

A FEW SCANDALOUS ACTIONS OF THE IMAGINARY PARTY

“Not a party, but perhaps a new kind of partisans, who would abandon the classical kinds of agitation to instead make highly exemplary *disturbing gestures*.”
Georges Henein, *Prestige of Terror*

At the time of writing, the first phase of the critical metaphysicians’ activity can be considered complete. Its dominant trait was *experimentation*. In general we expected nothing to come of our actions except for us alone. It was most often about interrupting the predictable course of behaviors at a selected point in social space-time, of creating situations where the truth of our era would be forced to unveil itself. Such aims were opportunely in accord with our strength and capacities; and, like them, they have now been surpassed. Thus our victory or our defeat can’t really be measured in the ordinary terms of effectiveness; after all, up to the present we have voluntarily situated ourselves *outside* of those terms.



The situation that the critical metaphysicians started from was no less than the bankruptcy of the ensemble of modern political practices. *Demonstrations* hence have become incapable of demonstrating anything that the Spectacle hasn’t already said, and from one year to the next have progressively taken on the dimensions of a fastidious ritual, offered as an amusement to the benevolence of the dominant chatter, and to the emissaries of the various city authorities. *Strikes*, for decades now, have only served the sinister function of punctuating the low water marks of “democratic life,” and are only any good for occasionally stirring up the monochromatic festering of the rotting union system. And so, *organized scandal* has ended up withdrawing in the face of domination’s having liquidated all objective morality, meaning, and effectiveness. From this observation was born the naïve hypothesis of the first critical metaphysicians, who considered that if the most modern procedures, properly speaking, were today also the most worn out, it followed logically that the most ancient would also prove the newest. The first consequence drawn from this cursory analysis was the decision to try out the use of *sermons*, which, as we know, Gramsci devoted more than a little time to over the course of his detention. The first “sermon to the Blooms” was thus put on the agenda for the 15th of May, 1998, at 2 pm, in Sorbonne square. At the pre-set time, then, a critical metaphysician, for lack of a pulpit, climbed up on a statute of the pitiful Auguste Comte and began to harangue those present. Well aware of the deafening heights of human sleep that our contemporaries have climbed to in spite of so many slips and falls, we gave a tone of invective to the oration for the majority of its length. Either way at least, we didn’t expect any real awakening to happen. Indeed, it was far from being obtained on that occasion, but we couldn’t feel any grief about having been excessively conciliatory or anything, as can be seen from these few extracts:



Paris, Sorbonne square, May 15th, 1998. Politicizing metaphysics.

“These gentlemen order you to smile; France Telecom swears to you that it will make you simply love the year 2000; the SNCF [French train company] explains politely that you can’t act like you’re at home when you’re on its platforms; your prime minister orders you to work, and you go without saying a word into this landscape of infamy... You were wrong to think that you were safe from everything in your humid and glacial withdrawal into private life, where the walls drip

with muck; and that’s how – agglomerated into clusters, overcome with trembling, terrified, bald and scrawny - the phantoms have put you at their mercy. You, the Shivering Ones, the Kneeling Ones, the Cave Dwellers, you the Cowards, the Frightened Slaves. It’s time for you to come out of your holes. You are truly sinister.”

“...It takes you eighty years to die of the absurdity of an existence where you’ve ended up confusing subjective life with the banal irony of your caprices. You work, you consume, and between these two unchanging poles of the empire of nothingness, you just wish to be allowed to sleep. You think *that’s* living!?! ... We aren’t counting on you ever forgiving yourselves for having to such an extent and for such a long while failed to know real life; and we expect you to do that all the less since this whole society has sworn to never pay for anything but alienation, and lavishly so. The most blinkered among you will then flatter yourselves that *they* are being reasonable while refraining of course from making the humiliating admission that if they think for themselves it’s just that they’ve been *thought for by others*. Some will certainly condemn us for being unjust. Because, after all, they’re suffering from the present state of things. They certainly do suffer, but their suffering touches no one and evokes no compassion because they’re martyrs of nothing, nothing but themselves, which isn’t much. The misery that their nullity and finiteness imposes on them is itself null and finite; it’s not a human misery, it’s an animal’s. The most refined among you will condemn the domination and tyranny of a handful of corrupt leaders, and wink knowingly. But indeed your submission is the whole reality of the world of domination. It’s not you and the “system,” its dictatorship, its poor people, and its suicides. It’s just you *in* the system, subjugated, blind, and guilty. We reproach you for your harmlessness.” And then the preaching ended with these words, the consequences of which were immediately felt: “Show us that you are not the subjects of your actions. But if you are, I hope you *die* of your indifference.”

