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# The Future Is A Scam

Reflection about the desire to not have children

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04/2019

*This text is the result of a reflection and doesn't aim to be exhaustive. We are aware that the topic to which we come up is delicate and that this text will probably trigger strong reactions. Nevertheless, we think that it's important to talk about it given the hegemony of the pro-natalist thought and the consequences it generates. Our reflection starts from an anarchist thought and so from a will to get over with a world which is authoritarian, industrialized, speciesist, etc.*

*First publication in France, in April 2019*

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When we are writing these lines, the Earth has about 7.7 billion human beings. At the Middle Ages there were less than 500 million. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this number reached over a billion. The step of two billion has been passed in the 20's, the step of three billion has been passed just before the 60's. Around 1975, there were more than four billion human individuals. Between 1985 and 1990, five billion human beings trod on the Earth soil. Before the 2000's, the stage of six billion was passed and we have finally gone

over the seven billion during the first half of the 2010's. For anyone who is not happy at the idea of seeing this number increase again, the future promises to be quite dark. The lowest estimations expect an increase until 2080 while the highest ones expect a constant increase until at least 2100. For the moment, the forecasts don't go beyond this date. For us, as we will see later on, the human being is overcrowded and this overpopulation undeniably affects, both the environment and all the animals, including ourselves. If this growth is indeed generally decreasing, it's still a growth, and in this respect, is problematic to us. In a time when there were about seven times less human individuals, quite a few anarchists was already asking themselves the questions that we ask ourselves today.

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, an economist, Thomas Malthus already thought about the issue of the birth rate. He theorized that the increase of the available resources didn't follow the growth of the population and that there would be a moment when they would run out. To avoid that, he recommended a birth control. However, his thought joins with the morals of his time, advocating the delay of the age of marriage and chastity before it. Besides, he proposed that the couples get the strict number of children they were sure to be in capacity to support. He also recommended stopping giving financial support to the poorest people. His thought seems to be more turned against the latter and doesn't challenge the Family model. In itself, the Malthus' thought doesn't really interest us given that its more turned towards the Economics and social control than towards an emancipatory reflection. Nevertheless, quite a few anarchists at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century have started from this idea that an infinite growth of the population would sooner or later end up to be in conflict with the fact that the available resources are limited. This new thought is called neo-Malthusianism and the anarchists who agreed with it, neo-Malthusians. Despite being in minority, they have worked on adapting Malthusianism to their emancipatory perspectives, especially affirming that children who

for us this solution mustn't be coercive, it mustn't be the result of any restriction whatsoever, but the result of an individual reflection going through the analysis of the current situation, of what it might become in the future and of what each one can individually do (or rather not do) to realize the refusal to participate to the human hegemony over the Earth.

We encourage the use of effective means of contraception (which excludes the false means of contraception such as "withdrawal method"), including the definitive ones, and the access to abortion (without the mean techniques of manipulation used by some doctors and relatives in order to dissuade people who want to abort). We also encourage a vision of sexuality as being firstly a way of feeling pleasure alone or with others rather than a reproductive means, and by extension every non-reproductive sexual practice. This sexuality hasn't to be obligatory and has to be consented and desired.

The dominant idea of our approach is to get every form of authority over and opposes among others this speciesist, patriarchal and racist world. Work, Nation, School, Religion, Society, etc. all exist in the name of the Child, and all require the child to remain. The future, as we currently imagine it, seems quite bleak to us. Be it as promised by a frantic capitalism or by blissful revolutionaries, for us, it rather relates to a huge scam. This vision can certainly seem pessimistic, yet it's not a matter of waiting things to happen without doing anything. When one is drowning, nothing stops one from struggling; and even if there is not much hope, at least one will have done one's best. Who knows, sometimes it can save one. We refuse to participate positively to this world putting in it new human beings, and that way to participate to its future.

to be able to do without this industry, or significantly reduce it, we don't see how this would be possible given the number we currently are.

The need of human exploitation also logically increases with the growth of the population. A humanity with simpler ways of life but which hasn't thought it right to having demographically decreased, continues to have basic needs. We've just seen it with over-exploitation of the soil for food production, but it also needs to be at the minimum transformed, and distributed. In addition to food, there are other basic needs to be satisfied that also require always more exploitation: housing construction, medicine (production of drugs, scientific research, etc.), production of the minimum in order to get an appropriate simpler way of life, production of the tools and extraction of raw material needed to the production/construction of the examples given above, etc.

