

# A Whisper from Nowhere

*Previously published as Ein Flüstern aus dem Nirgendwo on the wwweb, May 2020*

Dear friends and comrades,

I've had the idea of contacting you again for a very long time. No matter where I was, no matter what was going on, no matter what adversity or beautiful experiences I encountered outside of physical prison - I always felt the urge to let you be part of it. You are an indispensable part of my life that has taken roots deep in my heart.

But every time I sat down in front of the blank sheet of paper, my ability slipped away to write. To tell. Each time I fell silent and felt sad. How can words really convey what I feel? My mind tormented me with this question whenever I sat at my desk and stared at the empty white in front of me. And while I was struggling for letters, the world at once spun faster and then suddenly stopped. If someone had seriously tried to convince me at the beginning of February of this year that the virus in Wuhan, China, would put half the world under a glass dome within a few weeks, I would have laughed and shook my head. But here we are, in the midst of an authoritarian process of radically reshaping the status quo.

*Back to the old normal!*, complain the reactionary nostalgics. Always interested in saving their own ass and then locking the door again as quickly as possible.

*Forward to the new normal!*, preach the liberal cybernetics. Bright helpers of the state, always driven by good intentions ...

And what do the rulers do? They are at odds, united, hesitant, determined, totalitarian, reasonable, scientific, religious ... the range is endless and yet always describes only the same

thing - they act according to the maxim of maintaining power. Always and exclusively.

The question "old" or "new", or in other words; the question of how we want to be managed and kept in check is not the question that should interest individuals seeking self-determination. How we oppose the dictates of laws and morals, sabotage it with thoughts and dynamite and thus open a space for new things - this is music to the ears that are looking for the earth beneath the asphalt.

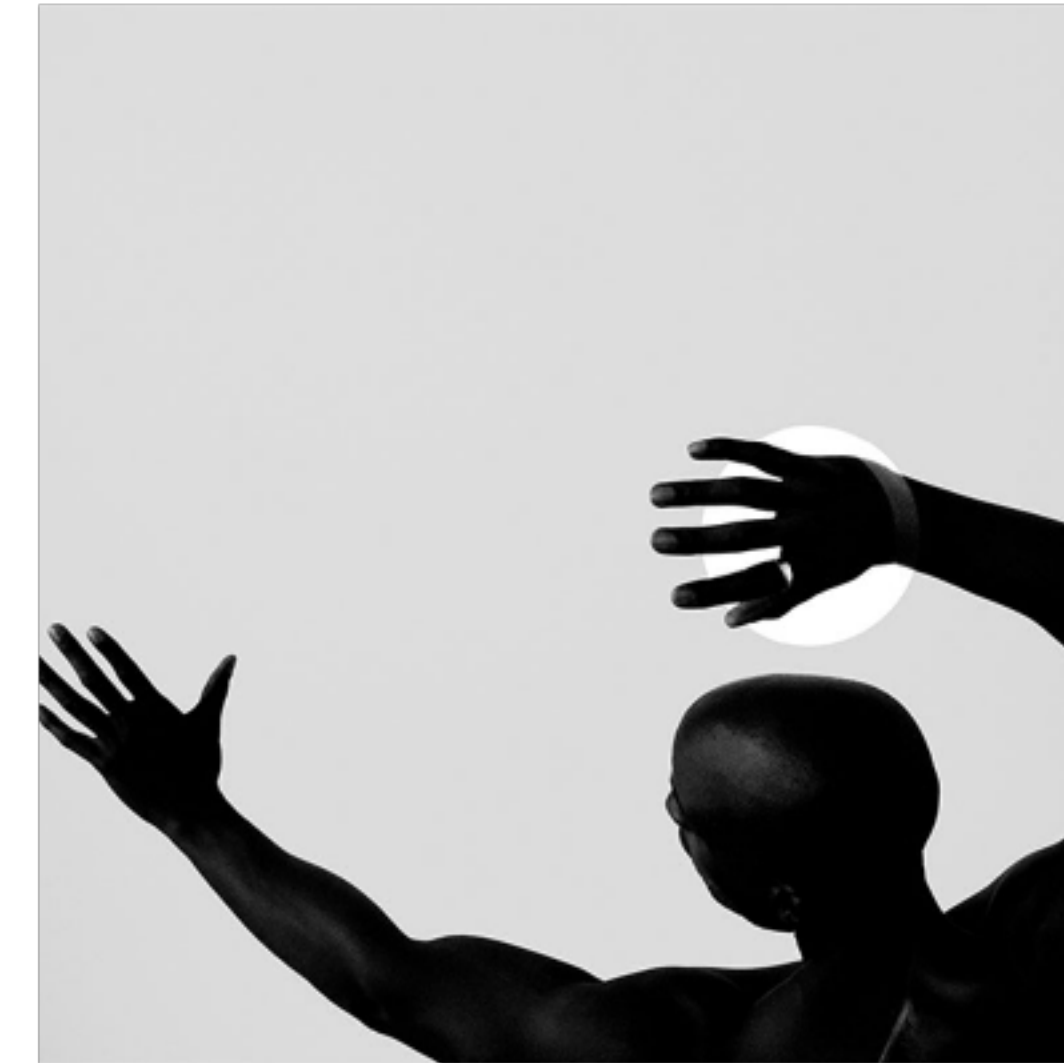
I have been on the run for almost 4 years now, which prevents me from discussing these explosive questions with you, setting up theses with you and rejecting them again, working out approaches with you and testing them with my whole heart. Of course that saddens me. Because such a shared discussion would mean that I can see, hear, smell and feel you. And you can't imagine how much I miss this immediacy - how much I miss you all!

But hey, I'm not with you, but next to you - moving quietly on a path nowhere, from which I wave to you and whisper the warmest words of greeting. Let's not allow the passing time to force itself between us and to gradually fade out our shared experiences and adventures.

I am glad that, thanks to you, I have found my beloved words and the joy of storytelling again, you are wonderful.

We'll talk again.

In solidarity and freedom-loving affinity,  
Your friend and comrade from nowhere



## War on Patriarchy On Irregularity: between Analysis and Desire The Attack on Our Senses About Madness Capitalist Hypocrisy Sketches of a Critique of Lockdown It Has to Come Out A Whisper from Nowhere



**Autumn 2020  
Issue 6**

A compilation of texts, a contribution to  
a correspondence between those who  
desire anarchy and subversion

The last months we saw different shades of curfew being imposed throughout the world. Apparently in this highly developed society (in the sense of the multiplication of institutions and technologies that penetrate every aspect of life) a pandemic can only be dealt with through the most blunt weapon of repression. To come together, to see eye-to-eye, is branded irresponsible and forcibly disbanded, with a glaring exception for profit-making, exploitative relations. Physical intimacy and tenderness suddenly become something threatening with deadly consequences. Meetings and physical contact are declared to be something abnormal and forbidden. Don't kiss, don't hug, don't touch. Yes but touch the screens. The physical is banned from our real world and replaced by the virtual. The situation serves as an ideal opportunity to push ahead the total digitalization of all aspects of life. This is the definition of this society of a human life; work and consume, preferably without leaving the confinements of the home and permanently accompanied by a fear of potential infection which puts one in a constant state of anxiety.

Levels of fear went through the roof not only because of the unknown risks of a potentially deadly virus, but also because of the violence unleashed against perceived potential transmitters. Everyone who doesn't display the good behaviour of the responsible citizen, is deemed suspect. The understanding of solidarity and responsibility was deformed and equated with obedience and trust in the state. Though not everyone went along with this narrative, the streets and squares did empty. Interaction moved to the internet, a space inherently linked to surveillance (data gathering) and shaped by unknown or misunderstood parameters (algorithms). Some might accept this (self-)imposed separation and isolation, others are starting to doubt if they want to live a life devoid of encounters that are not ruled by capitalist logic. The flow of goods will continue, the economy will be kept alive, the transfer of all aspects of life to the digital will be guaranteed. Thus creating an unstable construct of infrastructure where mobile phone antennas, fibre optic cables and the supply by trucks, trains etc. are more and more important. Could this mean possibilities to sabotage their apparent security at their sensitive points? By experimenting with these possibilities, can we perhaps feel, sense and touch life a little more?





### Management of the unregulated

Well, in the end, the “Crisis” is neither economic, nor climatic, nor nuclear, nor even terrorist. No, it is “sanitary”. “We are at war” against a virus. Looks like the apocalypse has gotten a new mask in its collection. Surprise! The old idea of The Great End is right under our noses again. Somehow it’s even a bit reassuring, because it’s still one of the foundations of our civilization. We’re back to the traditions, the last judgment all that, and the genesis too. In short, a nice straight line, a beginning, an end, and an immense perpetual progress on the way, the History, the Past, the Future. And it allows us to say to ourselves that, in any case, it is going to collapse by itself, God willing, and that all we would have to do is wait while eating a cone with chocolate ice-cream.

In the meantime, our daily discussions are populated by The Crisis and its newspeak, which describes the extreme narrowing of our horizons, geographical, social, emotional, temporal. At the same time, we lose our grip through the contradictory injunctions to think of ourselves on the giant and distant scales of a “planet”, a “nation”, a future of a “humanity”. Shit, after all, we can say that we are out of our depth, can’t we? Already we don’t know how to deal well with what is at hand?

“Barrier gestures” transform simple logical precautions into supposedly impassable ramparts against the outside world. The old fear of the

Other was already well-nourished by piles of nationalist, racist, identitarian shit. Now here is “social distancing” which puts everyone in the dangerous category, even without intention or sign of hostility. But fortunately, the hydro-magic gel makes the dirt clean in one push. Plus it’s fun for children, and sanitizing everything is promising of a future market for immune disasters.