Unable to refuse such a radiant chance to play the innocent bystander, a good number of passers by stopped and, hearing what was happening, a few tried to applaud the spectacle. But the weight of the insults they received in response dissuaded them from persisting in their effrontery. Unfortunately, by and large the spectators weren’t gifted with enough of

an attention span to be able to listen to a speech much longer than an ad spot. So, quite soon they had to give up trying to use us as entertainment, and went off to listen to some group of failed musicians who, a few meters away, were offering infinite comfort with some music that sounded like a dog food ad. A little while after our sermon, there was a demonstration by some bikers whose pride had been wounded by an odious ministerial decree, which for a few moments blocked Saint-Michel boulevard, and the indifference they were treated to for it was comparatively less sustained. Thus, it seems that among our contemporaries *people* are somewhat more sensitive to the noise of motors than to calls for truth. “Indifference,” wrote the divine Hello, “is a hatred of a kind all its own: a cold, lasting hatred that hides itself from others and sometimes from itself behind an air of tolerance, since indifference is never real. It is hatred coupled with a lie.” Later on, in his work *Mankind*, he added: “death, indifference, and separation are three synonymous words.”



A few of the sermonized

> Considering:

- 1 – All the inexhaustible perseverance that the French Philosophy Society [SFP] has shown ever since it has held sway to ensure that “dangerous thoughts be put aside until their poisons evaporate” (Nizan),
- 2 – The universal stakes involved in the conflict between our chthonic comrade Raguet and the president of said society, Bernard Bourgeois,
- 3 – The person of Jean-François Raguet himself, that raw artist of agitation, who for the great edification of the centuries will remain the inventor of the dig-it-ist dialectic and more generally of a *Weltanschauung* founded on coupling the principles of Hi-Lo poker and projective geometry, which also forms the foundation that as the perpetual secretary of the Commission for the Repression of Anti-Philosophical Activities he has made it our duty to uphold in a good number of circumstances, in keeping with the line of the Politburo of the Shit-Fuckers’ International (IFM),
- 4 – that said comrade was among us that day,
- 5 – that an objectively perfectly random chance gave rise to the SFP having one of their superfluous meetings at the nearby university at 4 pm on the Saturday in question,

the critical metaphysicians could not, without infringing upon their duties, do otherwise than to support comrade Raguet, and second him in the distribution of his tract *We're not fucking around anymore! Total war on these dogs!* Let no one be mistaken: the sympathy we might feel towards comrade Raguet in no way prejudices our agreement with his obligations (Jean-François Raguet persists in believing that he can infiltrate and undermine the French Communist Party all by himself), or with his theoretical positions; this is a man who *speaks a totally different language*. We feel that the reproduction here of the first paragraph of his tract as well as the last gives the reader rather a good idea of its content and spirit:

“What?! 30 years and 10 days ago, May 4th, 1968, I was one of the first seven students to be sent to jail by the De Gaulle regime, when Georges Pompidou was prime minister and you, Bernard Bourgeois, were a professor at the Sorbonne and the president of the board of admissions at the college of Philosophy, and you think you can impress me now by threatening me with exclusion from the University because I insulted you? Revolting pig! Pathetic little shit! Count your pellets, cretin, because you're made like a rat! You didn't have to distort the facts! And since you have distorted the facts and have been caught red handed, of course now you want to try to flail about defending yourself ignorantly. You're just sinking deeper in the shit, you fuck; you're predictable like clockwork, you abortion. But tell me, you filthy bastard, once you'd kick me out, how did you think you were going to make me shut up? [...]

