

I SUPER INTO ON TO IT

“I would love to read that one.” Robert Redford

A PAF DAILY - FRIDAY MAY 9th 2013



CRITIQUE ISN'T EVERYTHING (LOVE)

Kathryn Bigelow's recent "Zero Dark Thirty" has caused heated discussions from left to right. Is it a new "All The President's Men" or just a soup of NL benevolence, Steven Shaviro looks deep into his crystal ball.

Liberalism has often been criticized (rightly, in my opinion) for its unwavering emphasis upon means rather than ends, procedures rather than goals. As Carl Freedman puts it, in his great account of Richard Nixon:

Liberalism begins by abjuring positive social policy in favor of a formal proceduralism, pragmatically trusting that the application of a certain set of rules will "work" in the sense of yielding the fairest attainable results. But such results are absolutely precluded by the initial liberal move of waiving the question of justice: for justice is a social goal with positive, determinate content...

In other words, liberal proceduralism is concerned that actions must be conducted "fairly," and not at all concerned with the question of whether the outcome of the action is actually fair. If fairness or justice is a Kantian regulative ideal, then 20th and 21st century liberalism is obsessed with the "regulative" aspect in and of itself, to the point of entirely forgetting the "ideal" which is what really matters. Liberal proceduralism is one aspect of the "instrumental reason" whose annihilation of true rationality Horkheimer and Adorno warned us of two thirds of a century ago. And if anything, this proceduralism has become even more pronounced today than it was in the mid-20th-century. It has become the nearly unquestioned basis of all aspects of government and social life. Everything from the "reforms" that are currently decimating the US educational system, to the way that American foreign and military policy is conducted, adheres to a strictly procedural logic. (In a full social analysis, we would have to say that there is in fact an end in sight: the further accumulation of capital by the tiny minority that already "owns" it, and the exacerbated dispossession of the "99%" in the US itself, not to mention the much more severely disadvantaged global poor. But of course, this "end" is not publically avowable. And as Marx long

ago pointed out, the "end" of capital accumulation isn't really an end or an aim, since it has no goal in view aside from its continuing exacerbated expansion. On the largest scale, capitalism is itself a "liberal" process of proceduralism without any additional or external aim).

I think that it is because we live in such an overwhelmingly "proceduralist" society that the genre of the *procedural* has become so ubiquitous in television and film. This genre used to be known as the "police procedural," exemplified today by (for example) the ever-popular CSI group of TV shows. But procedurals have also become the staple genre for some of our most interesting film directors. Thus Olivier Assayas gives us a procedural of terrorism (Carlos), and David Fincher gives us procedurals of detective work beyond the police department (Zodiac) and of corporate strategy in the age of the Internet (The Social Network).

And this, to me, is the genius of Zero Dark Thirty. When I wrote before about Kathryn Bigelow, I noted that her characteristic technique as a director is to immerse herself, and us, in the element, or environment, in which the story takes place (night in Near Dark; the seashore and the waves in Point Break; the realm of inner-psyche-life-as-virtual-reality in Strange Days; and the desert in The Hurt Locker). I also noted that The Hurt Locker marked her move to the genre of the procedural, in order to convey this elemental reality (which seems not to be "political" only because it is, in fact, the necessary precondition and container of the political).

Well, perhaps this is because I am such an unregenerate aesthetist, but I find the same principles at work in Zero Dark Thirty as well.

Zero Dark Thirty is the ne plus ultra of proceduralism, its ultimate expansion and reductio ad absurdum. It's all about the well-nigh interminable process of searching for,

and then eliminating, Osama Bin Laden. The premise and initial impetus of this process is of course the mythological demonization of Bin Laden, as the ultimate culprit responsible for Nine Eleven. But in the relentless proceduralism that the film presents to us, this goal or rationale is abraded away. The torture which the film has become controversial for depicting is of course part of this. But so is the process of painstakingly correlating irrelevant information, the accidental discovery of leads in years-old records, the repetitive tracking of the vehicle of the suspected courier, the endless bureaucratic meetings at which officials seek to decide if the information is valid and what should be done about it, and above all the military operation in the last thirty minutes of the film (has military action ever been depicted in the movies with such relentless a focus on operational techniques, in a manner that is utterly devoid alike of the horror of war and of the glory and heroism that are so often invoked to justify it?). The goal has been so absorbed into procedural routine that the ostensible climax of the film, the actual killing of Bin Laden, occurs offscreen; and we barely even get a glimpse of the corpse, zipped as it is into a body bag, which is to say treated entirely (and literally) according to Standard Operating Procedure.

The film makes a sort of feint by implying that its real subject is the passion of its protagonist Maya (Jessica Chastain), who continues to pursue the search for Osama when everyone else has given up on it. But her obsession is itself entirely contained within, and articulated by, the proceduralism which is her job as a CIA analyst, and which seems to be the only world she knows. Every potentially dramatic action in which she finds herself (bombings and armed ambushes included) is drained of drama, and subsumed within proceduralist routine. Every affect, and every reason for doing what one does, is sucked into a black hole. This is why Maya is so emptied out at the end of the film.

We are immersed into an overwhelming environment in Zero Dark Thirty, just as we are in all of Bigelow's films. But in this case, the environment is the numbingly anonymous one of Big Data, of the numbingly repetitious accumulation of "information" (whether by torture, surveillance, physical search, or collation of records), and of instantaneity (the annihilation of duration) mediated through video screens and telecommunications technologies.

As I was watching Zero Dark Thirty, I found the relentlessness with which all this was depicted almost unbearably intense. I've never seen (or heard) so powerful a depiction (or better, I should say, so powerful an enactment) of entropic dissolution and decay. All meaning, and all feeling, was draining away before my eyes and ears, without even the prospect of any sort of negative finality or conclusion. I realize that this weird inverted intensity won't appeal to everyone; it's the reason, I think, that many people I know simply found the movie tedious and boring. (But such differences of response are of course, as Kant knew, beyond argument).

In any case, Zero Dark Thirty embodies the truth of liberal proceduralism as an organizing principle of all governmentality and all social life today. Embodying and testifying to a truth in this manner is not the same as offering a "critique." In this sense, it is perfectly true that the movie does not offer any critique of our government's systematic use of torture. It is also perfectly true, at least in a literal and banal sense, that (as the filmmakers have themselves defensively claimed) the movie doesn't "endorse" torture either. But I think that to have an argument on this level is to miss the point. Critique is important, but it isn't everything. It might well be argued that, at this late date, even the most accurate critique doesn't accomplish very much; it is itself too much part of an all-too-predictable procedure. Embodying the truth of a situation, as I think Zero Dark Thirty does, has important aesthetic and political consequences, more important perhaps than those that come from making an accurate and moral judgment. Zero Dark Thirty doesn't show us a way out from the nightmare of liberal proceduralism, but it makes this nightmare visible at a time when its sheer ubiquity might otherwise leave us to take it for granted and thereby ignore it.

CINÉMA À TERMINAL 2F STRANGE DAYS (LOVE)

Editor Marcus Doverud

The Doors are an amazing group. Each of them are highly competent and talented musicians, yet music is only secondary to what they are doing. They are violently anti-commercial in their stance and their approach, and yet the finished product is highly commercial. And it would also appear that vocalist Jim Morrison is making a direct appeal to the pubescent market, but upon closer examination, it turns out that he is not.

As musicians, the Doors are very good. Their excellence of musicianship, however, is not seen as individuals, because they do nothing really new or different as soloists. Their excellence is together as a group — the total effect they achieve. The group is original and highly evocative.

Many of the chord progressions and figures are easily recognizable from their first album. Except for the addition of an occasional bass, the instrumentation is nearly identical to the previous LP. Through very logical development, they have improved their original methods and techniques with more effective instrumentation (a variety of keyboard sounds, a lot of slide guitar, and strongly musical electronic bridges). They have not attempted to make any big changes in direction or music (like so many groups mistakenly feel obligated to), but have refined and enriched their previous efforts. Consequently their new album has all the power and energy of the first LP, but is more subtle, more intricate and much more effective.

On a track like “Unhappy Girl,” the various instrumental pieces and the vocal combine perfectly. The effect is overwhelming. “I Can’t See Your Face in My Mind” is the only disappointing song on the record; it’s mild without justification.

“My Eyes Have Seen You,” “Strange Days,” and “Love Me Two Times,” all have the same commercial potential of “Light My Fire.” They are heavy, evocative and climactic pieces.

As was strongly hinted in their first album, the Doors conceive their efforts primarily in terms of drama rather than in terms of music. The music is not meant to be particularly virtuoso or experimental. It is played to be dramatically meaningful. Before they formed as a group, the Doors were, individually, students at the UCLA drama school.

It was a unique qualification. Beginning with long hair and patterns of dress, rock and roll has become increasingly visual. Jimi Hendrix and the Who seem practically primitive next to the Doors. Rock and roll has become theatre.

Many people don’t care to see Jim Morrison making it with his microphone in the manner of Mick Jagger nor do they especially want to watch him writhing on the floor. If they don’t, then they suggest he is selling out to commercialism, has an old-fashioned concept of rock and roll or something. However, what’s actually taking place on stage, and what Morrison is doing, is about 3000-years old fashioned and very contemporary in approach.

Music is very sensual and it is particularly obvious in rock and roll. Morrison is just not making any bones about it. He’s just doing what comes naturally.

One must think of the Doors in a theatrical rather than a musical way. Their whole album, individual songs and especially the final track are constructed in the five parts of tragedy. Like Greek drama, you know when the music’s over because there is catharsis. And, as the Doors suggest in their closing song, “When the Music’s Over,” you “turn out the light.”

Originally printed in Rolling Stone, 23 November, 1967

ENUMERATED 4 (LOVE)

By Maayan Danoch

Simulated preparation
Consideration for the sake of consideration
Something suspected
Expected

Damage
A fly around honey
A butterfly “Go”

But they stood

Maybe just cruelty remains in the end

Such a thing as moral
A form

Behind there is the real show going on
Fake book
Quiet performance
Something concrete
Something stimulating

Thank you for the fish and sorry

They didn’t know the wrong they did

HOROSCOPES QUOTIDIENS (LOVE)

Jules Herrmann

want need desire space you

SENTIMENTAL VALUE - DELETED LAST SCENE (LOVE)

By Jules Herrmann

Somewhere on the Côte d’azur in summer. The sky is blue, the marine water smooth as glass. Some yachts and smaller boats are idling away in the midday heat. Their owners and some tourists are enjoying a coffee or early lunch in the marina cafés.

Patricia, Natalie and Thierry arrive. They seem to have an informal dress code - white shirts, safari trousers. Natalie is checking her ipad-like laptop and points to one of the cafés. He must be there. Patricia says she sees him. They go over to a man around 40, dressed in a casual but expensive sailor’s outfit. He’s having a drink with his wife and young kid.

As they go over, one of the yachts explodes. Noone is particularly interested. Some marine officers are getting ready to inspect the event. It seems routine. Patricia shows the man in the café her badge like a detective in a crime series.