As we've thus seen, human activity has an impact on its environment, and the more humans there are, the more human activity there is and the more global impact is important and harmful; and the more humans there are, the more the needs of exploitation are important, and this exploitation is both human and non-human. This growth of population requires a social and hierarchical organization always more complex that instills always more into the life of each individual, as well as into inter-individual relations, always more taking the perspective of a horizontal world without any authority away. We think, even if we have almost no hope anymore that it could ever happen, that one of the sine qua non conditions of a world where anarchy would reign is a drastic reduction of the human population to such an extent that the city as a social structure would have no reason to exist anymore.

For us, such a reduction of the population couldn't be made by the massive death of human individuals, this is why the only solution that we envisage is the reduction of the number of births, below the growth threshold. We are against laws, so contrary to (false) solutions that may have been implemented by some states,

were born were destined for becoming either canon or boss fodder. This adaptation also included individual solutions for birth control thanks to the promotion of means of contraception and the defense of abortion, position which was avant-garde at the time. It should be noted that at this time, the contraception being almost undeveloped, a great number of births weren't wanted, many families lived in poverty and weren't able to support children and make them autonomous and responsible individuals.

In France, neo-Malthusianism is initiated by Paul Robin in 1895, inspired by the British neo-Malthusianism, influenced itself by eugenics-based theories which began to emerge at this time. It's unfortunate that neo-Malthusianism has been suffused with eugenics. Indeed, this current has since proved its scientific gaps. Furthermore, he encouraged a coercive birth control which doesn't suit us because in our opinion, the decrease of the number of births has to be the result of personal reflection and because the eugenics-based desire to eradicate every "degeneration" was not only illusionary but also the reflect of a will to create a unique model of human being legitimate to live and to procreate. Nonetheless, all neo-Malthusians didn't embrace eugenics-based theories. One can read *La Limitation des Naissances. Moyens d'éviter les Grandes Familles* from Emilie Lamotte, even if solutions of contraception she advises are now outdated.

It's worrying to notice that these reflections existed in 19<sup>th</sup> century where there were "only" 1 billion human beings on Earth, and that today when we are seven times more, no massive realization has emerged.

### **Natalism: a deadly ideology**

Have you ever evoked in the course of a conversation that you didn't want children? The replies to this affront are often the same: "You say that now but you will see later", "it's natural to want children", "you're selfish", "you don't like children", "you will end your life alone" etc. The replies are very often outraged, to want and to make children is something obvious and the opposite is gener-

ally considered like a deviance. Facing this obviousness, those who don't want to make children should have to justify themselves contrary to those who follow the natural course of things. Incidentally, the possibility to not want children is rarely evoked spontaneously; you don't hear "If you have children one day", but rather "when you will have children". When somebody is pregnant, they are congratulated. To bear is generally considered as beautiful, positive and normal. Conversely, the decision not to have children is straightaway considered as negative. A life without children is generally considered to be an incomplete life. It's almost a pre-requisite. The pro-natalist ideology explains this state of affairs. Instilled by our education, it expresses itself more or less insidiously. When we are children yet, we are taught the pro-natalist ideology through play. Who didn't play with dolls or "mommy and daddy"? This conditioning makes obvious the fact of making children and doesn't let any space to the possibility of not having one. When we are children yet, our future begins to be drawn in our place: we will participate to the perpetuation of the human species.

To make children, it's finally in some ways to want to immortalize oneself by passing down our heritage. That heritage can be cultural. Many parents project what they are or what they would have wanted to be through their offspring. They want to pass down their values (traditions, mores, etc.), their history, their passion in order for these to last over time beyond their death. The child, instead of being an individual in their own right with their desires and their aspirations, is the receptacle of everything that their parents have decided to put in, as well as pretty often the mean to perpetuate an ideology. By the bye, we can find in some milieus (especially "Marxoid" ones), the idea that anti-natalism would be a bourgeois ideology and that "proletarians" should precisely make children in order to ensure the future of proletariat as a revolutionary class. But these children, in addition to not necessarily consent to the role that one wanted to attribute to them, often only join the ranks of deadly or working armies, and armies of consumers. To

contact with more resistant, and so make these drugs less efficient, even ineffective.