I'd like to piss in your hair-part, but you're too low for that, Bernard Bourgeois, you snotty eruption on a termite's anus! Go ahead and hold your head high as long as you can. A surprising clinical case you are – an aberration like you really does belong in one of the formaldehyde jars in the Dupuytren museum as an archetype of the perfect specimen of a mother fucker.” (We note that since then, the sordid maneuvering of the abovementioned Bouregeois worked out for him, because Jean-François Raguet was indeed suspended from the University for one year.)

By a reflex that points out what they *really are* rather well, these gentlemen “philosophers,” thus having encountered some difficulty making good on their right to speculate innocently, quite naturally called their security guards, and then, faced with the diffuse impotence of the latter, they called the police. Thus could they unrestrainedly free themselves from their mask of vain and pretentious clowning. And although there was already something fishy about anyone with even the slightest illusions about the decrepit state of the University, that “grand, tender, warm free-masonry of useless erudition” (Foucault), it has now become abundantly clear: its sleep is the sleep of death.



On May 23, 1998, that is, exactly five hundred years to the day after the good Savonarola was hung and then burnt by his enemies the odious Roman Curia and the little oligarchs of Florence, a second sermon was given, interrupting a “free party.” And from Savonarola's time until now, it's been a constant that domination rarely pardons those who conceive of “politics” as anything other than a separate sphere of social activity.

The project of a politicized rave – a number of “collectives” were to intervene in the same way as us – was not tasteful in the eyes of the Political Intelligence Service, which thought the idea sufficiently seditious to send a few of their piggies out, even starting the day before, to keep people away from the entrance to the quarry where the techno-fest was going to happen. And so the first people to show up, who were in charge of setting up the equipment and smoothing out a rough path down to the party spot, got themselves democratically “enforced” out of the area. The next ones to come were dissuaded by the example. This kind of episode shows the point where the apparent incoherence of domination on the issue of raves finally fades. Obviously, it’s not drugs or techno themselves that they fear, but just the constitution of any kind of infra-spectacular world, whatever the form and whatever the content. We consider that it would not be superfluous for us to reproduce here the text of the sermon, as it was to be read at the end of the morning on the second day of the rave.

SERMON TO THE RAVERS

Enough convulsing!

It’s almost noon, and the high tide of chemical drunkenness is slowly starting to roll back. In ebbing it has given greater acuity to our perception of the *dryness of things*. All this sonic commotion, with everyone’s nerves crashing against one another; all this streaming of electronic lightning bolts, cracking through time and streaking across space; all the colossal amounts of calories burned off by our bodies shaking – all this has returned to nothingness now that the sun is shining and the implacable, calm, triumphant *prose of the world* besieges you once more. All this agitation is incapable of holding it off for more than one day, and its only function is to cover up for a few hours the immeasurable extent of our *aphasia*, our unfitness for community. One more time we come out of it all alone, forlorn, and with our clothes reduced to rags by the pandemonium on parade. But above all, we come out of it *deaf*. Because every time a little more of our ability to hear is gone, and that’s just fine for those who *don’t want to hear anything*. The cataclysm of decibels, like all the recourse to drugs, just serves to erode, numb, and methodically devastate all your organs of perception, peeling away all the flesh of your sensitivity layer by layer, as you inure yourselves like Mithridates to a *world made of poisons*. Moreover, it’s urgent that you be inured to it when it comes to sound, since, as De Sade once said: “the sensations communicated by the sense of hearing are the most vivid.” And so, hardly even past the age of adolescence, some of us will already be stricken by *tinnitus*, that acute buzzing in the ear produced by the ear itself, which makes a person forever incapable of *hearing silence*, even in the most distant solitary places. And thus, they will have lost the most *physical* of their metaphysical faculties: that of perceiving the nothingness and consequently *their own* nothingness. Beyond that point, the flow of time is but a more or less rapid process of inner petrification into hardheartedness, fatigue, and death. And so we come to enjoy the growing violence that is needed to effect us emotionally even a little, and in this sense we are absolutely *modern*, because “modern man has obtuse senses; he is subject to perpetual trepidation; he needs brutal excitements, strident sounds, hellish drinks, and short, bestial emotions.” (Valéry) So we see how these nights are the mirror image of the suicidal resignation of these days: the *rave* is the most imposing form of our *leisurely self-*