Then there is the next phase, the “deconfinement”, which they have been careful to call by a new name, between the reassuring of the end of one thing and the worrying of the unknown of the next. It’s fuzzy enough to keep us in doubt about what’s next, and it’s probably quite handy to manage without too many reactions. Deconfinement is therefore accompanied, unsurprisingly, by the maintenance of a state of health emergency. In parallel with new rules and repressive devices, we are entitled to a kind of weekly national mass, like a new weather forecast of red and green zones, which are the places where we live (it already looks like a mutation of the orange weather alert, crossed with the nuclear accident protocol that was waiting for its time in the boxes, isn’t it?).

As a lot of grafters, nomads, make-doers, trespassers, misfits, tinkers, and other rascals, my horizon is quite reduced, with navigation at limited sight in the fog of changing restrictions at short notice. If I wasn’t distrustful by experience, I would probably say that our dear managers are doing a difficult job, for our own good. But the idea comes to my mind that their question is perhaps not so much about good or bad management as about keeping their function as managers, among those who generally rather profit from the capitalist system.



## Criminality within reach; towards a different relation with illegality?

Walking around in a park, accidentally on the first day it reopened, it made me feel super weird to pass openly through the front gate, as if something was missing, something that after almost two months of confinement had become a habit: a daily practice of illegality. Fortunately, I quickly found, in the company of my friend, a forbidden door to push that allowed me to fill the lack. This is where it seemed to me that, in times of confinement, of excessive control and repression, due to the fact that most of our actions, our needs, our desires had become outside the law, crime could, more than ever, appear as self-evident, a way out, a means to reconnect with oneself, to regain one's autonomy, to breathe.

Moreover, and paradoxically, it seemed that for some, the sheer amount of prohibitions made "crime" more accessible, the barrier easier to jump over. To be in fact breaking the law when you are walking for more than an hour or more than a kilometre from home, to be a criminal when you cross the street without a certificate or when you hang out with a friend outside less than a metre away, seems profoundly absurd; so much so that it tends to create a new context in which illegality can potentially be taken for granted, more easily experienced, and finally, as a daily practice being an integral part of this life.

And so it was that within a few weeks, while the state boasted of being able to declare falling crime rates all over the country, new delinquency, new practices outside the law, infinite and innumerable, diffuse and incalculable, exploded everywhere, as the expression of a new closeness to crime.

The complicity in crime also became more obvious, more recognisable: to meet people walking in a park in broad daylight, to glimpse here with a smile groups standing in a dead-end street without a camera, there people carrying full bags at dubious hours lol, to share in passing little "tricks" or an itinerary to get around avoiding running into a roadblock of cops, to ex-

change amused glances with strangers doing forbidden things, in a forbidden place at a forbidden time.

Far from saying that all these people, in the facts outside the law, were my accomplices, it still made me very happy to see, in times of confinement and repressive mania, the apparent multiplication and diffusion of outlawed practices, of criminal intentions.

At a time of a so-called "deconfinement" or a "phase 2" of confinement, it seems important to me to keep in mind this small movement on the slider, to keep fresh the memory of the multiplication of these moments of transgression, to take care of these new relations with crime, in order to be more at ease, more confident, and why not dare to imagine more in our moments of mistrust towards and against the state, its machinery and its supporters.

*"This culture has branded us as criminals, and of course, in turn, we have dedicated our lives to crime."*

MNG.



# War on Patriarchy

*Previously published as Guerre au Patriarcat in Spigaou (Revue anarchiste aperiodique), Issue 1, May 2020*

The question of domination is central to anarchist reflections. Certain specific issues such as gender-related violence are thus regularly addressed. For some, the issue is incidental, for others it is essential (because it affects different aspects of our lives in a comprehensive manner).

Gender and sexuality related oppressions are nowadays still so established that it is impossible to think about them without trying to name them. And I don't see how to fight around this issue without analyzing the social relationships, different positions and power struggles that stem from us. Many have things to lose by moving the lines (even if only a certain intellectual comfort). It is thus very difficult to discuss without provoking defensive reactions, or without bad faith, or without being called upon to respond to caricatures (which also exist in so many other situations and struggles: power feuds, dogmatism, manipulations, conflicts of egos and so on ...) put forward to ridicule a fight that is nevertheless attacking certain dynamics and their particularly recurrent, harmful and sometimes dramatic effects.

Sometimes, people who develop meticulous reflections on a lot of subjects, end up finding easy (and awful) answers to a difficult subject, such as: "All you had to do was put your fist in his face!" brushing aside the complexity of situations and relationships, such as the mechanisms of subjugation, of shock, shame, paralysis, denial, dependency or emotional need and more. Some out of ease, stupidity, others out of pettiness, or to reaffirm one's superiority (and

one's so-called physical or mental strength). For me strength lies elsewhere. Among others, in tackling uncomfortable subjects, putting oneself in danger, addressing harmful situations, calling into question your status and certainties, or even certain friendships.

To speak openly about patriarchy in a world and in a "milieu" where the culture of the "hard-boiled" is very present, entails a risk of not being taken seriously or of repeating certain roles, such as that of the mediator or the nurse. I would prefer that in many instances certain people would confront their mates directly on their attitudes; but this is something we see too little of, partly because of a certain fear of conflict, of losing one's position but also because this issue remains (sadly) of secondary importance for many. It is, however, in my opinion, an inevitable passage if one sincerely seeks to be as coherent as possible in ideas that we value and practices ...

The issue of gender-based violence and gender dynamics is inherent to a system based on hierarchy and competition, subordination of others and coercion. This implies to fight against many representations but also to attack a world in its entirety. It is not enough to simply wanting to defect to get rid of a certain number of conditionings. These are set up through mechanisms that are more often underhanded than obvious and considerably impact the quality of our relations. Hence there is sometimes the need to break with these relationships to better know what to do next and how.



When we talk about individuals we often forget that they exist “in all their complexity”. It is not my body, my sexuality or my “identity” (whatever it may be) that makes me into what I am but my history, my desires, my choices and the perspectives that flow from them. Thus I cannot be defined by a single word or adjective. This is also why I want that no part of me is denied. I don’t want to deny this reality because it is also the anger that comes out of it that built me up. I don’t want it to be annihilated by erasing my history, my experiences (good or bad) and my background.

*“Imposing a gender on us, an identity even, can only stifle us at best and destroy us at worst. Attempting to define us will always fail. No category can fully contain us; any identity will necessarily restrain, and so we must oppose identity. However, we’d be foolish to deny the material consequences of the myths of identity – these myths are, after all, amongst the foundations of oppression. Anyone who is told they are a woman will be treated “like a woman,” despite the fact that women share nothing other than the myth of womanhood and the societal violence that accompanies this myth.”*

nila nokizaru, *Against Gender, Against Society*,  
in *Lies Journal II*

Words and symbols are incapable of representing the complexity of life. I cannot be summarized by an identity. However, it is often necessary to find ways (not necessarily formal) to do so in order to be able to put a lived experience into words. Nevertheless, it remains important for me to say and do things with my own words and my own self, and not with a vocabulary imposed on me, by force or by law, or by any other social conditioning. I don’t want to support new norms. This is also why often the collective dimension, the pre-established rules crush me, because I smell too often a whiff of old authoritarianism in it. Freedom cannot arise in the shadow of norms and codes (even social ones). By systematizing methods, there is a risk of setting new standards, which risk in turn to establish a new power relationship. If we want to exist as we are, we must make ourselves elusive.

Domination exists in all spheres of society; the suffering and the experience of oppression are not in themselves synonymous with virtue, even if they can provoke shared anger. In fact, to experience and/or reveal oppression (more or less visible) should in no way penalize, nor enhance, nor create an ad hoc social status or role for that person. It is precisely the wish of this society to confine everyone to a status, which would relieve us of all responsibility and would erase any singularity. But this question deserves to be approached with a minimum of finesse and consideration, taking into account the limits and desires of each person, without entering into the logic of idealizing a “subject” or a “acting-together” devoid of meaning. In some cases, oppression leads to inhibition, inaction or reaction, sometimes it inevitably pushes towards rupture, explosion and revolt. It is precisely this which makes the unpredictable character of the human being, because we cannot assume any presupposition as to human “nature” (hence the obsolescence of the term) and its destination. Our life history and our sufferings do not necessarily enclose us, we can always look for margins of choice and decision.