Hello, my name is Patricia Hecker. Are you Jackson Savage, born May 4th 1977 in Brighton? The man nods. He knows what’s coming. I am chief commissioner of the IFP. The man’s wife interrupts Patricia. She thought the IFP didn’t destroy material assets. Patricia says, that’s right, they don’t do it. This must be the green brigade. She continues her speech: You have violated paragraphs 7,8 and 13 of IR act 763 in the amount of 11 million Euros. According to international existing law we will now reduce your capital by five times that amount. After the deviation of the capital your network will be destroyed. My colleague Natalie Petersen will implement the action, deputy Thierry Marin is attesting witness on behalf of the EU. The action will be recorded. You may watch the action. Jackson Savage says yes, please. (He is hoping they did not find out about the whole network). His son has no idea what this is about. He wants to watch, anyway. The family hovers over the ipad-laptop Natalie puts in front of them. Natalie asks: code or animation? Jackson wants animation. Natalie asks: sound? Jackson’s son cries Yes, please! Natalie presses the touch screen. As we hear the sizzling sound of the animated network and capital flow, we see the Savages’ reactions: Jackson is shocked at the extent of the IFPs knowledge, his wife is worried and his kid thinks the animation is great fun. Cut to the recording which is done from the laptop’s internal camera: Behind the Savages stand Patricia, Natalie and Thierry with friendly faces. The image looks like a living family picture. The sizzling cumulates to the sound of an explosion. The screen turns black. Credits.



GOING TO THE SCHOOL OF CAPITAL (LOVE)

Mattero Mandarini goes back to school and puts his hands around the neck of contemporary education strategies. It's probably much more complex than so but a chapeau is after all a chapeau and we obviously don't mean a doctors hat. But don't forget good student is nothing else than another words for playing by the rules, break them and not just once.

...the factory, which seems only a bogey to some, represents that highest form of capitalist co-operation which has united and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organise, and placed it at the head of all the other sections of the toiling and exploited population. And Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism, has been and is teaching unstable intellectuals to distinguish between the factory as a means of exploitation (discipline based on fear of starvation) and the factory as a means of organisation (discipline based on collective work united by the conditions of a technically highly developed form of production). The discipline and organisation which come so hard to the bourgeois intellectual are very easily acquired by the proletariat just because of this factory 'schooling'.

Lenin

With this notion of 'schooling' we can achieve a more ambitious and concrete understanding of collective politics, and reflecting on it should form the task for a future school for study.

I.

In his book on Lenin from the early 1970s, Antonio Negri names this passage from capitalist development of industry and labour to the organised appropriation of that passage, as one that marks the 'highest point of its [the working classes'] subjectivity as a class'. Negri's book on Lenin is focused on the substance and form of this passage, from transformations of capital to their subjective re-appropriation – that is, schooling at the hands of capital. In an interview published at the other end of the decade, Negri states:

No materialist conception of the subject can be given other than through the filter of class composition: it is only class composition that gives us the material and political complexity of the figure of the subject.

As we know, the notion of class composition draws together two aspects: a technical aspect, which involves an analysis of the world of production, its transformation, and the effects upon the labouring subject including the development of a certain level of needs and desires. The second aspect, the political composition, concerns the ways that this first – at least partly technologically driven – aspect can be appropriated politically. Simplifying again, we can speak of the way the specifics of the objective or technical dynamics of exploitation (such as the organisation of the labour process) are appropriated subjectively. This, according to Negri, is Lenin's great contribution: to 'translate the real class composition, as determined specifically, in organisational terms'.

A few years previously, Franco Fortini had written,

Economic structures – in our case capitalist, that is, industrial ones – are neither more nor less than the social unconscious, i.e. the real unconscious, the mystery of mysteries.

That is, the subject position is, at least in part, something of a compromise formation composed of differing forces in conflict. To restate this in a way that begins to indicate some of the consequences of these accounts: the militant subject can only exist and persist in relation to the antagonist that schools it.

But how far does this take us? Can a politics be read off from this? To take the communisation hypothesis in its Endnotes form, we see that their claim to the intractable co-dependence of workers and capital in the capitalist class relation means – they argue – that any revolutionary politics basing itself on the affirmation of the work-

ing class is contradictory since it ignores the fact that 'each pole is nothing without the other'. The immanence of the poles to the class relation that is capitalism means that to affirm the subject – and this would be the working class subject or capital as the automatic subject – as compromise formation does little to define a politics. For example, while it allows Operaismo to operate with a conception of politics as a self-affirmation of the working class that is able to advance particular demands, generated by the capital relation, but which pushed to a particular level result in the rupture of the relation; at the same time, Endnotes regard all that is caught, that is defined by that relation to be tainted by it, subsumed and corrupted by it such that it is only the structural gaps that open a space for revolutionary politics – the poles of the relation themselves cannot provide a path of escape, of rupture. Or rather, the working class makes itself redundant – to capital – through the development of the class relation itself. As technical development and productivity increases, workers are increasingly de trop for capital – always in excess of its requirements and increasingly therefore find themselves outside the class relation as a surplus population. Politics would then emerge only at the point where those subjects no longer subject to the class relation find themselves able to reproduce themselves 'without capital'.

Endnotes' position risks passivity, risks consigning politics to a moment to-come, when the dynamics of the economy have done their worst and a space opens up on the edges of the commodified territories of capital for social reproduction to take place freely, transparently. Politics – if it can still be called such a thing – either takes on a messianic character, its moment will arrive once a space outside capital arrives; or more precisely politics appears to collapse into the practices of social reproduction of the surplus (-to-capital-) populations.

II.

In 1982, in a typically uncompromising essay called 'Compromesso', Mario Tronti writes: 'When is it that the division begins to move from what is to be done with capitalism to what is to be done about capitalism? That is a big problem'. We can put this question differently: since when did capitalism, or the State for that matter, become our exterior? When did we begin to see 'our' sociality, our collectivity – what some have called the 'common' – as something so alien to the State and capital that either we see capitalism as coming from without to capture, to subjugate, to employ it, or that eventually renders workers de trop; and then where, conversely, that sociality is thought as a possible ground of a self-regulating, autonomous organisational form, as if we

could simply revive the discussion around the Russian mir in this age of real subsumption? For Tronti, these positions leave us marginalised, with a mutilated politics, with the means of politics as well as of production in the hands of capital.

Tronti's point is straightforward, but its consequences far reaching. To briefly outline three of them:

1) Marxist politics is a politics of conflict – or, as Roberto Esposito sums up Tronti's position, 'It is war, not peace, that is the political category of the working class'. That war is with capitalism and with the state, which in turn become constitutive categories of Marxist theory and politics (Marxism, in Lenin's phrase cited above, is 'the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism'). If asymmetric war often means that those contending the struggle are fighting different wars, we need to make sure we're fighting the same war as that fought by capital and the State.

2) A politics outside an engagement with the state is a politics that escapes the categories of political modernity and, while speculating about this new politics might be seductive, it remains merely that, speculation and without practical import. In short, politics is not everywhere: it only exists where there is a centralising, totalising force (in our time, that is still the state) that exerts power over something that needs to be contained; and it exists only at the determinate point where those opposing forces exist. A politics of 'exodus' or 'flight' is either an irrelevance for power – and hence marginal and ineffectual – or if power is threatened, do not be surprised that as you flee you get shot in the back.

3) One should maintain an aversion to the politics of the outside, the politics of purity, as it consigns us to ineffectiveness. Outside of the capital-state nexus our emancipated spaces are those that are precisely the most effective spaces in which to organise our ineffectiveness.

To conclude, by returning to the beginning. The uncomfortable result of this discussion is that it is not from our collective that we learn – although it is the collective that learns – but from capital. We must go to the school of capital and, as Antonio Caronia said speaking of the university, we must see this school as a 'palestra del conflitto' (a gym, an academy of conflict). We must do everything but flee from capital. Instead, we must advance a new injunction: we should seek the inside – re-establish a common space with capital (and with the state) as the place to dis-organise and de- / re-articulate the mechanisms of coordination in our own terms.



YOUR DEADLIEST ENEMY IS THE ONE CLOSEST TO YOU (LOVE)

Mad Mike on Economics and Hi-Tech Jazz

The classical Detroit scene is back and with a vengeance Aino Korvensyrjä opens the doors to the past and resurrect the already undead. Let is groove.



There will come a time in your life when you will ask yourself a series of questions. Am I happy with who I am? Am I happy with the people around me? Am I happy with what I'm doing? Am I happy with the way my life is going? Do I have a life or am I just living? Do not let these questions strain or trouble you just point yourself in the direction of your dreams find your strength in the sound and make your transition.

Do not spend too much time thinking and not enough doing. Did I try the hardest at any of my dreams? Did I purposely let others discourage me when I knew I could? Will I die never knowing what I could have been or could of done? Do not let these doubts restrain or trouble you just point yourself in the direction of your dreams. Find your strength in the sound and make your transition.

There will be people who say you can't - you will. There will be people who say you don't mix this with that and you will say "watch me". There will be people who will say play it safe, that's risky - you will take that chance and have no fear. You won't let these questions restrain or trouble you. You will point yourself in the direction of your dreams. You will find the strength in the sound and make your transition.

For those who know its time to leave the house and go back to the field. Find your strength in the sound and make your transition.

INTERVIEWER: What are the conditions like in Detroit at the moment, economically and musically?

MAD MIKE: I think there's a real similarity between the music and the economics of it. At one time Detroit was the only place in the world where cars were made in that kind of abundance, like Detroit was the only place that made Techno back in the mid 80s all the way through the 90s but, like with the auto industry, we face more competition now. Obviously it's a more global game and it's the same with the Detroit auto makers. First there were three car companies and now they face really stiff competition from great auto makers from all over the world, just like we face competition from great electronic music producers all over the world. So what used to be your territory only, now is shared by many.

I learnt from the auto makers. Every year in Detroit they'd have a car show, have cars covered with a veil. They

snatched the veil off when they introduced the car, it's pretty much the same how we record. I'm not so keen on any and everybody seeing recording techniques because, maybe in Europe it's not a competitive thing, but for the way we were brought up, it certainly was competitive. So music is an art but sometimes in our situation, in our environment, it is extremely competitive. That's why I think the DJs are so good. They used to compete with each other, Derick against Chicago, and us and plus 8, we compete, it's like friendly competition. We are quite secretive with how we do things.

INT: UR is one of the powerful brands in music. It's interesting how you use capitalist techniques for anti-capitalist purposes.

MM: The records were designed to inspire. There are certain conditions and situations that obviously we don't like. It's in our creed. The sound can change things. I think people can feel that in the music. There are no instructions given and I think that when you say this is one of the strongest brands I appreciate it but truthfully it's the people that bought our crazy looking shirts. I think they support the concept of what it is and it inspires their imagination. I was really blessed to travel late. In fact I travelled to Europe so late that the people from Europe had already come to Detroit way before I got to travel, and I was blessed with people were coming saying, "I was in drug rehab and a guy in there was playing 'Hi-Tech Jazz' and it really raised my spirits and changed my life." A guy came over, and I remember him real specific, because he had a drug problem, and he was a recovering drug addict and he said that that particular track was his shit, and it really gave him strength. And the blessing was, that when I made it, I really didn't know why I was making it, I was just making it because it needed to get made. I liked it, but I certainly wasn't thinking about drug rehab or nothing.