A growth of the human population means an increased need of space. But, the latter is limited, and we occupy it with many other living beings. This limitation is strengthened by the fact that many areas are not livable (deserts, areas contaminated by excesses of the human activity such as Chernobyl, Fukushima and their surroundings, etc.). To spread, humanity then has to colonize the living spaces of other living beings. It has been seen especially locally in recent years with projects that needed the destruction of wetlands, spaces that are full of life par excellence. In the same vein, an overpopulated humanity, even if it has a simpler way of live has to feed. This need in food requires areas that are dedicated to make it grow (we prefer to ignore breeding here, that just worsens the problem). When these areas are created, entire animal populations are moved, even eradicated. Let's not talk about the ceaseless expansion of cities, areas dedicated to entertainment (beaches, winter sports resorts, watersports centers, holiday villages, etc.), business parks and others. In addition to move or threaten the life of entire animal populations, this colonization, but also activities that are apparently as harmless as wilderness excursions (especially photography enthusiasts who go to forest without taking precautions), as well as the noise generated by human activity disturb non-human reproduction.

Besides creating areas that are only dedicated to single-crop farming, the food production for a constantly increasing population needs nowadays and all the more in the coming years, if this increase remains, an over-exploitation of the soil by the means of pesticides, fertilizers and GMOs and so a still increased dependence to industry. This over-exploitation is inherent to the capitalist world in which we live because we have to produce always more and faster. And this industry linked to GMOs, fertilizers and pesticides always needs more human, but also non-human (animal testing), exploitation. If we want one day

an analysis of the world in which we live and of the role of the human being in it.

Each human existence has consequences on our environment, and as we expressed it before, we consider the human being as being overpopulated. But the human genius has achieved to more or less eradicate the phenomena that enable, when there is overpopulation, to retrieve a state of balance (epidemics, starvation, etc.). That makes the human being, given how many we currently are, nothing less than a danger for the other living beings. It could be retort to us that the problem lies in our occidental ways of life that are suffused with consumerism and outrageous waste. To this, we reply that our ways of life are indeed a part of the problem, but working on the certainly unlikely assumption that we would stop to live as we currently live, given how many we are, a simpler and more modest life would have harmful consequences on the rest of living beings anyway.

An anti-natalist struggle seems coherent with an antispeciesist struggle to us. Indeed, if the number of vegetarian and vegan people is constantly increasing, the consumption of products of animal origin and activities needing animal exploitation isn't decreasing. It can be explained by demographic increase.

This demographic growth also accentuates all sorts of pollution problems. We might have well a simpler way of life, we would continue to pour here and there our various waste. To quote just one example, it seems difficult to us to imagine a humanity that would do without drugs. But, a part of these drugs that we consume are expelled from our body with urine and, whether wastewater is treated or not, they inevitably finish their course into rivers. This is true for human beings, but it should be reminded that the various animals raised for the good pleasure (gustatory, but also recreational) of a large part of human beings also fall sick and are even, ironically, preventively given antibiotics, that also end up into rivers. These antibiotics make the bacteria they come into

make little proletarians who will become great revolutionaries is a lure; they will likely rather become soldiers of Capital.

That heritage can also be material. The parents thus seek to be able to ensure the future of their offspring when they will be dead or retired. This may be done thanks to life insurance, or any other form of saving or by the will that one of the children will take the family business over.

Finally, it can be genetic. One has to make the lineage remain, pass the family name down. Thus, it's nearly unthinkable to be the one who will put an end to the descendants. One has also to make the species remain because there would be an individual duty in the participation to the perpetuation of the humanity. As for the possibility to adopt, it's pretty often dismissed on the pretext that bringing up an adopted child is not the same as bringing up a child who comes from one's womb, because they don't look like us, because there isn't any "blood tie" and because a not-adopted child symbolizes the conjunction of both parents and thus the concrete and physical demonstration of their love.

Those three forms of heritage actively participate to social reproduction. Thus, the possessing classes continue to possess, the exploited classes continue to be exploited, the values are passed down in an infinite cycle and globally the world ceaselessly continues to be what it is. Worse, not only do the new generations tend to reproduce the world in its current state, but the simple observation leads us to the conclusion that they also tend to reinforce it, to settle it more. The example of a quite few technological innovations seems eloquent to us.

For each major technological innovation, one can observe that sometimes the old generations are wary and a little lost faced with novelty. They have known the world before and they know they could live without it. The new generations who were born at the very beginning of a technological leap, or just after it, didn't really live the transition. The world in which they arrive thus becomes their norm. The new tools that these people then have at their

disposal seem much more essential to them than to people who have lived this transition. The various powers, taking advantage of the enthusiasm provoked by these novelties, especially in the field of entertainment, can thus create more control and surveillance while insuring a very minor resistance. For example, by familiarizing people with the usage of facial recognition – which is now available on many smartphones – it becomes harder to be reluctant to its usage when they have to use it to enter in a building, particularly if it hides behind good intentions. This reproduction and this reinforcement not only materialize in technological innovations. The example of governmental reforms also pertains to this phenomenon. A new law is visible solely when it's just a project and when it's put to the vote. The new generations that arrive once this law is voted and implemented don't see it anymore and are much less likely to oppose it. Generation after generation, the world in which we live strengthens and the direction it takes is being confirmed.