Voltaire de Cleyre opposes the accepted formula of modern materialism *Men are what circumstances make them*, with this proposition: *Circumstances are what men make them*. This is in order to get out of a deterministic reflection about circumstances, maintaining a feeling of powerlessness. On the contrary, the latter puts the individuals forward, as active agents at



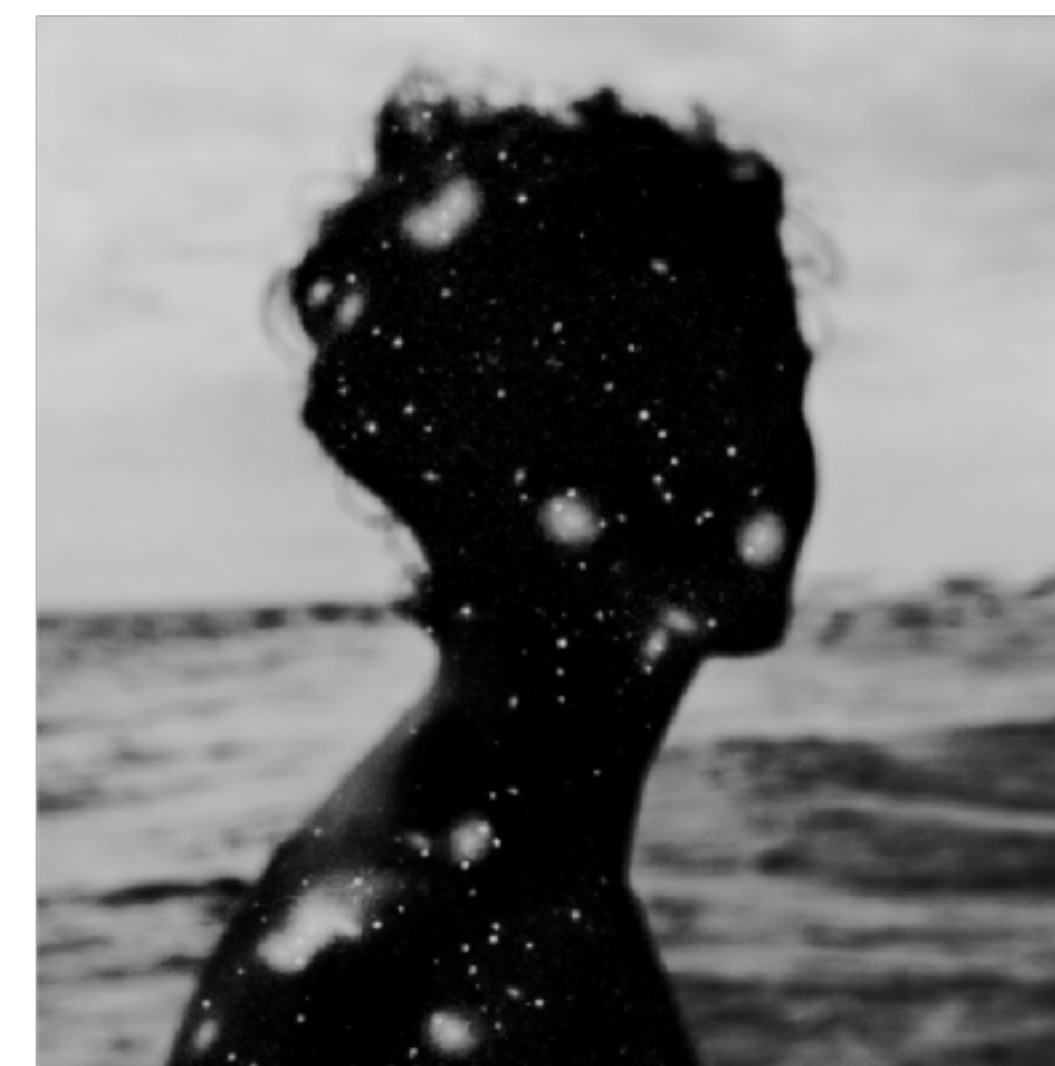
# It Has to Come Out

*Previously published as separate texts in Faut qu’ça sorte !, brochure, May 2020*

## Binary Misery

With this virus and its management, I saw a haze of fear descending suddenly and contaminating everything. I searched where mine was, to look it in the face, to distinguish it among the self-evident and the commotion, and to better understand that of others.

First of all, I wasn’t afraid of the virus. I saw it as an unknown among others, one that arrives and belongs to the world of scientific experts and all other categories of managers, politicians, economists and cops. I was not afraid of being exposed to the disease, nor of the death that roams around. I didn’t hope to avoid it, I was sick, it was annoying and long. I am actually quite confident in my immune system and I felt able to be careful for other people’s relationships and needs, without believing in the idea of “zero risk”. I did had to fight against my fear of the cops, of their “carte blanche”, of the fines that add to the daily misery of so many people, of the prison sentences even. In short, of the repression and control that are only getting stronger, with all the “fragile” people by other criteria who are even more ignored than usual.



All around, these two particular fears were the most visible, and difficult to disentangle. They created a powerful shock and complicated reflection, by confusing or opposing each other in clichés. As if choosing to take precautions was to submit, or to rebel was murderous. It concealed the many other reasons and ways of reacting. Whether it is fear of social judgment and stigmatisation if you don’t appear at the window for the holy ceremony of applause, or if you are often seen outside to find something to survive, or because you don’t have a home, or because you don’t want to go crazy inside, or on the contrary, because you needed to stay inside out of fear of going out in the nightmare of the outside.

The government measures have also created two false categories of people, those who respect them and those who refuse them. It all seems far too binary and simplistic to me. No, not all the “fragile” ones were “freaked out”. Not all the “disobedient” were “able-bodied”. Not all the “responsible and caring” people were “good confined citizens”. Not all the “confined” had the same privileges to do so. Neither did all the “rebels”...

And “deconfinement” brings new questions. Why are people going out now? What has changed? Is it suddenly less dangerous, or are the police, or the neighbours? I want to look for complexity, and others to share it with. That we don’t tell ourselves that there is only one right way to deal with this kind of “sanitary putsch”, and on this scale. But neither should we tell ourselves anything other than the real choices we made during this period. That we assume strengths and weaknesses, both individual and collective, and that we try to find out how to deal with what comes afterwards, which is likely to be worse.



use the tool as it has made it easy to unconditionally rule our lives. And that, even power had to doubt it before this year. But maybe we won't need to wait for a new virus for the logic of confinement, whatever form it takes, to become part of our daily lives.

Let us remember the emergence of the yellow vests, this "profound and sudden movement of *deconfinement* of French society, a historic moment when inside worlds which had not emerged, had not crossed for years, suddenly decided to come together in a new common space, *outside* the frameworks and norms that normally regulated their confined social interactions". The tendency then was to break through the established order of separation and confinement. A year has passed, and it's as though we're now taking the opposite route, back home.

Stay at home. To taste the desired comfort. To find something there to make the situation liveable ... Staying at home is always to realize - even without knowing it - the absolute paradigm of the economy; the *administration of the house*. *Oikos*, the house; and *nomos*, management, this is how the economy sees its base. Comfortably confined, we are inviting more than ever the economy, its rationalization, its controls, into our interiors. Teleworking as the future standard is the stereotype of life at home. And the liberal economy, with its flows of goods and capital, will be quite satisfied with the consumers and managers of their homes. At the most, the economy will find the opportunity for a small reconfiguration: fewer restaurants, more delivery people.

Finally, with confinement, the gap widens between two dimensions, yet inseparable, of what constitutes life. On the one hand, our biological life - *naked*; on the other, our collective life - *shared*. But here it is clear that the authorities have chosen to limit our existence to what is biological, to prepare our bodies for an increasingly pacified and patrolled configuration of society. It is our survival that is at stake, and it is for our well being that the confinement cancels the collective. It doesn't matter what one thinks about

it, it doesn't matter that our political existence becomes secondary. This process, again, is not new. Lockdown only accelerates it, it is in the ultimate interest of power - its controls, its disciplines - to maintain it.

### To Take a Breath

We all thought the lockdown would have a beginning and an end. We now know it was a deceit. Confinement will continue, in other forms. Deconfinement as it seems intended by the state will not be the end of the lockdown but its continuity. "Nothing will be like before, and for a long time," even said one of its senior lieutenants. We are therefore only at the beginning of a long period of transformation of the administration of authority. Of which the larva is known, but we can for the moment only sense the forms and the extent of what it will become.

So how do we find out what will change in a lasting way? How to *understand* that this situation will impact all political activity and in what ways?

Imagining answers will require figuring out how to get out of the house, and fast. It is about not waiting for either the end of confinement or the end of the epidemic risk decreed by the state. Rather, it is about finding ways to resist it now, collectively and individually. Individually, first to ward off the possibility of getting used to the logic of confinement, or even of developing a taste for it; collectively then to thwart the mechanisms of separation and isolation by having political perspectives in a world that keeps them increasingly restricted.

No *end* in sight, lots of loneliness to be warded off by the enthusiasm of the collective, so many pacified and confined spaces to ignite ... and a thousand other things to reactivate or invent to stop this mechanism that without a break makes us apathetic and overwhelmed.

work, acting on their environment and transforming circumstances, sometimes slightly, sometimes considerably, sometimes - although not very frequently - entirely. In my opinion, the question of "privileges" is based on an incorrect analysis, because it puts too often forward a social status instead of a whole prism (of interdependence) to be taken under consideration. Power mechanisms are sometimes visible, other times they are less easily detectable. Also because one is only rarely in a position of dominance or dominated at all levels. Different dimensions come into play: our knowledge, our fragility and our abilities (for dialogue, banter, or the ability to assert oneself), our known or supposed "victories" in the "milieu", too often also charisma, our friendships, our associations (in terms of social "connections") and so many other things, not necessarily understandable at the first approach.

Revenge involves a multitude of choices and instances. Everyone is free to choose its terms. Where the use of force is necessary, it is particularly important to never lose sight of our aspirations and principles. It is not just a question of responding to the blows but to open up all possibilities. One can also decide to take revenge on those who dictate and reproduce the limits of this world on a daily basis, in attacking their institutions and nodes directly.