So, if someone was to say 'Hey man, Why did you make Hi-Tech Jazz?' and I described why I did it, because I did have something I was thinking of, if I was to do that I would have fucked up his vision of why he listened to it. So I learned not to describe anything and just leave it like water, clear, with no shape and no form. I think that's what people really enjoy about UR, they get to paint their own picture. We might just make the canvas for them, with the record,

and in their mind they paint the picture and that's one of the reasons we sold for so long. We just went faceless, there was no reason for you to know what we look like, you just concentrate more on what the sound was. Unfortunately, people need a face all the time, and for many years I didn't give em any face. But now - internet, cell phone - people take pictures of me, the shit's all over the internet. I figure well, hopefully the people will still have some honour and honour my wish not to be seen in front of my music.

I don't go in front of the music. I believe that if you put your ego in front of the music, and place it in front of the speaker, then the people trying to listen to the music can't hear your music, they just listen to your ego. So I really ask the people who do have pictures of me to be honourable and just leave me out of it, man. There's been time when I've made music like 'Hi-Tech Jazz'. Man, when I made that track I can't remember anything, it was a two week blur. The spirit was moving through me, and when I got through, it was 'Hi-Tech Jazz'. Many, many times as a musician, if you're really in tune, like you're playing in church... As a keyboard player, or guitar player, or bass player, I'm decent at what I do, but there's times when people in church get into it, and the feeling comes, and the spirit comes, and you can play way beyond your ability. In fact, you know the bass pedal on the organ? I always have trouble with it. I have to look down and play the bass, it's difficult but when the spirit comes you don't have to look down, your foot be moving, so at the point you realise that I ain't really playing this organ. So it's the same with a track. If the spirit come when you make a track, the question then becomes 'Is it really you making the track?' So again, it's difficult to take credit for some of this stuff, some of the time.

PLAYLIST: OUT OF KNOWHERE

1. Sweat Electric
2. Base Camp Alpha 808
3. The Theory
4. Illuminator
5. Jaguar
6. Happy Trax #1



BETTER GROUPSEX BETTER LIFE (LOVE)

If we desire actual change and not just modification within already existing and quantitative sets of qualities to occur we need to initiate non-linear practices that goes beyond, at least temporarily, modalities of assessment. Do we want change to happen there will by necessity be collateral damage, something's gotta go. Mårten Spångberg uses groupsex actually and metaphorically as forms of activity can bring us out of control, get sweaty and engage in smooth interaction.

I wish I leaned toward group sex. I don't!
Of course a negligible episode in my late teens, but the session stretched only as far as two couples fornicating in the same room. A tiny space, but still public enough not to challenge the order or sexual conduct, and thus not contesting notions of success. It was still one on one, and triumph was measured in coming or not coming, making her come or not, making her come twice or not, the action slavishly following an Aristotelian climactic dramaturgy.

I. Group sex is mystical rather than rational. It leaps to conclusions that logic cannot reach.

I didn't visit the therapist afterward, but the experience must have been traumatic because ever since I have without exception practiced with one partner at a time. Experimenting a little. Cultivating a need to at least feel experimental (No no, I promise nothing like that), making an effort to further liberate sexuality: mine, hers and the world's in general. Night after night, day after day I have pronounced myself guilty for not being free enough, competing with the world for successful action using orgasm as a grand narrative to save myself from disappearing in multiculturalism when identity politics turned a commercial "I Want To Be A Millionaire".

II. Rational judgments repeat rational judgments.

The point with group sex is not the phantasy of the abundance of pussy, cock, mouths and ass holes. One in every hole, two in every mouth, three, four, five. On the contrary, in today's society group sex becomes counterproductive to capitalism exactly because the availability of flesh, limbs, members, landing strips and balls is made redundant. What late capitalism offers is always already free and unrestricted access to licking, sucking and fucking in whatever way you can want to like it, but such access deploys direction and allocates time. It coordinates freedom of choice and feeds on asymmetrical dependencies. The currency of neo liberal capitalism is not \$€¥, it's freedom.

III. Illogical judgments lead to new experience.

But seriously, I'm not interested anymore, and don't even think of offering me something else. Stop it, there are no catchy phrases left, not even for the neoliberal perversion par excellence: masochism. I don't need more freedom! Don't want to become ever more liberated. In fact freedom is the one thing that I have too much of, so much that decision has been made indifferent, so completely redundant, that ideology has faded into a few hundred views on YouTube.

IV. Conventional sex (one on one) is essentially rational. Group sex is essentially illogical.

If there is no ideology, what am I supposed to do with my freedom? If the premise of the world is maximum smoothness, the possession of freedom is dead weight, or a support for the proliferation of its previous opposite. The abundance of freedom and consequently endless opportunities of navigation and choice opens for the proliferation of a politics functional through affect, i.e. based on irritations to the body rather than discernible and distinct arguments. If "sub specie aeternitatis", and with Spinoza's addition "there is nor good or bad" once had relevance, it has today transformed into a watchword for neoliberal governance. There is nothing good or bad, there are only irritations to the body, only a suspended decision generated by our utmost fear: the loss of freedom.

And what could be a more obvious defense than to search for and produce autonomy, even though it is an equally superfluous project, and in any case is reproducing borders precisely in order not to change the concept of freedom but rather contain the subject anew.

V. Irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically.

If autonomy is, i.e. comprises a form of authorship, it must exist in relation to something established and hence always

consolidate coordination. Instead we must search behind us. No, don't turn around; let's search backwards towards an inautonomous life. If autonomy is, i.e. comprises some authorship—taking off alone; its desire must be organized as lack, fulfilling psychoanalytical protocols. Instead let's turn around and bring a friend. No, don't decide—you don't need to, everybody can come. Non-autonomous desire is configured through opportunity, through abundance. Let's stop being things and engage in our selves as machines.

VII. Group sex's motivation is secondary to the process it imitates from idea to completion. It's willfulness may only be subjectivity.

Group sex as experimental practice is concerned with forms of organization, modes of distribution of power, strategies and criteria for quality assessment. It is not an expression of experimental sex: activities that aim to deterritorialize the body and its thresholds, frequently accompanied by ideological subtexts that regularly tend towards the consolidation of sexual identities rather than the estimated, and marketed, production of new or alternative subjectivities. Group sex is not a matter of each individual being responsible for his or her satisfaction, that's what happens in Swinger clubs. Group sex is a matter of giving up ones own immediate satisfaction, which always has a happy ending and is a tragedy in favor of a pleasure that bypasses identity and hence proposes a different (in kind) practice of ownership.

VIII. When words such as display and scenario are used, they connote a whole tradition and imply a consequent acceptance of this tradition, thus placing limitations on group sex that would be reluctant to display and scenarios that go beyond those limitations.

If, following e.g. Gilles Deleuze and Slavoj Žižek, perversion is fundamentally based on repetition (satisfaction not through intercourse but through the perfection of a scripted operation), then group sex cannot be a form of perversion, but is on the contrary a celebration of sexuality as activity, as forms of practice. It's transformative capacity is contained in those and similar terms: activity, practice or rehearsal, and this is where group sex's subversive potentiality is positioned.

The transformative intensity of sexual activity is not first of all whether boys spend the night together, whether girls forget to fall asleep because they are so busy through the night, or whether indeed we make out in zigzag. No, the threat carried through and in sexuality is how, to what extent, under what circumstances, etc., it produces—possibly alternative—forms of life. You and your partner can use your imagination all the way until the sunset, using any and all kinds of tools, outfits and so on—it doesn't matter. You can fuck each other down to the basement, and it will mean nothing compared to a waterproof conventional group sex session. Group sex is a way of conducting life through a different ethics than the prevailing neoliberal paradigm, which is characterized by "public opinion" and the organization and modulation of a permanent state of exception.

X. Ideas alone can be group sex; they are in a chain of development that may eventually find some form. Group sex need not be made physical.

Value, and with that appreciation in all its forms, exists in and as a constant flow or flux, but underneath there is a system, a grid of values that constitute the world and its actions, that act as an alibi for all other flows and fluxes and produce a necessary stability for modes of navigation.

XI. Group sex does not necessarily proceed in logical order. It may set one off in unexpected directions but group sex must necessarily be completed in the mind before it is formed.

If we today—at the zenith of recession, on the one hand, and global climate change, on the other—desire not just to postpone the moment of impact, or simply close our eyes and wait for a future that will definitely arrive, it is those fundamental values that must be contested.

No, they cannot be questioned or critiqued in a conventional sense, precisely because these values constitute the very existence of such modes of operation. In this case there is no face-to-face, neither back stabbing nor taking from behind, nor any possibility of the elaboration of alternative approaches.

If sexuality wants to be something more than sympathetic ornamentations on capitalism or shopping mall Q-time, it can only take place through jeopardizing its own positions, through strategies that consist of superimposed incompatibilities whose outcome cannot be calculated. We have no choice but to admit it: We are fucked! But we can decide if we want to be just fucked or insist on fucking as a group.

Marquis de Sade once said that nothing needs order more than an orgy. But fuck that, if order can be identified, there is certainly no orgy. Group sex provides circumstances to contest order as we know it. Orgy and group sex should not be confused. Group sex is not about excess or subversive actions; nor is it concerned with the efficiency or eruptive intensities of spectacle, but rather in an activity known to produce a different being together.

XII. For each group sex event that becomes physical, there are many variations that do not.

XV. Since no form is intrinsically superior to another, a group sex event may use any form from an expression of words (written or spoken) to physical reality, equally.

Attempts to transform values that are formulated from within late capitalism in particular often tend to have the opposite effect, consolidating established values due to the binary tendencies of western discursive order.

Throughout modernity experimentation and alternative sexual practices have been understood as a context where actual transformation could be produced and embedded in society, something that today appears as a naïve attempt to escape the ubiquitous intensities of the global market economy. Those practices can, however, be regarded as fields where protocols for possible transformation can be developed, tested and researched. Such protocols are not first of all statement-like, but aim at producing agency, thus functioning as a kind of shape-shifter that, although embedded in established fields of knowledge and economy, can escape localization and recognition. These shape-shifters need to keep floating evasively through the meshes of markets, social structures and demographic layers. Making the effort to elude identity and location is sometimes precisely to engage in it, since to deviate from already accepted values might be to create another, perhaps even keener desire.

XVI. If words are used, and they proceed from ideas about group sex, then they are (part of) the group sex event and not literature. Numbers are not mathematics.

Paradoxically, the shape-shifter must both fight established values to understand them and at the same time come to resemble these values in order to keep them at bay, not to fall into the trap of production of "the new" or sink into the abyss of "progress". Group sex is such a shape-shifter.