The family model is massively never challenged. Even in capitalism-compatible LGBTI+ milieus, the natural order of things is to find a partner, to get married, to make children and to contribute to the reproduction of society as it is at a given moment. Thus, even if we understand the struggles of some people who want to be able to take advantage of ART and surrogacy, we think it's a pity that the debate on these subjects is restricted in the boundaries of "for or against" and don't put into question procreation itself. The dominant thought pushes individuals to reproduce the hetero model and to seek the integration into society. With this in mind, as written in *Bædan 1: Journal of Queer Nihilism*, the Child thus becomes the symbol of the future, of the hope and implies sacrifices that are done in readiness for the next generations.

At a national level, from campaigns in favor of birth rate to social benefits, everything is done for the couples to make children. The child is an economic driving force; publicists understand this very well. It's also a national pride; the birth rate is also a growth factor

of this world (authority, nation, work, school, religion, patriarchy, etc.) will be in their interest.

In a context where our life is robbed, being responsible of a child (or several) takes a little more freedom away from us. Besides, a child needs attention and patience. But in precarious economic conditions and/or after a tough working day, it becomes complicated to satisfy their expectations. How many people leave it to others (relatives, nanny...) to be here for their child? Education, that is supposed to construct the child, is entrusted to an institution, and rob them and their parents of this important part of their life. We are thus in a totally incredible situation where a child has to learn an enormous quantity of knowledge that they didn't choose and that, for a large part, favors statist ideology and prepares them to the marvelous world of work. On this subject, another text from Emilie Lamotte, entitled *L'Education rationnelle de l'enfance*, seems today still interesting to us to read. But beyond this, we don't want to be responsible of the education that we would give to them.

We refuse to impose to them our way of life because it couldn't permit them to live by and for themselves. We either don't want to be disappointed by what they could become through their personal construction.

In addition, we don't want that our genitals cause suffering (if only that of giving birth). We rather want that they enable to us to feel pleasure, and only pleasure, alone or with several consenting persons. The will to procreate, finally, can lead one to live the sexual intercourse as a mechanic task that is as bad as a post on an assembly line. When, after the birth, the couple doesn't last and break up, the parents are very often forced to continue to see each other. The child then becomes like cement that one doesn't want anymore.

The reasons we've talked about so far emanate from a personal feeling. Nevertheless, procreating doesn't only involve people who procreate but also the other human and non-human individuals. Thus the reasons that push us to not want children also come from

material goods. Furthermore, “women” who refuse to make children are generally considered as people who will end up being old and bitter. These considerations advocate more for a societal injunction than for a biological need. In the same way “men” who are vasectomized will be considered as less male and so unfit to fulfill their role. Alongside this, “women” who are sterilized are considered as useless because they can’t fulfill their role. That is how people are generally dissuaded from being sterilized, especially when they are considered as “women”.

The injunction to procreate precedes the injunction to sexuality, which leads to despise not only non-heterosexual people, but also asexual people. No matter if one is an asexual person or not, nobody is legitimate to define the use of our genitals. Historically, the religious, familial and patriarchal authority has contributed to strengthen this injunction, be it by condemnation of autosexuality,<sup>1</sup> genital mutilation, prohibition of sexual intercourse before wedding or renunciation of the non-heterosexual members of the family simply because they won’t ensure the lineage.

#### **Against overpopulation, against the sadness of normality**

What is the meaning behind the fact of inflicting to a child the world as it currently is? In terms of exploitation alone, it’s to condemn them to be either a persecutor, or a victim. Because they are considered as inferior, violence – be it physical, psychological, or sexual – isn’t rare, and sometimes leads to death. If it implies immediate impacts (wounds, death, sexually transmitted infections etc.), it also shapes the way the child, once adult, will sense the world, dragging with them after-effects that will often reproduce the last as it is. Even though solutions are implemented, they can only be insufficient given that (almost) everything in this society tends to generate violence. Almost none of the structuring factors

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<sup>1</sup> We prefer the term of autosexuality, which reminds that it’s also a form of sexuality that is legitimate to exist in itself, but also to be integrated into every sexual intercourse between several people without being qualified as “foreplay”.

that permits to compete the other countries. Thus, to bear is a duty towards the nation and when one doesn’t have a child yet, one is more willingly advised temporary means of contraception than definitive ones. In the same vein, people who can bear are submitted to overmedicalization; from puberty until menopause, they are thus advised a gynecological examination yearly, in order to check that “everything works perfectly”, that the person will be able, among others, to carry their reproductive role out. It’s another field in which society arrogate a right to examine.