This world that has declared war on us will not collapse with mere declarations of intention, taking a stance and well-thought-out discourses. This struggle cannot and should not be reduced to the sole analysis of the internal dynamics of the "militant" "milieu", putting aside the existing, its structures and its powerful. Because there is an outside that continues to advance and sharpen its claws. This involves fighting while articulating questions of ethics and practices. To get out of partial visions without also denying lived oppressions. Without a hierarchy between struggles, oppressions, and means of action, so that finally principles and practices are one and the same. In a perspective of freedom for all, by attacking the enemies of freedom wherever they may be, as well as the mechanisms of essentialisation and normalisation which have been present for too long in

our struggles. In order to create a total break with this world, through a conflict open on all fronts, with an infinite number of variables and angles of attack.

There is nothing else to exalt but our rage and determination.

*"How do you think it makes me feel to notice that within our collectives, all that is needed is for someone to repeat what I just said with a more virile voice so that, suddenly, it becomes worthy of interest?"*

*"I have friends that I love but who sometimes behave like roosters in a farmyard. If I introduce them to a female friend, they are very pleasant. Much less when it comes to a guy..."*

*"I had to fight to get my place in groups of guys. Why in the end. Just to be recognized as an individual. Because alone, without guys, I didn't really exist. As a result, I had managed to convince myself that I was better than the other girls. Because I had done everything I could to get guys to accept me. Only their "recognition" was important to me. I despised other girls because, in my opinion, they were still confined in their role as victims. I thought I was just like them, but in fact no; because when I am no longer with them, I go back to being a girl, and for guys who are not, or less, my buddies I return to the same status as a chick, potentially nothing else than fuckable, gee that stings a bit... So you, girl, who's holding a speech of "I don't see what the problem is blah blah blah blah blah", please ask yourself, sincerely, what is your interest in being more dominated than you already are. And yes, there are certainly some things that don't touch you, or you have decided that they don't touch you; just accept that there may be girls out there who are less armed, less conciliatory, or who have paid more dearly than you and/or who want to do something other than defend guys at all costs."*

Excerpt from the VOMI brochure (Lille, 2015)



# On Irregularity: between Analysis and Desire

*Previously published as Dell'irregolarità: fra analisi e desiderio and De l'irrégularité: entre analyse et désir in entre chien et loup (revue), Issue 2, Autumn 2019*

*"Not merely the love of one person, but the animal instinct, the simple undifferentiated desire: that was the force that would tear the Party to pieces."*

George Orwell, 1984

Often when we feel calm reigning, we busy ourselves with the task of trying to draw up the analysis of the situation. We enter into that order of discussion that recites: the analysis of reality is missing, the study of what is happening around us is missing. And who would disagree with this principle? In attacking a world that horrifies us, knowing what creates the disgust is a rather wise matter. Oh yeah, wisdom, which rhymes with stale authority: eternal historical enemy of every leap into the void, of the taste for the unknown, of savouring the possibility of going beyond the outer wall of resignation.

The authoritative wise men, dedicating themselves to the *post* (post-industrial, post-modernity, post-capitalism, etc.) of everything, strive to find the central point of this meaningless existence. Affirming that there is no centre is completely impossible, unless one broadens one's gaze to give life to a breach in the sterile mechanism that surrounds us. Today some say that production is the central point in the functioning of the world. Others assign this node to the technological apparatus. Finally, some say

that communications, with its ensuing speed of information transmission, is the central axis of alienation. No one is wrong, all are right, partially. These three elements work together to forge the anaesthetic scalpel of minds, supporting each other to maintain the only world we know: that of oppression.

Knowledge is a product for sale, ready to be consumed according to its exchange value. Knowledge, devoted to scientific reality, becomes the power that unites individuals through the submission to fear. Many point us towards effectiveness to prevent and combat fear. Effectiveness is the technical paradigm that coincides with the production of needs and downgrades the creation of desires. Computerized anaesthesia, generalized misery and technological short-sightedness impact the routine of many living beings and reduce them to zombie-inhabitants. Technique is inseparable from the concept of profitability. It is responsible for subjugating individuals to the obligations of effectiveness and profit, turning desires into emancipatory needs. Or rather: into fake needs artificially classified, interconnected and represented as emancipatory.

Consequently, technology is not derealizing reality, it is reproducing it on the quantitative level and attuning it with exploitation. In the past and still today, work makes the exploited

ing such treatments can sometimes be long and difficult. The question is thus: how to respond to the disease without killing the living?

If the biological danger is real, the challenge is not to be overwhelmed by fear of the virus and its spread. But for that, we still need to be able to understand the disease, to identify the conditions of its transmission and its lethal capacities. Appropriating the information transmitted through the media and produced by the part of medical and scientific institutions subservient to power seems the only way - certainly unsatisfactory - to build our own practices to face the risk of epidemics. Because Covid-19 is not the plague, and it seems possible to find ways to live - not survive - with the epidemic.

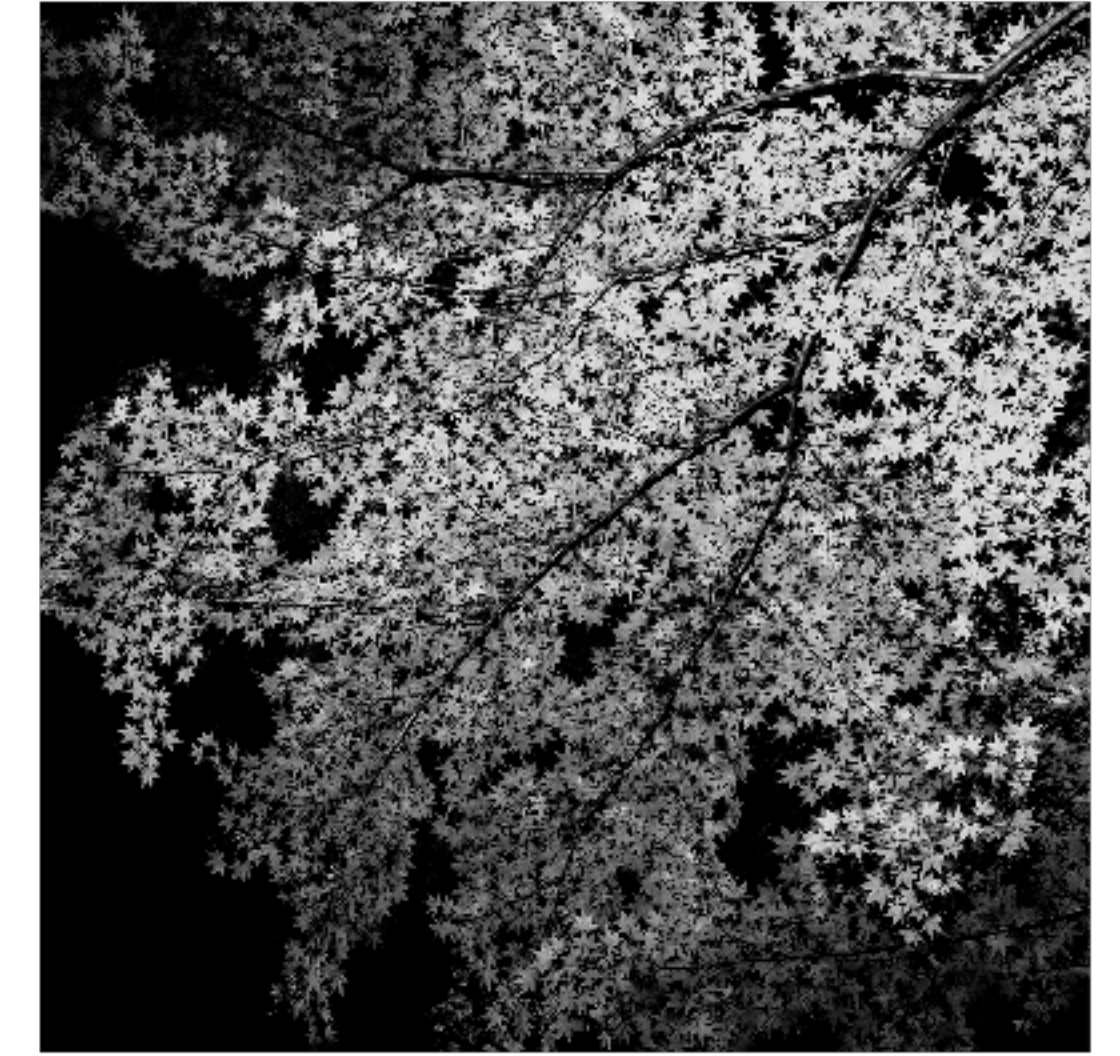
It is therefore up to us to produce our own health rules to protect ourselves and others. Starting with vulnerable people, find our own "barrier gestures" and take them serious. See each other, discuss, reflect together. Determine the activities to reduce, stop, continue ... The beginning of a list of concerns to be understood and methods to be implemented. All this, at the level of collectives or singular groups, depending on their forms, their limits and the issues that animate them.

Ultimately questioning confinement is perhaps the most serious way to consider the severity of the outbreak and to think about ways to deal with it. It is by confronting the virus that one develops an awareness of the situation. It's as if respecting lockdown without questioning it makes you stupid in the face of danger.

It is essential to appropriate ways of dealing with an epidemic. In view of the environmental situation and capitalist forms of life, corona viruses are very likely to come and visit us every year. We will have to live with them and not barricade ourselves at home at the slightest alarm. The risk of fear of contagion is fear of life itself. Let's be unconfined!

## An Instrument of Power

A generalized house arrest, lockdown responds more to a logic of power than to a philanthropic



logic of public health. It becomes the privileged tool of the *political dream* of the state in the situation of a coronavirus epidemic. We should be able to describe this dream precisely. But its contours are still hazy, and its borders can be redrawn at any time. It is nevertheless possible to say that control and discipline are the two main characters.