XVII. All ideas are group sex if they are concerned with group sex and fall within the conventions of group sex.

Considering the vast transformations at stake in the world today, with an economical system collapsing, the neoliberal regime on its way out and alternative epistemes (modes of knowledge and life) growing stronger, it appears impossible to engage in sexuality in the sense of solidifying or directional practices. Group sex, the shape-shifter, intensifies opportunities of eluding formations of measurable and finite entities, narratives and scenario, and will instead engage in the sexual practices understood as open-ended, non-directional, discontinuous, smooth and immeasurable. Sexuality as we know it in western society is organized around climax and hence necessarily finite, whereas the group sex with all its layers carries a promise, a promise of the everyday, the fleeting and lived. In other words, sex is always already guilty, whereas group sex and its activation-





al textures is a suspect, a suspect in the sense of suspending the accuracy or permanence of the law or language.

XVIII. One usually understands group sex events of the past by applying the conventions of the present, thus misunderstanding the group sex of the past.

Conventional sexual activity is fundamentally Aristotelian, just a step away from any action movie, the poetic elegance of Shakespeare where “uhhhh” is largely absent, or the control of the path in an IKEA store. Already in advance we know who’s gonna come out on top, as everybody knows sex is better before, just like cinema is best when the lady with the torch comes towards us. When Bruce Willis shows up on the screen it can only get worse, and I know my cum will not be double espresso sized, and she will only wake up the closest neighbor, never the whole house. Or why did we only fuck on the kitchen table during the first four, I mean two, months.

Sex, however we think we are so different and original, must, since it is analogous to these examples, be understood as capitalist expression. Success is measurable and the job description not more than: Come in time! Never to early, never not at all. Sex, with you and me, is formed on the anvil of post-fordism, and we have no choice but crescendo and after the good deed is done to lay back on the bed catching our breath. No, we have no choice, it’s mandatory for success, independent of whether we have read our J.L. Austin or not. This performativity is as normative as the tennis player making sounds when he hits the ball. We don’t need to but have to, and every time.

XX. Successful group sex changes our understanding of the conventions by altering our perceptions.

In June 2009 the international tennis federation considers changing the rules with respect to what sounds the players are allowed to produce. It is the young Portuguese player Michelle Larcher De Brito that has stirred turbulence. Not only is she loud. 109 dB has been measured which is 1 dB less than a chainsaw (the comparison made by the international press). Her sounds are also long, very long. A French journalist pondered if it is possible to experience 300 orgasms during a single tennis game, referring to the player saying: “Nobody can make me stop, this is me.” Long live authenticity and the petit mort of the tennis court.

The heterosexual one to one sexual encounter produces norms for all other sexual practices. Any other practice is an alternative, an instead-of or hybrid. Whether we want or not, as long as we are two we must be haunted by the heterosexual norm. Group sex does not question those norms and conventions (as long as sexual experimentation takes place in the domestic sphere, they are not dubious, obscene or perverse), but is instead not occupied with them. Group sex doesn’t need to subvert those norms; it is indifferent to them; it’s aims are simply not compatible with such critique.

XXII. Group sex cannot be imagined, and cannot be perceived until it is complete.

Group sex is about resolving notions of success, the measurability of sexual ability, criteria for “was it good for you...”—and indeed to change the world. How is group sex successful: not because I come, not because we all come, not even at the same time. Group sex issues another modality of success that requires other means of assessment: what is the name of those criteria? What matters is not the individual but the success or well-being of the assemblage, both as a plane of consistency and as a series of interdependent individuals whose only concern is the plane.

This implies that the individual can estimate different positions, different modes of activation, possibly changing during a single session in order to stimulate the plane, which in itself is a shifting and fluctuating entity. Conventional one-to-one sexual activity is measurable with respect to signs; group sex in contrast can only be evaluated with respect to productive intensity, some sort of volume whose composition, conditions and attributes continuously shift and therefore force the engaged to produce autonomous capacities for identification, coordination, classification.

XXV. Group sex may not necessarily understand its own expression. Its perception is neither better nor worse than others.

It is our responsibility, and opportunity, to take on such practices, which indeed is self-jeopardizing and a departure from consensual and universal notions of sexuality and its relationship to individuality and protocols for identity production, group sex thus being closer to engineering than consolidation. An engineering of abstraction defined as equipment, both tools and lure, linking material and semiotic elements, from non-discursive, un-namable, un-repeatable sets of entry-points, in order to construct political, economic and aesthetic devices where existential transformation can be tested.

XXVII. The concept of a group sex event may involve the matter of group sex or the process in which it is made.

Each individual case of group sex proposes a tangible threshold to, or forces us to think and create through, a “bad

will” as opposed to good will, which, however joyful and affirmative, will allow for consensual production.

Group sex’s initial ambition is to honor what forces us to escape good will, consensual thought, and instead insist on bad will, the fundamental concern of which is to examine the reliability of claim, in favor of an open speculative operability that empowers us to venture all the way along the question that gave power to oblige us to think: how can incoherence be produced where coherence rules. Group sex, in other words, is a matter of proposing one, or many other, sexualities, whose collective ambition is the invention of sexualities outside, or detached, from the organic.

Group sex implies that the participant has to give him/herself up. This production is not just concerned with the self but with one self as human. Group sex invites the participant to become non-human, a process which offers, or rather forces, the participant to invent new kinds of sexuality detached from heterosexual protocols, or from anthropomorphic sexuality in its entirety—an abstract sex independent of Oedipal pleasure, functioning instead through joy and affective contagion.

XXIX. The process of a group sex event is mechanical and should not be tampered with. It should run its course.

In neoliberal economies freedom is something one consumes; freedom has turned into a product in an economy based on cognition and knowledge. Manufacturing is past-tense, or somebody else will take care of it, and instead opportunities for transformation are produced. If capital has penetrated life into its core and equally holds maturity in the stocks for experience and transformation, economy has become one with life. We don’t need to consume anymore, life is the production of consumption, the production of the production of economy, it is a life economical, where the strive towards and the manifestation of freedom is equally a means of consumption and production. The freer I am the more attractive to current economical life, and this freedom has a color, direction, flavor, ecological profile and packaging.

XXX. There are many elements involved in a group sex event. The most important are the most obvious.

A new kind of urban individual has appeared over the last few years. In Stockholm they are known as DINKs: Double Income No Children, but perhaps they could also be called freedom suckers. They are the free people in our society and they would never—it is in fact incompatible with their notion of freedom—to engage in group sex, and I would argue that neoliberal life in general cannot engage in group sex since sexual contact is founded on the idea of minimal interventions / maximum revenue.

XXXI. If a group sex event uses the same form for a series of events, and changes the content, one would assume that the group sex event’s concept involved content.

I have a stone—a small one—and a yellow scarf sitting on my night table. When I can’t sleep I fantasize about the scarf and the stone having sex, making love or whatever it is called when stones and scarves engage in erotic pleasure. I’m slightly ashamed that it’s only the two of them. Are they also a couple? Maybe they are, maybe not, perhaps a scarf is already a multiple identity or perhaps stones share identities with other stones nearby. In any case it is good to have them because, you know, it’s pretty hard to imagine how stones and scarves make life beautiful, especially if you insist on avoiding to anthropomorphize either entity while letting them make love specifically.

XXXII. Banal group sex cannot be rescued by beautiful execution.

In Star Wars at some critical moment where the universe is just seconds from total implosion, Luke together with Han Solo arrives in a mobster-ridden space city to negotiate the future’s existence. The negotiation takes place in something that looks like a teepee, but is a nightclub. Han sits down with Scarface from a galaxy far far away while Luke hangs out in the bar. He turns around and there, in order to heighten the party atmosphere, George Lukas introduces a small group of aliens engaged in the rhythmical transposition of their bodies. They dance, or we think so. I like to imagine that it is not at all a dance, but what we are looking at is a city. A city with millions of inhabitants, they are just not using a city in the ways we are used to. Can those ways be explored? Can they be mapped without the assistance of Hollywood?

XXXIII. It is difficult to bungle a good group sex.

Group sex is epic, and it welcomes alienation effects. Isn’t it so that one-to-one sexuality is measured on the basis of keeping the illusion intact and active? Group sex does not follow cinematic protocols; it doesn’t support dramaturgy like a CD—with a strong beginning, middle and end. Group sex is more like downloading separate tracks and listening to them with iTunes on shuffle. No, group sex is not about sex; is it about practicing different kinds of coagulations of decision making, models that necessarily shift, considering that there can be no division between life and economy. Group sex plays the role of that which defies and can as a

result only be named negatively by power, communally in favor of neutralizing group sex as a weapon of subjection. Group sex contests what is known through established institutions and their forms of representation, and invents and imposes new rights, encouraging new relationships to time, wealth, democracy. Group sex can be brought back into the institutional conflict, which has already been standardized; or do we seize the opportunity to develop struggles for identities, modes of life and coordination still in the making?

Different modes of behavior and expression are represented in group sex, and as they spread, which they necessarily must, they produce skills or collective bodies of expertise. Those bodies, these skills, as soon as they are in operation, trigger, instead of a hoped-for climax and its aftermath, a proliferation of problems, desires and responses.

Group sex, as an alternative action of coordination, may extend to experimentation with political procedures, and in their play of production of expertise invent new ones which, however, also take thorough care to encourage the meeting of singularities, the arrangement being of different communities, lives and epistemologies.

XXXIV. When group sex learns its circumstances and conditions too well, it makes it slick group sex.

Group sex is not a vertical and hierarchical organization, nor is it a network based on models of patchwork that allows individuals and groups to operate in a more flexible and responsible way. It is yet a different organization which is modulating or amorphous on the level of form and structural consistency; i.e., it does not operate due to structure, discipline, and is not long term, but is instead organized due to flows and fluxes. It is a coagulation of decisions rather than a skeleton that simplifies decision-making.

XXXV. These sentences comment on group sex but are not group sex.

On the other hand, group sex is not an organism (it is not hierarchical) and is not a swarm—that would be too sad. It is not atomic, and it is not a multitude. It is, instead, not a metaphor, but it is a landscape—however, the metaphor does not continue. It is a landscape on the level of formation, but on the level of the individual it is strongly stabilized. On the level of expression the individual and the group must proceed very carefully, and there are even certain formal responsibilities to consider. Group sex transposes difference, from different in degree but not in kind to different in kind but not in degree.

On the level of expression, group sex is long-term, striated and non-dynamic. Group sex with respect to organization is changing direction—in this situation, it is not the organization that works for the individual, but the individual working for the organization. Group sex is not an organization but a coagulation without a center or skeleton. It is an abstract machine in relation to a particular set of behaviors forming an ethics through concrete rules.