People who refuse to embrace the pro-natalist ideology, and who consequently refuse to make children, are often considered as selfish. But, not wanting children is not more selfish than wanting children. However, which is the most authoritarian between refusing to make exist someone who doesn’t exist yet (and who will never suffer from not existing), and imposing the existence to someone who will have no choice but to exist?

One cannot help wondering whether birthing children is not more a societal injunction than a personal desire.

In this respect, the objection has often been raised that making children is a part of the natural order of things and that “the maternal instinct pushes women to bear.” The female identity is intrinsically linked to motherhood and it isn’t uncommon to hear from a person that they have never felt more like a woman than after giving birth. Thus, instead of seeking legitimacy getting out of the roles this identity induces (making children, taking care of them and the household, etc.), rejecting this identity is more relevant to us. And as this woman identity only exists compared with man identity, we think that this identity has also to be rejected.

*“Claiming the female identity by rejecting motherhood, is to get upset like a fly who thinks to be able to go through the walls of the jar where they are caught. The female identity is consubstantial with procreation. The term woman is in itself an injunction to motherhood.”*

– Priscille Touraille

In addition, beyond not wanting children, another very taboo phenomenon should also be considered: the regret of being a parent, and even more, the regret of being a mother. If parenthood is an experience that many people want to live, there are others for whom it's not the case. When parents have the courage to claim this regret, they often meet with hostile reactions. This is all the more true regarding "women" who are supposed to fulfill their role of mother and who are considered as odious people. However, this regret doesn't necessarily mean a lack of love despite the absence of desire in the parental relationship. There is a difference between love that one can feel for one's children and the oppressive responsibility regarding them over a lifetime. But even if there is a lack of love, it is necessary to analyze the reasons that lead to this state of affairs, without blaming those for whom it's the case. Given that motherhood is erected as a supreme virtue of woman identity, it isn't surprising that "women" are misjudged if they happen to confess this regret, which pushes them to retain what they feel.

Living with a child isn't necessarily infernal, but it involves heavy responsibilities, in addition to disrupting the habits of everyday life, which, for us, should be more taken into account before making the choice of bringing a child into the world (needless to say that one should be in capacity to make that choice). How many devote less time to, or have abandoned, their passion or their various daily activities (creative, intellectual, entertaining ones, or just sleep) to be able to take care of their child? Even if it's very common to hear some parents say that they are tired, upset, one can suppose it's a lesser evil that worth it. But it is a lesser evil that shouldn't be ordered to those who don't want it. It should be noted that a "man" who is off because he is unable to accept a child of who he is the biological father is for us just an asshole. Do these moments of joy permit to ignore all that is implied by making one or several children? Instead of inciting a rational choice, the pro-natalist ideology keeps quiet about the drawbacks of parenthood and naturalizes the desire of procreation.

Thus, the last is very often based on the contact with children in positive contexts (when other people from the family, or friends have children, or when you can see them playing in a park, for example), and it is then the cuteness and all that a child can inspire of positive emotions that get in the way. The costs that a child implies, the sleepless nights, the tears, the almost obligation to settle more and more into society, are very often invisible and thus (almost) not taken into account in the choice of making a child.

Before even living with a child, one should be able to know if one will be in capacity to assume them (economically, emotionally, sentimentally, etc.). In a society that tends to reproduce itself ceaselessly, where working constitutes the major part of our time, "women" are incited to devote their life to God, to the father, to the partner, to the boss rather than to themselves. When a child happens to join this everyday life, it's always less time for oneself. When one is used to see one's life to be robbed, one doesn't get the time to think about what's wrong, because one is distracted by an everyday life which is imposed to us.

The few "women" who don't want to be mothers might hear that "it's shameful regarding those who can't have children". It's sort of the variant of "it's shameful not to vote while people have fought for it", or "it's shameful not to finish your whole plateful while other people starve to death". We don't really understand how bearing would give back fertility to infertile persons, nor how there would be an historic duty to respect, nor even how finishing a whole plateful could resolve problems that are inherent to capitalism and nationalism, but these three examples can show us that we are pushed to reproduce the world as it is, instead of reinventing it as we individually want it to be. This is nothing more than a servitude logic.

For us, making children is more a cultural phenomenon than a biological obligation. Indeed, if we can't live without breathing, sleeping, drinking or eating, we can live without procreating. We then just decide to not pass down our genes, our culture and our