The current period does not mark a strict break with some fantasy *before world*, it rather accelerates processes already underway. Lockdown, as a tool of power, deepens the separation between individuals, strengthens the primacy of health and medicine, confirms the depoliticization of public spaces and the primacy of private spaces, provides a great opportunity for the legislator to reduce public freedoms, continues the entanglement of cybernetic and police methods, allows the economy to reconfigure itself once again.

Routine law enforcement practices are not enough to explain the success of the lockdown. Rather we stay at home because the rule is assimilated and self-control is general. The phenomenon of a deadly epidemic can only generate obedience. The widespread fear of losing one's life makes the only proposed solution into the only conceivable solution.

If the epidemic is a crisis, the means imposed to deal with it seem calibrated to be long term. As long as the viruses return, confinement will be put back in place at the slightest opportunity. There is no reason why the state should not re-



makes nursing staff its new soldiers, applauded every evening by those who are not at the front. The state seems to be discovering the appalling conditions in which these suddenly glorified nurses are required to work. It begs the hospital to hold hands with the police to save the Nation. The *Nation*, that old idea that we hoped was dead and buried. The feat is remarkable; in the great national play, each play their part.

The state is orchestrating the medical discourses to legitimize its administration. Until further notice, we will no longer obey politicians but instead medical prescriptions issued by the authorities. In the face of the health alert and the dispossession of scientific knowledge, we have no choice but to rely on government instructions. With fear in our hearts, we demonstrate at our windows to ask that the medical staff is as well armed as the police; we are outraged at the liberal policies of dislocation of public hospitals; we are calling for a stronger state, a state which finally takes its responsibilities; we would like to replace the bad politicians with good doctors... These are the only demands which manage to emerge in this situation of tense pacification. Destitute, it is as if the arrival of the coronavirus has deprived us of all *critical* reasoning in the face of absolute state domination. The order of confinement is well guarded.

However, a state-run lockdown does not meet the recommended medical requirement. Others have shown it clearly. The injunctions that structure the lockdown make no practical sense. Absurdity and inconsistency, these are the feelings that take hold of us when we know that we have to go to work at the Amazon centre but that it is forbidden to walk on the beach, or when we see supermarkets operating at full speed and open-air markets prohibited. The list of contradictions is long ...

Ultimately, this nonsense only makes sense if we understand that the imperative that motivates these rules of conduct is the maintenance of a liberal *social contract*, which has to juggle between sanitary logic and economic interests. It is a question of leaving the time and the possibility for capitalism to adapt and allowing a

relative freedom to the citizens to consume as they please; and at the same time to preserve the appearance of a “welfare state” which does not let its subjects die in the streets, as we have seen elsewhere.

The globalization of lockdowns and its identical execution on half of the Earth’s population further reinforces the absurdity of this tool. A lockdown is a product intended for societies completely rationalized by the economy and already prepared for the separation of individuals. The application of lockdowns in cities or territories where the economy has not normalized all spaces and all interactions is impossible without resorting to ultra-violence. Thus on 20<sup>th</sup> of April in Nigeria, Covid-19 killed 12 people in the hospitals and the police killed 18 in the streets for not respecting the lockdown. All proportions taken into consideration, the violence of confinement is nevertheless everywhere and the police went berserk in the neighbourhoods of the big cities of France.

Along with the violence and the fear of repression come the disarray in which everyone is plunged, both individually and collectively. The space is completely reduced, completely empty. A lockdown opens up time to us, the nothingness it produces deprives us of it. Our days are futile and we have no control. Time passes and escapes us at the same time. Apathy, boredom, inflated egocentrism, fear of being poisoned by others, loss of points of references, deepening of loneliness ... it is an entire emotional and sensitive environment that is dissolved by the injunction to stay at home.

### Appropriate the Danger

It is not about forgetting the countless deaths from Covid, nor about denying the hellish conditions in which the sick are being treated, nor about saying that nothing should be done about the disease and its spread, of course. However, a lockdown is akin to mistakenly prescribing a high dose of broad-spectrum antibiotics. The antibiotic indeed kills the harmful bacteria but also devastates everything else. It may be necessary in some cases, but everyone knows that it is no longer routine, and that the recovery follow-

participate in their enslavement. Even unemployment participates in work, with the continual search for it by those who are excluded from the productive sphere. Today this also applies to communication and its speed, along with technology and its intrinsic abstraction. All reinforce this world.

The techno-democratic system is producing a quantitative reality where specialized knowledge and skills are locked up in a transcendental way in the laboratories. These structures and factories of the ruling order are in the hands of a few charlatans, apprentice techno-sorcerers who, as an inherent consequence, claim the world as their experimental laboratory. Submission becomes fulfilment, becoming the worst creation of the existing: participative servitude.

Nowadays what intoxicates minds is not the argumentation of analysis, but the firm belief in what works. This is why the only dialogue possible is democratic, between unequals, meaning between oppressors and oppressed, with consent replacing being in the world.

Power only dialogues with what it possesses. Democracy is an untouchable value, the supporting foundation of technological reality. The state, especially in the West, is the dominant form of social life. The dynamic of the market is based on the satisfaction of needs. They make the mercantile paradigm function, and this fictitious balance tends to eliminate diversity. The complete eradication of the *creative difference* would make all the elements homogeneous and the mega-machine would function perfectly. Doesn’t this recall the Orwellian environment of 1984 and the paradigm of acceptance of the system in Huxley’s *Brave New World*?

Technology, production and speed of communication are not things in themselves, structures reproducing the ruling order. They are social relationships, mechanical activities carried out by the world’s inhabitants. Habitual and unreflective; they prevent even merely thinking about grasping our lives in order to destroy the social order that is taking more and more away from us.

Habit and the continual reproduction of the existing train us in the impossibility of imagining something else and thus giving life to potentially dangerous desires. The power of this world is based on the tendency of these relations to reproduce the ruling order, under the blackmail of sacrifice. This doesn’t only reinforce command, but expands it and perpetuates it in time. The thing that is command intrinsically feeds obedience. But is there anything exciting in seeing and feeling the inability to express our desires? Can surviving in a world of disasters ever be able to make us grasp the absurdity of life’s authenticity? We live in a society that feeds on catastrophes, which serve the ruling order in expanding its power. The threat of disaster is a perfect alibi for justifying a technologically controlled world, along with the predatory power of its experts and its guardians.

The media, armed wing of the thought police, proclaim continuous terror for all. They chant the mantra that only the state and its functionaries (uniformed and not) can guarantee the adornment of security. This is how the oppressors convince many to accept police control and even to monitor themselves. The unreserved securing of privileges produces the possibility of civil war. But where can we find the possibility of rebellion, which transforms itself into insurrection, meaning the rupture of the social conventions of the ruling order? Dragged into the necessity of survival we no longer even know how to imagine a life made of passions and adventures.





*“The nature of rebellion is imaginary in a world that dreams of getting rid of it”*

Stanislas Rodanski, *Lettre au Soleil Noir*

The objectivity of what we see is not there. What we mean by reality is a fragment of something that cannot be completely accomplished before our eyes. What is there in an inescapable way is its interpretation: it is the language we give each other, the expression of relationships in their concreteness. And we alone decide whether to stagnate in its presumed truthfulness or to incite to move beyond it. Nothing is neutral when we take our thoughts into our own hands. The mutation of meaning through consensus throws water on what is fire. Analysis that seeks consensus is itself afraid of rebellion, mutilating the potent incommunicability of desire, making the construction of language itself divine. Some seem to say that one can analyse without desire, but one cannot desire without analysing. The difference between analysis and an idea is precisely in the force of desiring utopia. If causes are found in analysis, the idea wants to destroy all that it recognizes as causes, since they sustain *the force of reason* of this world.

The idea is a thought that moves one to act. It challenges its concreteness by giving itself to the quality of its possibilities, struggling with its temptation toward realization. If one doesn't have the glimmer of an idea, one remains entangled in the mechanisms of opinion, meaning induced thoughts that are realized in their democratization.

Interpretation and desire give life-blood to a subversive idea. To have an opinion it is enough to keep running your mouth. This is why ideas are rocks to throw against every form of authority, while opinions make this world completely debatable, ruled by the intrinsic order of technologically armed democracy.

The ruling language of an epoch, in this instance democratic dialogue, corresponds to the construction of social relationships necessary for the ruling order of the same epoch. Anyone who is outside of this language is thought of as a stranger. How can contempt for society stir up

this strangeness? How can the barbarians destroy the *polis* and break with the community of the *agora* in its dual sense of the city centre and the market?