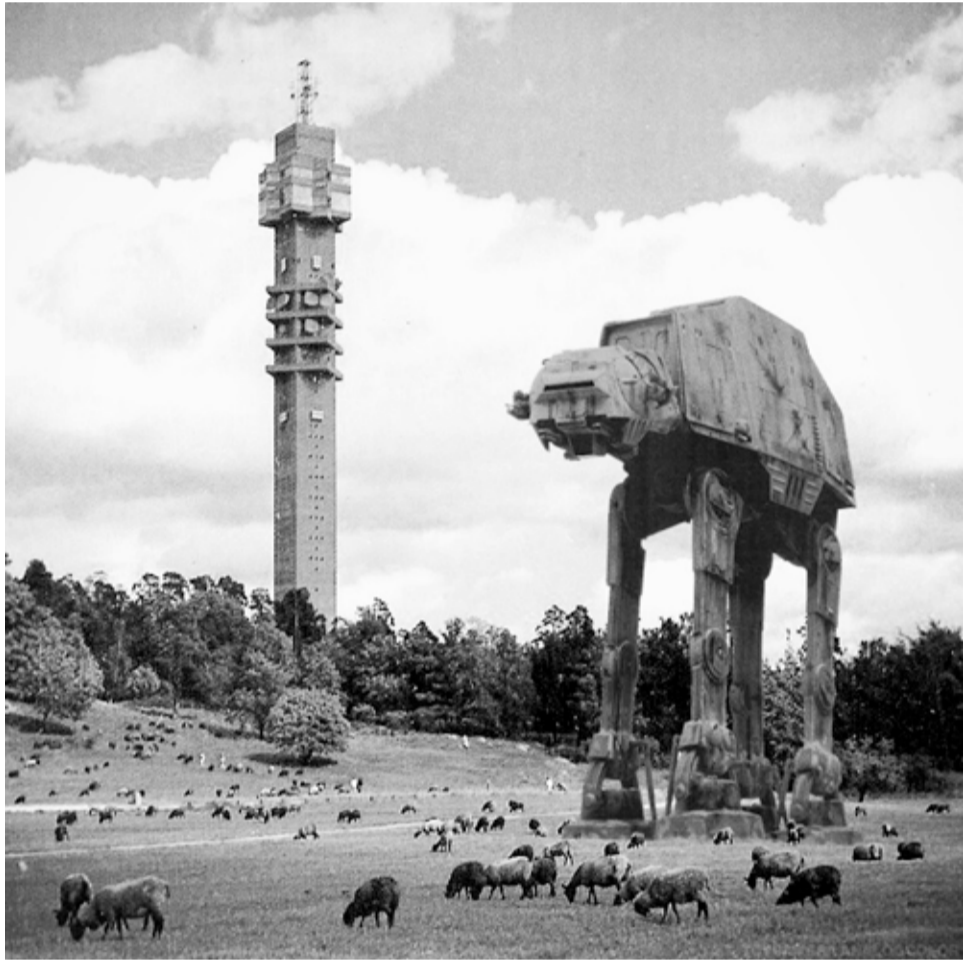
Group sex in this respect is not counterproductive to given and established politics. It does not oppose given systematics, but formulates a no to given modes of engagement. Group sex is not something else but an incompatible addition. Group sex does not arrest its position to be either pacified or to be given a position as outside which both would consolidate the given. Instead group sex functions as an irritation to the body of organization. It is a post-identitarian practice that carries the potentiality of a different life.

XXXVI. Better group sex, better life.



PROPOSALS FOR STOCKHOLM (LOVE)

Our cities are changing rapidly, corporate interests are no longer interests but predatory excitement working under notions more delusional than those of Le Corbusier. They don't call them warmachines, they don't even have names but they are out there and nobody seems to take responsibility outside profit paranoia and short-term political goals. The architect Tor Lindstrand has over a good year produced alternative, often ridiculous proposals for Stockholm based on historical records mixed with pure joy. Here an excerpt of those visions, visions that are not supposed to be realized but rather can function as concepts for how we project onto our future cities which ever city, the cities of our future future. Check it out and remember the future is not necessarily a modified what's already around but can also be something contingently other, really fucking different and not in the hands of a bunch of NL chiefs.





exist for him. An extraordinary characteristic proof of this is that Casanova (as may be seen from his memoirs), in the course of his erotic-adventurous life, every so often seriously intended to marry a woman with whom he was in love at the time. In the light of his temperament and conduct of life, we can imagine nothing more obviously impossible, internally and externally. Casanova not only had excellent knowledge of men but also rare knowledge of himself. Although he must have said to himself that he could not stand marriage even two weeks and that the most miserable consequences of such a step would be quite unavoidable, his perspective on the future was wholly obliterated in the rapture of the moment. (Saying this, I mean to put the emphasis on the moment rather than on the rapture.) Because he was entirely dominated by the feeling of the present, he wanted to enter into a future relationship which was impossible precisely because his temperament was oriented to the present.

In contrast to those aspects of life which are related only peripherally - by mere fate - the adventure is defined by its capacity, in spite of its being isolated and accidental, to have necessity and meaning. Something becomes an adventure only by virtue of two conditions: that it itself is a specific organization of some significant meaning with a beginning and an end; and that, despite its accidental nature, its extraterritoriality with respect to the continuity of life, it nevertheless connects with the character and identity of the bearer of that life - that it does so in the widest sense, transcending, by a mysterious necessity, life's more narrowly rational aspects.

At this point there emerges the relation between the adventurer and the gambler. The gambler, clearly, has abandoned himself to the meaninglessness of chance. In so far, however, as he counts on its favor and believes possible and realizes a life dependent on it, chance for him has become part of a context of meaning. The typical superstition of the gambler is nothing other than the tangible and isolated, and thus, of course, childish form of this profound and all-encompassing scheme of his life, according to which chance makes sense and contains some necessary meaning (even though not by the criterion of rational logic). In his superstition, he wants to draw chance into his teleological system by omens and magical aids, thus removing it from its inaccessible isolation and searching in it for a lawful order, no matter how fantastic the laws of such an order may be. The adventurer similarly lets the accident somehow be encompassed by the meaning which controls the consistent continuity of life, even though the accident lies outside that continuity. He achieves a central feeling of life which runs through the eccentricity of the adventure and produces a new, significant necessity of his life in the very width of the distance between its accidental, externally given content and the unifying core of existence from which meaning flows. There is in us an eternal process playing back and forth between chance and necessity, between the fragmentary materials given us from the outside and the consistent meaning of the life developed from within.

The great forms in which we shape the substance of life are the syntheses, antagonisms, or compromises between chance and necessity. Adventure is such a form. When the professional adventurer makes a system of life out of his life's lack of system, when out of his inner necessity, he only, so to speak, makes macroscopically visible that which is the essential form of every "adventure," even that of the non-adventurous person. For by adventure we always mean a third something, neither the sheer, abrupt event whose meaning - a mere given - simply remains outside us nor the consistent sequence of life in which every element supplements every other toward an inclusively integrated meaning. The adventure is no mere hodgepodge of these two, but rather that incomparable experience which can be interpreted only as a particular encompassing of the accidentally external by the internally necessary. Occasionally, however, this whole relationship is comprehended in a still more profound inner configuration. No matter how much the adventure seems to rest on a differentiation within life, life as a whole may be perceived as an adventure. For this, one need neither be an adventurer nor undergo many adventures. To have such a remarkable attitude toward life, one must sense above its totality a higher unity, a super-life, as it were, whose relation to life parallels the relation of the immediate life totality itself to those particular experiences which we call adventures.

Perhaps we belong to a metaphysical order, perhaps our soul lives a transcendent existence, such that our earthly, conscious life is only an isolated fragment as compared to the unnamable context of an existence running its course in it. The myth of the transmigration of souls may be a halting

attempt to express such a segmental character of every individual life. Whoever senses through all actual life a secret, timeless existence of the soul, which is connected with the realities of life only as from a distance, will perceive life in its given and limited wholeness as an adventure when compared to that transcendent and self-consistent fate. Certain religious moods seem to bring about such a perception. When our earthly career strikes us as a mere preliminary phase in the fulfillment of eternal destinies, when we have no home but merely a temporary asylum on earth, this obviously is only a particular variant of the general feeling that life as a whole is an adventure. It merely expresses the running together, in life, of the symptoms of adventure. It stands outside that proper meaning and steady course of existence to which it is yet tied by a fate and a secret symbolism. A fragmentary incident, it is yet like a work of art, enclosed by a beginning and an end. Like a dream, it gathers all passions into itself and yet, like a dream, is destined to be forgotten; like gaming, it contrasts with seriousness, yet, like the *va banque* of the gambler, it involves the alternative between the highest gain and destruction.

Thus the adventure is a particular form in which fundamental categories of life are synthesized. Another such synthesis it achieves is that between the categories of activity and passivity, between what we conquer and what is given to us. To be sure, their synthesis in the form of adventure makes their contrast perceptible to an extreme degree. In the adventure, on the one hand, we forcibly pull the world into ourselves. This becomes clear when we compare the adventure with the manner in which we wrest the gifts of the world through work. Work, so to speak, has an organic relation to the world. In a conscious fashion, it develops the world's forces and materials toward their culmination in the human purpose, whereas in adventure we have a non-organic relation to the world. Adventure has the gesture of the conqueror, the quick seizure of opportunity, regardless of whether the portion we carve out is harmonious or disharmonious with us, with the world, or with the relation between us and the world. On the other hand, however, in the adventure we abandon ourselves to the world with fewer defenses and reserves than in any other relation, for other relations are connected with the general run of our worldly life by more bridges, and thus defend us better against shocks and dangers through previously prepared avoidances and adjustments. In the adventure, the interweaving of activity and passivity which characterizes our life tightens these elements into a coexistence of conquest, which owes everything only to its own strength and presence of mind, and complete self-abandonment to the powers and accidents of the world, which can delight us, but in the same breath can also destroy us. Surely, it is among adventure's most wonderful and enticing charms that the unity toward which at every moment, by the very process of living, we bring together our activity and our passivity - the unity which even in a certain sense is life itself - accentuates its disparate elements most sharply, and precisely in this way makes itself the more deeply felt, as if they were only the two aspects of one and the same, mysteriously seamless life.

If the adventure, furthermore, strikes us as combining the elements of certainty and uncertainty in life, this is more than the view of the same fundamental relationship from a different angle. The certainty with which - justifiably or in error - we know the outcome, gives our activity one of its distinct qualities. If, on the contrary, we are uncertain whether we shall arrive at the point for which we have set out, if we know our ignorance of the outcome, then this means not only a quantitatively reduced certainty but an inwardly and outwardly unique practical conduct. The adventurer, in a word, treats the incalculable element in life in the way we ordinarily treat only what we think is by definition calculable. (For this reason, the philosopher is the adventurer of the spirit. He makes the hopeless, but not therefore meaningless, attempt to form into conceptual knowledge an attitude of the soul, its mood toward itself, the world, God. He treats this insoluble problem as if it were soluble.) When the outcome of our activity is made doubtful by the intermingling of unrecognizable elements of fate, we usually limit our commitment of force, hold open lines of retreat, and take each step only as if testing the ground. In the adventure, we proceed in the directly opposite fashion: it is just on the hovering chance, on fate, on the more-or-less that we risk all, burn our bridges, and step into the mist, as if the road will lead us on, no matter what. This is the typical fatalism of the adventurer. The obscurities of fate are certainly no more transparent to him than to others; but he proceeds as if they were. The characteristic daring with which he continually leaves the solidities of life underpins itself, as it were, for its own justification with a

feeling of security and "it-must-succeed," which normally only belongs to the transparency of calculable events. This is only a subjective aspect of the fatalistic conviction that we certainly cannot escape a fate which we do not know: the adventurer nevertheless believes that, as far as he himself is concerned, he is certain of this unknown and unknowable element in his life. For this reason, to the sober person adventurous conduct often seems insanity; for, in order to make sense, it appears to presuppose that the unknowable is known. The prince of Ligne said of Casanova, "He believes in nothing, except in what is least believable." Evidently, such belief is based on that perverse or at least "adventurous" relation between the certain and the uncertain, whose correlate, obviously, is the skepticism of the adventurer - that he "believes in nothing": for him to whom the unlikely is likely, the likely easily becomes unlikely. The adventurer relies to some extent on his own strength, but above all on his own luck; more properly, on a peculiarly undifferentiated unity of the two. Strength, of which he is certain, and luck, of which he is uncertain, subjectively combine into a sense of certainty.