*“Our social structure, meaning with this rough formula the whole of Europe currently affected by the pressure of the migrants, would not withstand the impact of the arrival of millions of people. A collapse doesn't require the arrival of tens of millions, four or five million would be sufficient. In that case it would no longer be a question of building walls or voting in more or less permissive or repressive laws. It would be the collapse of a social concept that cannot tolerate the eventuality of slaughtering two or three million on our coasts in order to accept only a couple million of them. We are not prepared for such an eventuality. No one can predict what will have to be done. What will the revolutionaries with their mouths full of words while only inflicting little pinpricks on the body of the governing whale do when these forebearers of humanity arrive at the gates, the gates of our so-called civilization, and set about destroying it? Will they contribute to the more than welcome destruction? Will they do everything possible to prevent the reconstitution of a new power under a new symbol and some strange coloured flag on the ruins of the magnificent temple of collapsed Christianity? Who can tell?”*

AMB, *Le lunghe ombre oltre il muro*,  
in *Negazine*, Issue 1, 2017

Perhaps this is where our dreams will play out, where joy and sorrow will be at stake. The storm of primordial chaos will not bring any certainty, but choice. With all due respect to the beautiful souls who adhere to the sun of the future. Only a different life can give rise to *different* thoughts. It is in encounter, in the conspiracy against this world, that we can weave subversive plots. Here are the bad passions to drive out the demons that smoulder in us. We have to see that the rejection of political manipulations also begins with a different way of communicating. Without being afraid of a possible inability to communicate desire, so as not to leave the totality of our words to the analysis of this or that. To disrupt ourselves

devastation. Isn't then the position of the different governments faced with the current pandemic hypocritical? How can they give so many speeches and take palliative measures for the degrading health system, pretending concern for people's lives, when they are responsible for the conditions for this virus to have spread? When we talk about cynicism, it is not even necessary to think only about this aspect. The conditions in which most people live in all territories are marginality and exclusion. Conditions that lead to a life with few hints of dignity, since the inequality generated by poverty is extreme. It has never been among the priorities of governments that this changes. All this sounds more like taking politically advantage of the situation and an opportunity to implement reforms that reinforce repression and improve the tools of the State to continue its domination.

The Covid-19 virus is real, it has killed thousands of people around the world and continues to do so every day. But this is not something new. Those who live in prison, kidnapped by the state, know it well. Health and sanitary conditions have always been very poor, and now it is not different. Governments have shown no interest in their lives; the demands of the prisoners to improve sanitary conditions in this context of pandemic have been answered with beatings, mutilation, torture and death. Also the indigenous societies in the world know well the cynicism of the different govern-

ments. In Abya Yala [name used by some indigenous people as an equivalent for the American continent], the indigenous people know it for centuries. The European empires came to plunder the territories, bringing death and destruction. Not only at the hands of their swords and rifles, but also through many contagious diseases such as smallpox, tuberculosis, flu or syphilis. These diseases finally depleted the population of the cultures of the territory much more than any weapon. The hypocrisy is evident and continues to this day. Hunger, Ebola, malaria, the bombings in the Middle East kill thousands of people every day, many more than Covid-19 and have been around for much longer. But they are not as much a cause for concern as the new coronavirus. Is it because now the privileged classes of first world countries are also being affected?

The call is to not believe for a single second in the words of the rulers, never to trust the state and progress. As free individuals or communities we can face the pandemic, with mutual support and never leaving aside the fight against power and domination. The concern for life on the part of the system has never been such, and it is time to make this clear.

For insurrection and total liberation  
For the self-determination of peoples  
For the destruction of the prison society  
Fire to the state and bullets to its lackeys!

## —Sketches of a Critique of Lockdown—

*Previously published as a pamphlet, Esquisses pour une critique du confinement, April 2020*

**Lockdown:** Being confined, locked up within narrow limits. Maintaining a living being in a small and closed environment. French: *confinement*.

### **An Ubiquitous Picture**

A generalized lockdown was decreed overnight.

An unknown word, a strange practice a few days earlier, the lockdown has established itself as evident, without any bodily or theoretical questioning. Since then, obedience has been general.

The rhetoric of war. This is the form that power chooses to appeal to the national effort. It



cattle. In this territory, capitalism cleared the fields to replace them with a “monoculture of cattle”, mainly of animals infected by precapitalist pandemics imported from Europe. The consequences of these pandemics were much greater than in other territories since the concentration of these animals changed disproportionately due to the advance of the industrial revolution. The outbreaks were concentrated in large dairies in London where the environment was ideal for the evolution of viruses.

Given the advances of the English state in science and medicine, they managed to contain these pandemics. However, it was much worse in Africa where the same pandemics arrived due to European imperialism, manifested in the colonization of the African continent. The military campaigns spread the viruses in the local cattle, causing a great mortality which was reflected in the death of almost 90% of the cattle. This led to an unprecedented famine in the pastoral societies of Africa. And also had as a consequence for the European powers a greater facility for their imperialist expansion.

Another example is the case of the Spanish flu, one of the first outbreaks of H1N1 influenza and a precursor to more recent outbreaks such as the bird or swine flu. It spread in the second decade of the twentieth century. According to studies so far it originated in poultry or pigs on farms and infected soldiers on duty who travelled to Europe. The rudimentary forms of concentration and intensive treatment on these

farms made them the ideal places for the development of viruses. Although it is considered to be one of the most lethal pandemics (about 25 million people died in the first 25 weeks, according to some studies), the virus itself was not very different from others strains. Perhaps the high mortality was due to generalized malnutrition, urban overcrowding and unsanitary conditions in the affected areas, where urbanization around the developing industry was increasing. Clearly, the spread of this pandemic benefited from growing trade and the First World War.

Concerning (2), the devastation of nature is unstoppable for this system, since it goes hand in hand with so-called progress which is the cornerstone of this order today. In all territories, capitalism devastates forests, jungles, beaches, mountains, glaciers and an endless number of environments inhabited by many species, many of which are carriers of diseases and viruses that human animals were perhaps not aware of. The changes in the environment of these species (the destruction of their habitats) forces these species to survive in other ways; going further into the wild where humans have not yet reached, or adapting to life near human settlements, towns or even cities. These changes can lead to an evolution of the diseases they carry, as well as more exposure for those who were not close to these “dangers”. On the other hand, many indigenous communities use the sale of animal meat to survive, since their environments and ancestral ways of life and alimentation have been devastated and there are not many other options. And clearly, each time the city advances, more species are at risk of being hunted by those who now need to survive in this way. When this cycle continues, it is a matter of time for people to become increasingly exposed to new diseases and viruses. It is not surprising that the pandemic could have originated in a city like Wuhan. Since it is a highly urbanized society and also industrialized, with large steel and concrete industries, which reflects the devastation that capitalism has left in its wake. Covid-19 is no exception.

Following these arguments, let us think of governments who use the power of the state infrastructure to perpetuate the capitalist system and promote indiscriminate progress at the cost of

and the world in which we feel like strangers, we need a desertion. We need to allow us to abandon ourselves to something totally different, to make a clean sweep of this consensual reality. We need to sow doubt.

The epoch of passivity has always needed leaders and experts. As someone said, those who cry that it is not time for rebellion reveal to us in advance which society they are working for. Acting out of pleasure goes hand in hand with the eradication of politics and the lighting of the fuse that unleashes the passions and desires of *the dark forest of the self*, ripping to bits the opinion of effectiveness. Attacking when everyone else is waiting for the so-called *decisive* analysis is what puts the refusal of this world into the spark of a dawn as magnificent as possible.

“True life is elsewhere. We are not in the world.”

Arthur Rimbaud, *Illuminations*

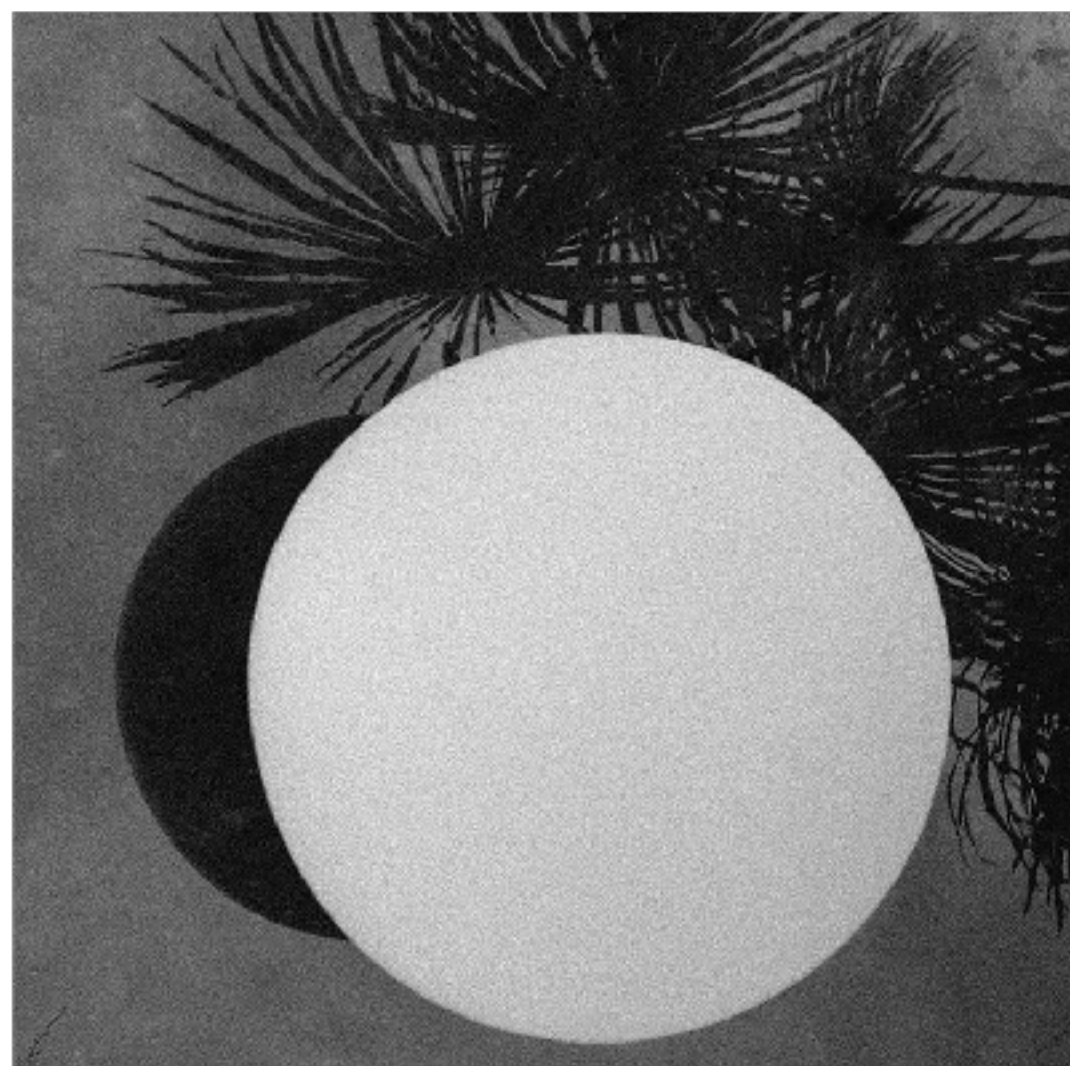
One basic aspect of the creation of other worlds would have to speak of sabotage, spreading knowledge and desires for experimenting with revolt among subversives, writing about what happens, without the mediation of any of the collaborators of those in power. Not to fall into the litany of the already-said, but to make the practices of rupture reproducible by anyone. Then it is necessary to experiment with informality, becoming accomplices on the basis of affinity. Without a name to assert,

without a group to propagate, but with the *creative solitude* of an insurrectionary project to carry out.

Words cannot be shaky steps that only resonate with themselves. They will not find their salvation in analysis, but in one’s own singularity and in the desire to destroy all that submerges it. Affirming that we are strangers in the world, refractory to every order, is also understanding that our interpretation is fighting with something to come. As an old philosopher said, *the moment is eternity*. The thought police want to transform us into individuals without a shred of desire. But if we want to be poets of an idea that doesn’t give a damn about gods, laws and regulations, we should give ourselves to the disorder of dreams that can interrupt the world, or at least to try provoking various blackouts. No refined and well-done analysis will ever be able to upset the minds that burn on the earth. No more than the misfortune of knowing – desiring the disorganization of all the senses – that life is elsewhere. The reciprocity of certain relationships is necessary to make the boundaries between destruction and creation disappear. Because destruction is the creation of an inaccessible path toward the unknown.

The certainty of the gaze that only focuses on effectiveness is linked, in an indissoluble way, to the technological reality that does not only construct oppressive control outside the individual, but also on the interior. It’s so invasive (although most individuals do not feel it), it literally changes our way of feeling and imagining. Against this persuasion we can oppose the uncertainty of freedom, without dying of security. Some anarchists between the 19th and the 20th century dedicated themselves to propaganda of the deed. And if today other subversives were to dedicate themselves to the poetry of acting, what would happen?

Black Mamba, March 2018





# The Attack on Our Senses

*Previously published as Der Angriff auf unsere Sinne in In Der Tat (Anarchistische Zeitschrift), Issue 8, Summer 2020*

One of the effects of the technology project is the reduction of experience and along with it, experiencing the world together is becoming an increasingly rare phenomenon. Fear increases in isolation, perceptions shift and trust in one's own ability to shape one's own environment dwindles - unless we relearn the art of experiencing ...

Our perception of the environment is becoming increasingly deprived through the use of technological tools. This means that we are placed in a state of isolation that replaces our natural perception with that which domination provides us. Interpersonal communication, information and emotional affection are regulated by various devices and continuously integrated within capitalist systems. Deprivation is a means of torture in which the tormentor completely shields the victim from external stimuli and thus deprives him of the necessary sensory impressions; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching. Sensory deprivation is one of the methods of white torture, meaning it is often difficult to detect and verify, yet it has harmful to destructive effects on the psyche and body of the victim. But since a person's brain is dependent on constant stimulation even in a deprived environment and cannot do without it, it creates hallucinations and the consciousness changes. At the same time the nerve cells that are not used begin to wither. Altering, aligning or trying to deteriorate our senses is a fundamental intervention in the being of a person since they are responsible for how we perceive reality.

The interaction of the senses forms our experience in this world, which exists as a practical (and implicit) understanding and is attached to our actions and movements. For example, when playing the piano, hearing is linked to the keys. Our body learns to play a certain key combination which seems to come automatically from our fingers and with which we are able to fade out the individual details. Another example would be when a blind person uses a cane to fill in their vision. He absorbs the cane, attention to the use of the equipment fades into the background and the person is able to concentrate on other things. This process connects the sensual, the physical and the habit to enable an action. A negative increase in this is referred to in psychology as "Entsinnung" [detachment from meaning]. It is the process in which experience of the world gets lost. For example, a hiker does not climb the mountain but takes the cable car. In this example, the resistance that the hiker has to overcome in order to bring his body to the limits of his perception is lost. He gets to the top of the mountain without having experienced the ascent. And this is exactly where the crux of our current behaviour in the technologically advanced world lies: one uses the microwave instead of the fire without knowing how the equipment works. You simply press the button or not even that, but leave it to voice commands or, in the future, to commands through eye movements, for example. Instead of wandering, people take the carriage, the steam locomotive, the electric locomotive, the plane, the magnetic levitation train to get around - and bodily activity is always lost, as is the knowledge about the func-

# —Capitalist Hypocrisy

*Previously published as Coronavirus; La hipocresía capitalista in Rebrote (boletín anticarcelario para presxs), Issue 4, April 2020*

Pandemics have always existed, in the past diseases have wiped out billions of lives around the planet. The context in which each one develops, the pre-existing conditions that allow its evolution and development, and the impact they have on species (human in the case of the new coronavirus), are directly related to the prevailing order that governs human relationships in society. In other words, capitalism and the commodification of life on Earth play an important role with regard to the origin, spread and consequences of diseases considered pandemics.

Capitalism is based on the premise that the planet's resources are scarce and therefore must be regulated so that the participants of society can benefit from them. Clearly, the very premise of this system is based on the objectification of life on Earth. The water flows, the existence of infinite species of plants and animals, and the earth itself, are regarded as sources of material wealth. That is, as objects that can be exploited at the cost of suffering and destruction, for the benefit of those who hold economic and military power in the various regions of the world.

Nothing can be expected from this predatory system for which money, luxury and consumption are above a free and natural existence. Many lies can be told about the benefits of capitalist progress, but the truth is something else, something verifiable in the facts. Progress brings nothing more than destruction: devastation of natural environments, changes in water flows, subsequent droughts and consequently misery or death for plant and animal species (human and non-human) who live thanks to the balance of the environment. However, there is a privileged group of humans who do benefit from all this and at the expense of others.

This destruction imposed by capitalism is harsher for many animal species that have fewer ways to defend themselves against the frantic advance of technologies in modern societies. Specism is one of the pillars of this system and is also reflected in the objectification of animal bodies, used for different purposes. One of the most cruel is embodied in the food industry. But what does this bloody industry has to do with Covid-19? Different scientific sources (not that this really gives them more value) have affirmed that the virus originated through zoonotic transmission. In other words, it jumped from non-human animals to human animals. There is much speculation about Chinese citizens eating bats which would have triggered the spread of the virus. This has provoked a lot of talk about the eating habits of other cultures, many times bringing racism to the surface. Aside from that, zoonotic transmission occurs under certain conditions when the environment of the species that carries the virus touches with that of the species that can be infected. This contagion may be due to a change in these conditions, such as changes in proximity and regular contact among other things. These changes provide the basis for the evolution of the virus, which can lead to a more contagious and deadly virus, for example. And as already mentioned before, what better than capitalism to change the conditions of the environment where a virus with these characteristics can exist? Mainly, capitalism generates these changes in two related ways: (1) through the animal industry, specifically factory farms and (2) through the devastation of nature.

In history there are already many examples for (1). In the 18th century, in the territory dominated by the English state, three different pandemics arose related to animals considered



comes a thing, a deviant identification, and this is what this mechanism of projection reveals, which generates the phenomenon of exclusion. In this context, the relationship to the other can be experienced as a destabilizing experience. We can then see that rejection constitutes, in a way, a refusal to look at ourselves, to see ourselves defenceless and to live our own madness. A way of excluding the other in order to free ourselves from its haunting.

It is our tolerance of eccentricity or difference that is diminished when our disposition to the normalisation of behaviour is becoming more pronounced in a "society" that is devoted to a real cult of performance. The dominant culture seeks to conform, lynch or bury alive all subjects that defy the social norm. One adapts or disappears. The norm erases intensity, multiplicity. The system abhors what does not work, so it tends to neutralise the best it can anything outside of the frame. Domestication is a tool that is excessively well developed through so-called universal laws and codes (you have to work, to fit in, to go to school, to smile and to produce).

To be normal is to be socially useful. It means being able to adapt to the group and to be able to comply with the norms in place, and it is sometimes also a question of survival because the social environment is a determining factor in the construction of the self. The rules of the game are legitimized by the silent acceptance of the majority, by the integration of the relations of domination. And that is why it is necessary to restore the social and political dimension of this issue to give it a global dimension. The dominant model is not sustainable without social reproduction. And while the institutions of assistance and control organise the dispossession of bodies and knowledge, we build our own devices of power and alienation.