If it is the nature of genius to possess an immediate relation to these secret unities which in experience and rational analysis fall apart into completely separate phenomena, the adventurer of genius lives, as if by mystic instinct, at the point where the course of the world and the individual fate have, so to speak, not yet been differentiated from one another. For this reason, he is said to have a "touch of genius." The "sleepwalking certainty" with which the adventurer leads his life becomes comprehensible in terms of that peculiar constellation whereby he considers that which is uncertain and incalculable to be the premises of his conduct, while others consider only the calculable. Unshakable even when it is shown to be denied by the facts of the case, this certainty proves how deeply that constellation is rooted in the life conditions of adventurous natures.

The adventure is a form of life which can be taken on by an undetermined number of experiences. Nevertheless, our definitions make it understandable that one of them, more than all others, tends to appear in this form: the erotic - so that our linguistic custom hardly lets us understand by "adventure" anything but an erotic one. The love affair, even if short-lived, is by no means always an adventure. The peculiar psychic qualities at whose meeting point the adventure is found must be added to this quantitative matter. The tendency of these qualities to enter such a conjuncture will become apparent step by step.

A love affair contains in clear association the two elements which the form of the adventure characteristically conjoins: conquering force and unextortable concession, winning by one's own abilities and dependence on the luck which something incalculable outside of ourselves bestows on us. A degree of balance between these forces, gained by virtue of his sense of their sharp differentiation, can, perhaps, be found only in the man. Perhaps for this reason, it is of compelling significance that, as a rule, a love affair is an "adventure" only for men; for women it usually falls into other categories. In novels of love, the activity of woman is typically permeated by the passivity which either nature of history has imparted to her character; on the other hand, her acceptance of happiness is at the same time a concession and a gift.

The two poles of conquest and grace (which manifest themselves in many variations) stand closer together in woman than in man. In man, they are, as a matter of fact, much more decisively separated. For this reason, in man their coincidence in the erotic experience stamps this experience quite ambiguously as an adventure. Man plays the courting, attacking, often violently grasping role: this fact makes one easily overlook the element of fate, the dependence on something which cannot be predetermined or compelled, that is contained in every erotic experience. This refers not only to dependence on the concession on the part of the other, but to something deeper. To be sure, every "love returned," too, is a gift which cannot be "earned," not even by any measure of love - because to love, demand and compensation are irrelevant; it belongs, in principle, in a category altogether different from a squaring of accounts - a point which suggest one of its analogies to the more profound religious relation. But over and above that which we receive from another as a free gift, there still lies in every happiness of love - like a profound, impersonal bearer of those personal elements - a favor of fate. We receive happiness not only from the other: the fact that we do receive it from him is a blessing of destiny, which is incalculable. In the proudest, most self-assured event in this sphere lies something which we must accept with humility. When the force which owes its success to itself and gives all conquest

of love some note of victory and triumph is then combined with the other note of favor by fate, the constellation of the adventure is, as it were, preformed.

The relation which connects the erotic content with the more general form of life as adventure is rooted in deeper ground. The adventure is the exclave of life, the "torn-off" whose beginning and end have no connection with the somehow unified stream of existence. And yet, as if hurdling this stream, it connects with the most recondite instincts and some ultimate intention of life as a whole - and this distinguishes it from the merely accidental episode, from that which only externally "happens" to us. Now, when a love affair is of short duration, it lives in precisely such a mixture of a merely tangential and yet central character. It may give our life only a momentary splendor, like the ray shed in an inside room by a light flitting by outside. Still, it satisfies a need, or is, in fact, only possible by virtue of a need which - whether it be considered as physical, psychic, or metaphysical - exists, as it were, timelessly in the foundation or center of our being. This need is related to the fleeting experience as our general longing for light is to that accidental and immediately disappearing brightness. The fact that love harbors the possibility of this double relation is reflected by the twofold temporal aspect of the erotic. It displays two standards of time: the momentarily climactic, abruptly subsiding passion; and the idea of

something which cannot pass, an idea in which the mystical destination of two souls for one another and for a higher unity finds a temporal expression. This duality might be compared with the double existence of intellectual contents: while they emerge only in the fleetingness of the psychic process, in the forever moving focus of consciousness, their logical meaning possesses timeless validity, an ideal significance which is completely independent of the instant of consciousness in which it becomes real for us. The phenomenon of adventure is such that its abrupt climax places its end into the perspective of its beginning. However, its connection with the center of life is such that it is to be distinguished from all merely accidental happenings. Thus "mortal danger," so to speak, lies in its very style. This phenomenon, therefore, is a form which by its time symbolism seems to be predetermined to receive the erotic content.

These analogies between love and adventure alone suggest that the adventure does not belong to the life-style of old age. The decisive point about this fact is that the adventure, in its specific nature and charm, is a form of experiencing. The content of the experience does not make an adventure. That one faced mortal danger or conquered a woman for a short span of happiness; that unknown factors with which one has waged a gamble have brought surprising gain or loss; that physically or psychologically disguised, one has ventured into spheres of life from which one returns home

as if from a strange world - none of these are necessarily adventure. They become adventure only by virtue of a certain experiential tension whereby their substance is realized. Only when a stream flowing between the minutest externalities of life and the central source of strength drags them into itself; when the peculiar color, ardor, and rhythm of the life-process become decisive and, as it were, transform its substance - only then does an event change from mere experience to adventure. Such a principle of accentuation, however, is alien to old age. In general, only youth knows this predominance of the process of life over its substance; whereas in old age, when the process begins to slow up and coagulate, substance becomes crucial; it then proceeds or perseveres in a certain timeless manner, indifferent to the tempo and passion of its being experienced. The old person, usually lives either in a wholly centralized fashion, peripheral interests having fallen off and being unconnected with his essential life and its inner necessity; or his center atrophies, and existence runs its course only in isolated petty details, accenting mere externals and accidentals. Neither case makes possible the relation between the outer fate and the inner springs of life in which the adventure consists; clearly, neither permits the perception of contrast characteristic of adventure, viz., that an action is completely torn out of the inclusive context of life and that simultaneously the whole strength and intensity of life stream into it.



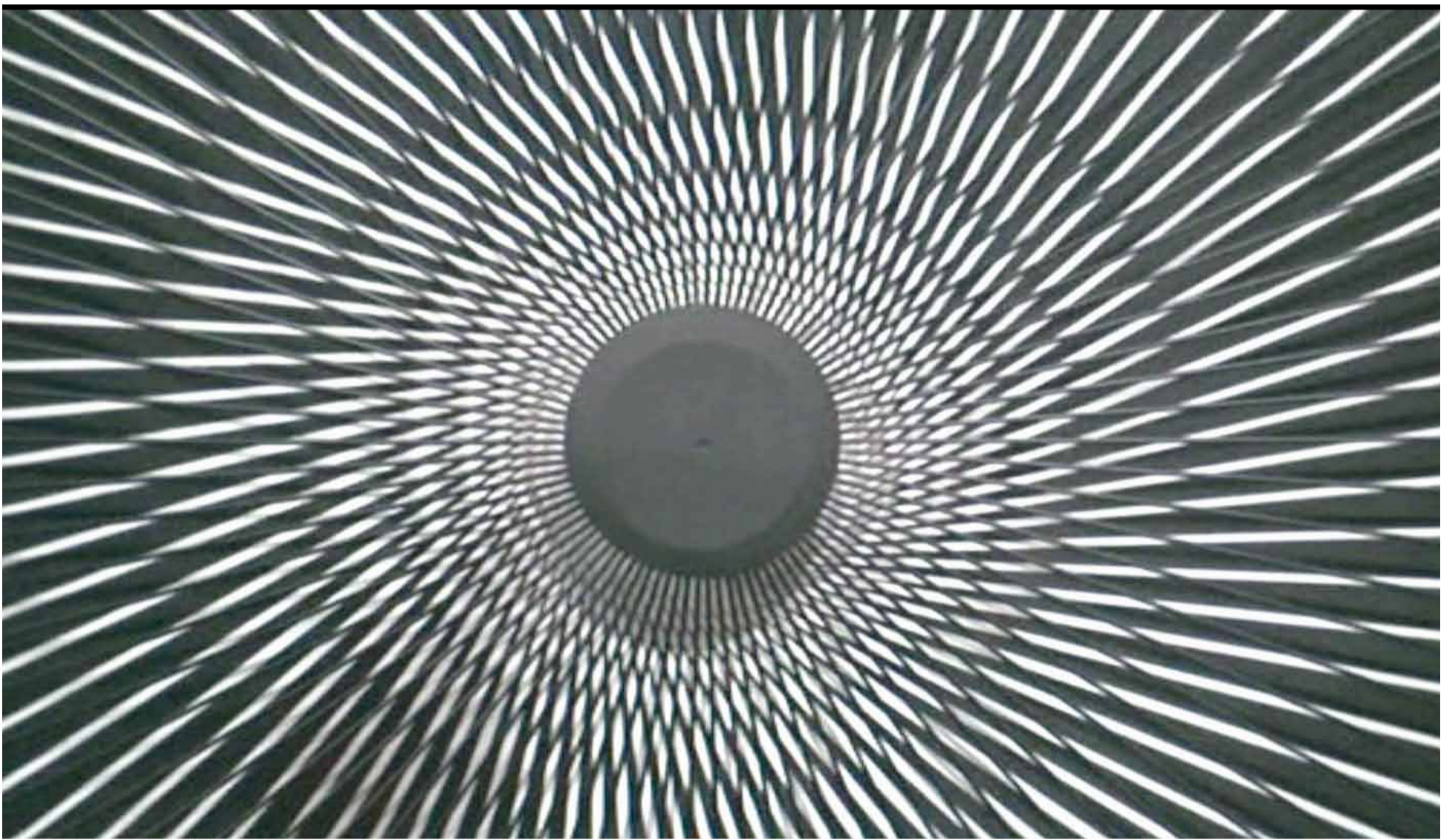
In youth, the accent falls on the process of life, on its rhythm and its antinomies; in old age, it falls on life's substance, compared to which experience more and more appears relatively incidental. This contrast between youth and age, which makes adventure the prerogative of youth, may be expressed as the contrast between the romantic and the historical spirit of life. Life in its immediacy - hence also in the individuality of its form at any moment, here and now - counts for the romantic attitude. Life in its immediacy feels the full strength of the current of life most of all in the pointedness of an experience that is torn out of the normal run of things but which is yet connected with the heart of life. All such life which thrusts itself out of life, such breadth of contrast among elements which are penetrated by life, can feed only on that overflow and exuberance of life which exists in adventure, in romanticism, and in youth. Age, on the other hand - if, as such, it has a characteristic, valuable, and coherent attitude - carries with it a historical mood. This mood may be broadened into a world view or limited to the immediately personal past; at any rate, in its objectivity and retrospective reflectiveness, it is devoted to contemplating a substance of life out of which immediacy has disappeared. All history as depiction in the narrower, scientific sense originates in such a survival of substance beyond the inexpressible process of its presence that can only be experienced. The connection this process has established among them is gone, and must now, in retrospect, and with a view to constructing an ideal image, be re-established by completely different ties.

With this shift of accent, all the dynamic premise of the adventure disappears. Its atmosphere, as suggested before, is absolute presentness - the sudden rearing of the life-process to a point where both past and future are irrelevant; it therefore gathers life within itself with an intensity compared with which the factuality of the event often becomes of relatively indifferent import. Just as the game itself - not the winning of money - is the decisive motive for the true gambler; just as for him, what is important is the violence of feeling as it alternates between joy and despair, the almost touchable nearness of the daemonic powers which decide between both - so, the fascination of the adventure is again and again not the substance which it offers us and which, if it were offered in another form of experiencing it, the intensity and excitement with which it lets us feel life in just this instance. This is what connects youth and adventure. What is called the subjectivity of youth is just this: The material of life in its substantive significance is not as important to youth as is the process which carries it, life itself. Old age is "objective"; it shapes a new structure out of the substance left behind in a peculiar sort of timelessness by the life which has slipped by. The new structure is that of contemplativeness, impartial judgment, freedom from that unrest which marks life as being present. It is all this that makes adventure alien to old age and an old adventurer an obnoxious or tasteless phenomenon. It would not be difficult to develop the whole essence of adventure from the fact that it is the form of life which in principle is inappropriate to old age.

Notwithstanding the fact that so much of life is hostile to adventure, from the most general point of view adventure appears admixed with all practical human existence. It seems to be an ubiquitous element, but it frequently occurs in the finest distribution, invisible to the naked eye, as it were, and concealed by other elements. This is true quite aside from that notion which, reaching down into the metaphysics of life, considers our existence on earth as a whole, unified adventure. Viewed purely from a concrete and psychological standpoint, every single experience contains a modicum of the characteristics which, if they grow beyond a certain point, bring it to the "threshold" of adventure. Here the most essential and profound of these characteristics is the singling out of the experience from the total context of life. In point of fact, the meaning of no single part of life is exhausted by its belonging in that context. On the contrary, even when a part is most closely interwoven with the whole, when it really appears to be completely absorbed by onflowing life, like an unaccented word in the course of a sentence - even then, when we listen more closely, we can recognize the intrinsic value of that segment of existence. With a significance which is centered in itself, it sets itself over against that total development to which, nevertheless, if looked at from another angle, it inextricably belongs.

Both the wealth and the perplexity of life flow countless times from this value-dichotomy of its contents. Seen from the center of the personality, every single experience is at





once something necessary which comes from the unity of the history of the ego, and something accidental, foreign to that unity, insurmountably walled off, and colored by a very deep-lying incomprehensibility, as if it stood somewhere in the void and gravitated toward nothing. Thus a shadow of what in its intensification and distinctness constitutes the adventure really hovers over every experience. Every experience, even as it is incorporated into the chain of life, is accompanied by a certain feeling of being enclosed between a beginning and an end - by a feeling of an almost unbearable pointedness of the single experience as such. This feeling may sink to imperceptibility, but it lies latent in every experience and rises from it - often to our own astonishment. It is impossible to identify any minimal distance from the continuity of life short of which the feeling of adventurousness could not emerge - as impossible, to be sure, as to identify the maximal distance where it must emerge for everyone. But everything could not become an adventure if the elements of adventure did not in some measure reside in everything, if they did not belong among the vital factors by virtue of which a happening is designated a human experience.

Similar observations apply to the relation between the accidental and the meaningful. In our every encounter this so much of the merely given, external, and occasional that we can, so to speak, decide only on a quantitative basis whether the whole may be considered as something rational and in some sense understandable, or whether its insolubility as regards its reference to the past, or its incalculability as regards its reference to the future, is to stamp its whole complexion. From the most secure civic undertak-

ing to the most irrational adventure there runs a continuous line of vital phenomena in which the comprehensible and the incomprehensible, that which can be coerced and that which is given by grace, the calculable and the accidental, mix in infinitely varied degrees. Since the adventure marks one extreme of this continuum, the other extreme must also partake of its character. The sliding of our existence over a scale on which every point is simultaneously determined by the effect of our strength and our abandonment to impenetrable things and powers - this problematic nature of our position in the world, which in its religious version results in the insoluble question of human freedom and divine predetermination, lets all of us become adventurers. Within the dimensions into which our station in life with its tasks, our aims, and our means place us, none of us could live one day if we did not treat that which is really incalculable as if it were calculable, if we did not entrust our own strength with what it still cannot achieve by itself but only by its enigmatic co-operation with the powers of fate.

The substance of our life is constantly seized by interweaving forms which thus bring about its unified whole. Everywhere there is artistic forming, religious comprehending, the shade of moral valuing, the interplay of subject and object. There is, perhaps, no point in this whole stream where every one of these and of many other modes of organization does not contribute at least a drop to its waves. But they become the pure structures which language names only when they rise out of that fragmentary and confused condition where the average life lets them emerge and submerge and so attain mastery over life's substance. Once the religious mood has created its structure, the god, wholly out of itself,

it is "religion"; once the aesthetic form has made its content something secondary, by which it lives a life of its own that listens only to itself, it becomes "art"; once moral duty is fulfilled simply because it is duty, no matter how changing the contents by means of which it is fulfilled and which previously in turn determined the will, it becomes "morality." It is no different with adventure. We are the adventurers of the earth; our life is crossed everywhere by the tensions which mark adventure. But only when these tensions have become so violent that they gain mastery over the material through which they realize themselves - only then does the "adventure" arise. For the adventure does not consist in a substance which is won or lost, enjoyed or endured: to all this we have access in other forms of life as well. Rather, it is the radicalness through which it becomes perceptible as a life tension, as the rubato of the life process, independent of its materials and their differences - the quantity of these tensions becoming great enough to tear life, beyond those materials, completely out of itself: this is what transforms mere experience into adventure. Certainly, it is only one segment of existence among others, but it belongs to those forms which, beyond the mere share they have in life and beyond all the accidental nature of their individual contents, have the mysterious power to make us feel for a moment the whole sum of life as their fulfillment and their vehicle, existing only for their realization.

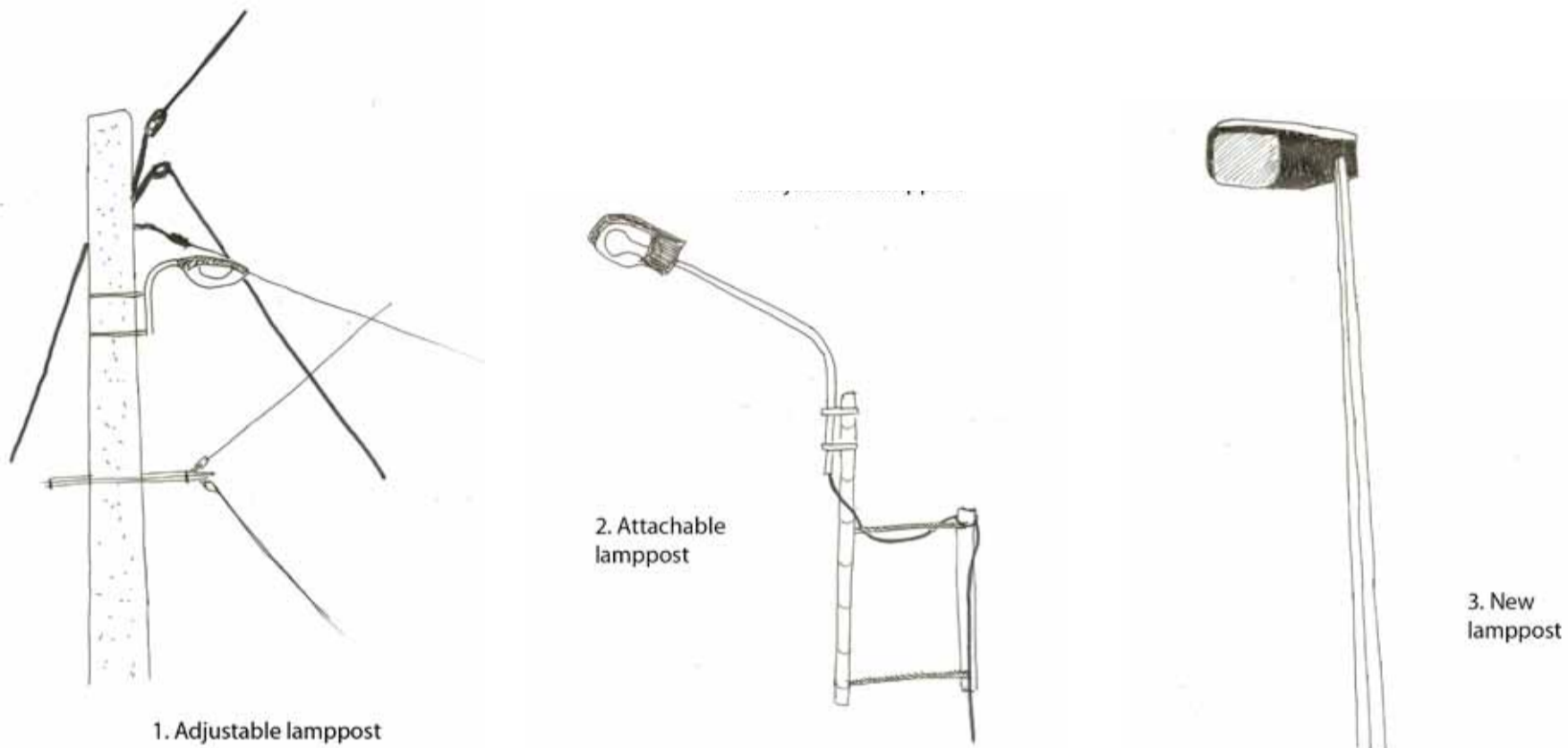
"Das Abenteuer," Phisosophische Kultur. Gesammelte Essays ([1911] 2nd ed.; Leipzig: Alfred Kroner, 1919)
Translated by David Kettler {dW:April 2002}



Ö3/DAS LEBEN IST EIN HIT

OUT OF CONTEXT #3 (LOVE) HORS CONTEXTE #3 (LOVE)

While in the beginning I was intrigued by the static condition of this environment, now I'm becoming more and more concerned with the micro dynamisms that the town is presenting.
By Aline and Rico



Several months after my arrival in Saint Erme-Outre-Ramecourt, my understanding of the place has enlarged. While in the beginning I was intrigued by the static condition of this environment, now I'm becoming more and more concerned with the micro dynamisms that the town is presenting.