Normality has become a means of social control. It is essential to know in which box to put the individual in order to know where it stands in the system. If you step out of line, you're documented, categorised, diagnosed, put in a box by the psychiatric or social police for a bet-

ter management of flows. In short, one is alienated by illness. Diagnosis is also based on subjective interpretations and depends on the vision of what is socially compliant, conventional and correct. However, the boundaries between the normal and the pathological remain fuzzy. Social alienation and mental alienation are two sides of the same coin for who has not found their own place or a specific "social utility" for this system.

Conversely, what is considered madness is sometimes fetishized, idealized or even considered subversive "by nature", or an example to follow. This rather naïve tendency permits to passively accept the definitions of deviance provided by the dominant ideology (Giovanni Jervis, *Le mythe de l'Antipsychiatrie*, Ed. Solin). It also allows us to not have to take responsibility for ourselves by identifying madness as an imminent liberation, which is tantamount to denying certain realities. Madness is not an alternative to life as it is presented but an expression of social violence, it cannot be defined with certainty as a homogeneous reality, much less romanticized. Any ideology that seeks to define categories and to clumsily interpret the troubles of the mind fails faced with the complexity of human relationships and emotions. It is impossible to make all the reactions of the human body and mind predictable. Its elusive and spontaneous character plunges us towards the unexpected...

*"Basically, every domination is based on the hypothesis of being able to regulate the unpredictable future. Every domination has managed to exorcise fear and uncertainty of the future. The refusal of domination therefore also passes through the conscious and courageous restoration of instability, the unknown that awaits us around the corner of the street."*

*La nostalgia di Dio, in Canenero, Issue 17, 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 1995*

tionality of the products that we use all the time. Confidence in acting according to one's own personal observations and judging information for oneself is also lost and is replaced by confidence in a scientific and technological authority. Your own sensory impressions are no longer the instruments to find your way in this world. The resistances in such a way of life disappear, the experience of reality is lacking and at the same time the activity is reduced. The friction becomes almost imperceptible with a push of a button, a mouse click or a swipe on the screen. They appear so simple and convenient and do not expose us to any significant resistances that we have to overcome, but rather diminish our sense of touch by only using it for a swipe on a smooth surface. And I certainly do not exclude ourselves as anarchists from this degradation of knowledge based on experience. For example, if we feed a translation AI to make our translation projects more efficient and thus want to achieve faster results. Or even if we watch riot video after riot video, collect tons of information in front of the screen and evaluate it and compare it with other countless Twitter sources in order to create a picture of an event that we did not attend or in which we did not actually take part.

The floods of images to which we are exposed are not attached to any physical equivalent, but still leave impressions that are inscribed in our bodies. We become screen addicts who yearn for the next spectacular expropriation videos which are far from letting our adrenaline levels get as high as what we experience with even the most un-



spectacular pasting of posters in the streets. What happens nevertheless is that these images expel our actual memories and replace them with enactments or a spectacle. It turns us into fillable vessels who are open to the supply of commercial software and who adapt more and more to the passive life of a screen puppet. It also happens that simply sitting in front of the screen, for example, a person's visual spectrum is reduced. The eyes adjust to staring from the same distance at moving lights, they move only minimally and look at the restricted area of the screen. The head remains rigid, which would otherwise not be the case, because outside of this reduced scope we are used to constantly orient ourselves towards proximity, distance, movement and natural light sources. Nevertheless, it must be said that our perspective is narrowed even beyond the screen, because - to name just one example - the light that surrounds us in cities is becoming more and more artificial, meaning technologically regulated. Lanterns illuminate the streets for us, regulate our sleep rhythm, control what we will see, where we will walk on the streets and in parks, and our body adapts to this restricted visual behaviour. We mostly bypass with flash-lights our abilities to see without lights and to trust our steps. Without a light source it takes a while before you can see in the dark. It is really difficult to find places that are not somehow illuminated. Even when we are standing on a mountain we are often in a glow of city lights that obscures the stars or in a system of so-called Smart City Lighting which offers the technological lighting solutions for the energy efficiency of a city.

Virtual Reality creates a further level of enactment through media by merging the physical with the electronically produced appearance. Here also the viewer receives the illusion of an action without acting. And completely by accident, we take the predefined paths of domination without encountering eventualities or inducing the unexpected. We find ourselves in a monotonous walk in an artificially created reality with various options like in a video game. Or we will even find ourselves faced with an upgrade, in which algorithms will create our own singular reality, that will be created for our little bubble - the Augmented Reality. One could argue here



that it is also possible in VR or AR to take on the role of a hacker by changing the source code, meaning creating creative solutions or changes that break down limits. Or that it is possible that a prescribed technical product can also be used in other ways, such as the Bonnot gang's use of cars to expropriate banks. That's true. Nonetheless, progressive environmental destruction, shitty working conditions, etc. must always be expected in order to produce these products. So it is a thing between means and ends. And to come back to the subject of torture: the sensory impressions that reach us in a world of VR are hallucinations that domination provides us. While all undesirable sensory impressions are eliminated, those permissible have been analysed and rearranged for us for years by the (advertising) industry and the field of neuromarketing; their sound and food designers, their psychologists and doctors. For example, sound designers are working on building razors in such a way that they sound particularly powerful and robust, while epilators for a female clientele are gentler. Or chips and cornflakes that are mixed with substances that create a crispy crack in the mouth or car door noises that companies can patent. The list can be infinitely expanded with everyday objects, right down to scent marketing. Visual, acoustic or tactile signals are first processed in the cerebral cortex of the brain, while scents have

a direct effect on the limbic system, where emotions are processed and urges are guided. Events that are linked to strong emotions are much more likely to linger in our memory, and we find it difficult to evade this orchestrated influence.

Therefore, our concepts of life in this world are not a matter of taste, meaning that we can simply choose an alternative from a range of choices. Because the interpersonal dimension is lost without the action that creates the meaning of social interaction. The other becomes a projection surface and a product of a presentation which leads to a loss of empathy and also prevents us from recognizing our comrades and building affinity. The loss of shared experiences, of causing trouble and destruction together makes people insecure. Those who do not make their own experiences also lose confidence in their own intuitive abilities, necessary persistence and tolerance towards frustration. While these are necessary to carry out an action. They lose themselves in the increasing dependence on guides, statistics and devices that try to create a knowledge that you don't have to acquire yourself through experiences. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to relearn the art of experiencing in order to live and fight creatively, while breaking norms and going beyond borders.

## About Madness

Previously published as Autour de la folie in Spigaou (Revue anarchiste aperiodique), Issue 1, May 2020

*This text has been written years ago following a lived experience in an inner circle. It's not the purpose here to retell it, but to reflect on different mechanisms that far too often are put in place when faced with abnormality and to develop reflections following from it. I don't use "we" because of a feeling of belong-*

*ing but to point out the mechanisms that touch us all sometimes a bit, others more. Finally, I'll talk mainly about "abnormality" and not about severe crises which entail a serious situation and that need at times a specific involvement.*

In the current system the violence of social relations is often disguised. However it's difficult to put a mask on madness because it allows to disclose the vulnerability of a shattered society. Someone who disintegrates faced with a "valid" world which is imposed on us, necessarily disturbs - an uncontrollable spirit, an "unhealthy" phenomenon. Those who can no longer stand this society where your individuality is denied and where you are only a cog in the machine, are quickly quarantined. The "illness" or psychological suffering is treated or punished, never accepted. It is even often denounced as perverse, shameful or the result of failure. "The Greek word *norma* refers to the ruler that one follows to draw a line, and which permits to walk straight: those who walk in an organised herd are said to be *normal*." Today, everything is "clean", we are clean on ourselves, we make clean wars, right down to our relationships: we speak correctly, no rudeness, nor any deviation is possible, we all walk very very straight... And finally, as time goes by, the forms of exclusion change (from banishment to confinement, from asylum to chemical straitjacket) but its process remains.

Our timidity in the face of what disturbs makes us sometimes silent or complacent in the face of a "problem" which we will then individualise and personalise. This frees us from responsibility and avoids us having to go through a certain number of reflections and to take some delicate stances. And which will have as a consequence to participate in making a given situation invisible and taboo. And finally, not reacting is also taking a stance with obvious consequences. So what do we do? We "reach out" as in good Judeo-Christian fashion that knows how to do the good, we close our eyes, we condemn what disturbs, or we question the mechanisms that accompany this situation and that touch us even in our own spaces where relationships of power and domination are never completely absent. Of course, we are not always ready to be open to suffering. Still one must say it. Because silence is more violent. There is noisy violence and discrete violence. That of silence, of cowardice and of disregard is among the hardest because it is underhanded. Without having a position of angelism, you can't hold everyone in



your arms. We can, however, approach it the most vigilant as possible in the face of a situation that is sometimes difficult to discern and to try to create spaces where people can feel confident and supported.

*"People must be left to their own, let them find and practice their own choice of life, their own project. And this freedom must not be subject to conditions, agreements, compromises imposed by our limits, our fears, our paternalism. We cannot transform ourselves into those to whom they have to be accountable, responsible tutors, good "therapists". We cannot again link the existence of persons to a judgement (ours) that can only be arbitrary and violent."*

Giuseppe Bucalo, *Derrière chaque idiot il y a un village. Itinéraire pour se passer de la psychiatrie.*

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Fear of the other, of contagion, of what it breaks us down to, generates different systems of defence and mechanisms of protection. It is not always a simple "fear of the difference", but very often a recognition that leads us to avoidance, indifference or false awareness and hypocrisy. The fact of seeing in the mirror sensations in the other that are not foreign to us, to discover ourselves similar to those marked by otherness sometimes leads us towards the extrapolation of unspeakable fears. Which relates us with a part of ourselves that disgusts us. The other then be-