At the moment, the village is going through a period of renewal to bring the current electrical system up-to-date. For this reason, the old electricity lines running on street posts are slowly buried underneath the sidewalks.

Last week, brand new lampposts popped into the street due to the imminent removal of the old street posts. Together with the electrical lines, the street lights and the phone lines all depended on those street posts which have now become redundant.

Walking in Saint Erme Ville, I notice the sidewalks' surface is not smooth and continuous. Indeed, it consists of two or sometimes three different materials. Step by step, as the cement, dirt and broken rocks alternate on the wavy road, my eyes focus on the double rows of lampposts, across the street, one after the other. Old versus new, I cannot quite decide which lampposts belong. Yet, I know that sooner or later one of them will go.

In considering such an ephemeral yet future-oriented condition, I am not concerned as much with the physical characteristics and specificities of the new lampposts, but I rather consider an anterior decision by the planners that has to do with the actual removal of the old street lights.

How come we could not find a way to adapt the old lampposts to the new needs and requirements of the local population – instead of simply replacing them? All the consideration about phone and electricity lines aside, what is expected of the lamppost?

Through various observations of street light systems in town, I realize that in their own time the communities that lived, worked and managed the 3 villages conceived a flexible street light system capable of adapting to its slowly changing surroundings. The diversity and multiplicity of the lampposts is not only a sign of a change in fabrication methods or industrial trends... The choices that the planners made in order to implement coherent light sources always consider a practical way to reach the most successful

and efficient light solution. We can appreciate the flexibility of the old system by taking a look at street lights attached directly onto houses (where the pavement is the narrowest, there is no possibility to properly install a post) allowing for the minimum space that a pedestrian needs to walk comfortably and safely.

I particularly noticed the striking difference in height between the old and the new lampposts. Considering the reduced height of the new ones, we can imagine that the planners have consulted local residents - or simply followed enforced regulations - and made an informed decision based on the quality of light and visibility performances that were expected by the population - creating a closer and sharper relationship between the light and the pedestrian. However, I believe we could have achieved similar results with the old system since the position of the lamp can be adjusted on the post itself. The possible height adjustment accommodated for the electrical and phone lines of different typologies of houses connected to the same post.

Nevertheless, with the new lampposts all of those considerations are lost. Even confronted to different street conditions, the same exact lampposts are used in many different ways as opposed to the previous system, which offered a range of lamp solutions responding to the heterogeneous environment. With the new system, a generic model prevails over specificity.

Overall, the houses, the streets, the infrastructures - everything you may see, has been added to the existing environment over and over. It is interesting to realise that the works to improve the streets have been in motion for about 8 months now. And this is over this period of time, which I was able to slowly see and comprehend the changes from one model to another.

This infrastructure has evolved thanks to subtle punctual alterations yet in the end, the general environment has changed very little since the middle of the 20th century. It seems as though the places have been kept in the past while the social habits, individual needs and people taking ownership over this environment have drastically changed.

For example, nowadays, everyone needs an Internet connection, a TV, a mobile phone, a car, a washing machine, a cooker – needs which were inexistent 60 years ago... Yet, the equipments and facilities here were not prepared for those technological needs. The old electrical boxes cannot support the combination of all those equipments, the wireless networks are limited, the houses insulation is not up to the legal standards... The context in which we live here is in discordance with the lifestyle, which is expected of us.

What I ask myself is both : is there a need to bring this environment into the present? Or even into the future? But also, in what present or future would we bring it into? I realize that people here depend on systems that have been imagined and designed for other environments and lifestyles. These new technologies in energy consumption, environment, or communication have been conceived for a specific marketplace and for people with different needs than those of the Saint-Ermois. By copy-pasting the model of a society onto another, do we provide for them a critically appropriate and viable environment that responds to the local socio-economical, cultural and technological needs? Thinking of the urban development overtime, in what ways can we insure that the environment constantly self-updates itself in order to avoid a discontinuation between an environment and its context?

In respect to the new lampposts for instance, we can already see that they will become obsolete in 2 to 3 years time – if they are not already... The improvements the local authorities are providing to the town (by introducing new electrical, energetic and digital equipments) are not taking into account current technological improvements but operate with standards that only patch up the local infrastructures' fall behind – limiting the residents to outdated infrastructures instead of imagining new contextualised forward-thinking systems. I believe that to imagine the future of Saint-Erme-Outre-Ramecourt we have to consider present Saint-Erme and Saint-Ermois to be able to speculate on behavioural and technological trends and then adapt the urban development to local needs rather than applying out-of-context models or systems found elsewhere.

ABOLISH THE GRAND ASSEMBLY (LOVE)

Be armed. But do everything possible to make the use of weapons superfluous. Expect nothing from organizations. Defy all the existing milieus, and above all, refuse to become one. Sabotage all representation. Generalize arguments. Abolish the general assemblies.

"I AM WHAT I AM." That's marketing's final offering to the world, the final stage of advertising's evolution, beyond, far beyond, all the exhortations to be different, to be yourself, and drink Pepsi. It took decades of concepts to get there, to that pure tautology, to "I = I." He's running on a treadmill in front of the mirror in his gym... she's coming back from work, flying down the road in her Smart car. Will they meet?

"I AM WHAT I AM." My body belongs to me. I am me, you are you, and it's not going too well. Mass personalization. Individualization of all conditions – of life, work, misery. Diffuse schizophrenia. Rampant depression. Atomization into fine paranoiac particles. Hysterics upon contact. The more I want to be Me, the more I feel an emptiness. The more I express myself the more I dry up. The more I run after it, the more tired out I get. I hang onto it, you hang onto it; we cling to our "I" like a tedious bureaucratic window-job. We've become our own representatives in a strange commerce, guarantors of a personalization that in the end looks a lot like an amputation. We insure ourselves all the way to bankruptcy, with a more or less disguised clumsiness. While I wait, I manage. The quest for a self; my blog, my apartment, the latest fashionable idiocy, couples' stories, getting ass... all kinds of prosthetic limbs to hang onto an "I" with! And if "society" hadn't become such a definitive abstraction, then it would just be all these existential crutches offered me to let me drag myself along a little more, the ensemble of dependencies that I've contracted, for the price of my identity. The handicapped person is the model citizen of tomorrow. It's not without foresight that the associations that exploit them today demand a "subsistence income" for them. The injunction everywhere to "be someone" maintains the pathological state that makes this society necessary. The injunction to be strong produces the very weakness it maintains itself on, to such a point that everything seems to take on a therapeutic aspect, even working or love. All the times we ask "how's it going?" all day long – like a society full of patients, taking each other's temperature. Sociability is now made up of a thousand little niches, a thousand little refuges where you can come in to keep warm. And it's always better there than in the bitter cold outside.

Where everything's false, since it's all just a pretext for getting heated up. Where nothing can happen since we're all too busy deaffly shivering together. This society will soon only be held together by the mere tension of all the social atoms straining towards an illusory healing. It's a power station that drives its turbines on a gigantic reservoir of dammed up tears that is always about to spill over.

"I AM WHAT I AM." Never has domination found a more above-suspicion slogan. The maintenance of an "I" that's in a permanent state of semi-disrepair, in a chronic state of semi-failure, is the best kept secret of the present order of things. The weak, depressed, self-critical, virtual "I" is essentially the indefinitely adaptable subject that requires a production based on innovation, the accelerated obsolescence of technologies, the constant upheaval of social norms, and generalized flexibility. At the same time the most voracious consumer, and, paradoxically, the most productive "I," it will throw itself with the most energy and avidity into the slightest project, only to come back later to the embryonic state it started from.

"WHAT AM I," then? Washed since childhood in the waves: milk, smells, stories, sounds, emotions, nursery rhymes, substances, gestures, ideas, impressions, looks, songs, and foods. What am I? I'm totally tied to places, sufferings, ancestors, friends, loves, events, languages, memories, all kinds of things that obviously are not me. Everything that attaches me to the world, all the links that

comprise me, all the forces that populate me – they don't weave an identity, though I am encouraged to wield one, but an existence: singular, common, living, and from which emerges - in places, at certain moments - that being that says "I." Our feeling of inconsistency is only the effect of this foolish belief in the permanence of the "I," and the very slight concern we give to what makes us.

It's dizzying to see Reebok's "I AM WHAT I AM" enthroned atop a Shanghai skyscraper. The West is advancing everywhere, with its favorite Trojan horse: the murderous antimony between the "I" and the world, the individual and the group, between attachment and freedom. Freedom isn't the gesture of liberation from attachments, but the practical capacity to operate upon them, to move around in them, to establish or cut them off. The family only exists as a family, that is, as hell, for those who have renounced the project of altering its debilitating mechanisms, or don't know how. The freedom to tear oneself out has always been the mere phantom of liberty. We won't get free of what's holding us back without losing at the same time that which our strength could be exercised on.

"I AM WHAT I AM," then, is not just a simple lie, a simple advertising campaign, but a military campaign, a war-cry directed against everything there is between people, against everything that circulates indistinctly, everything that ties them invisibly together, everything that puts an obstacle in the way of perfect desolation, against everything that makes it so we exist and the world doesn't just look like one big highway everywhere, an amusement park or one of the new cities: pure boredom; passionless, but well-ordered; empty, frozen space where nothing moves besides the duly registered bodies, the automobile molecules and the ideal commodities. France couldn't be the fatherland of anxiety-pills, the anti-depressant paradise, the Mecca of neurosis that it is if it weren't for its simultaneously being the European champion of hourly productivity. Sickness, fatigue, depression, can be seen as the individual symptoms of a bigger disease that needs to be cured. They contribute to the maintenance of the existing order, to my docile adjustment to idiotic conventions and norms, my adjustment to my modernized crutches. They are the thin veil on my weak, depressed, self-critical, virtual "I" is essentially the indefinitely adaptable subject that requires a production based on innovation, the accelerated obsolescence of technologies, the constant upheaval of social norms, and generalized flexibility. At the same time the most voracious consumer, and, paradoxically, the most productive "I," it will throw itself with the most energy and avidity into the slightest project, only to come back later to the embryonic state it started from.

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We aren't depressed; we're on strike. For those who refuse to manage themselves, "depression" is not a state, but a passage, a good bye, a step to the side towards a political disaffiliation. And from then on there's no possible reconciliation besides medications and the police. Indeed, that's why this society has no fear of imposing Ritalin so much on its too-lively children or of fixing people into life-long dependency on pharmaceuticals, and claims to be able to detect "behavioral troubles" at three years of age: because the hypothesis of the "I" is cracking everywhere.

From The Coming Insurrection