punishment, where each of us commune with each other in the jubilatory self-destruction of all. As you can see now, this is *a call to desertion*.

All the tragic truth of the *raver* comes down to this: what he's looking for he doesn't find, and what he finds is not what he's looking for. And thus he has to coat his brain with ever more fantastic illusions, so that he can remain totally unaware of the abyss that separates what *is* from what he *thinks* is. And in the last resort he drugs himself so as not to die of truth.

What the raver is after, in the first place, is a certain *romanticism of illegality*, a certain adventure in marginality. In fact, he's entered into a desperate quest after a *real* exteriority to the total organization of society, an *existing* place where its laws would be suspended, a space where he could at last abandon himself to what he thinks is his "freedom." But in the same way as it's this society that commands the necessity of the phantom of revolt against it, this society dispenses, authorizes, and organizes its own exteriority too. The Law also decrees where and when the Law will be suspended. The interruption of the program is itself *part* of the program. These *free parties*, which aren't really free in any sense of the word, are *tolerated*, in a *gracious* gesture, by the City Administration, when it's not the cops themselves that distribute the access maps, or, more pleasantly, save the facilities from being overtaken by mudslides, as happened recently at pH4. And so, *nothing*, in this illusory space of freedom, escapes domination, which, undeniably, has attained to a remarkable level of sophistication. But this lapse of judgment on the part of the raver would be but a comical irrationality were the reality not *exactly the opposite* of what he thinks it to be, in its principles and – almost invisibly – at its very heart. Because *the rave is today the most precise metaphor that this society has come up with for itself*. In both the one and the other, there are just these crowds of puppets shaking themselves to exhaustion in a sterile chaos, responding mechanically to audio commands given by a handful of invisible technophile operators, who they think are there at their service, and who *create nothing*; in both the one and the other, what we have is an absolute equality of social atoms to which nothing organic aggregates besides the unreal and booming cacophony of the world, obtained by the submission of the *masses* to the program; and in both, finally, we see the commodity and its hallucinatory universe centrally guaranteeing that *people* will tolerate the generalized drying out of emotionality, because all commodities are *drugs*. If, in spite of the obvious, the raver clings so dementedly to his blindness, it's only because he must at all costs maintain his illusions about the resolute hostility of Power and the furious energy of police repression. Otherwise he'd be forced to open his eyes to the frightening novelty of the most recent forms of domination, which no longer rest in a palpable "outside," simultaneously close by and far away - not in the authoritarian figure of a tyrannical master - but rather in the heart of all the social codes, even the very words we use, and carried in each of our gestures and in each of our thoughts. However, if he would for just a moment let go of his chimeras, he would have to recognize the *revolutionary essence* of his quest. Because this society's only authentic exteriority is *political conspiracy* undertaken collectively, aiming to overturn and transfigure the *totality* of the social world and move it towards a real, substantial freedom. And that's precisely what domination, which surrounds us so regularly with plain clothes cops, has now confusedly grasped.

But the raver is pursuing something different, and that is a certain tribal feeling of *community*, whether he's participating in organizing the rave or if he's just at the rave itself. Everything about his life shows his search for a perfect and immediate community where egos will have ceased to comprise obstacles between people. He seeks this so blindly that he's ended up confusing it with the *hellish* fanaticism of a collective quest for depersonalization, where the artificial and molecular explosion of individuality through chemicals has taken the place of intersubjective development, and where an external negation of the self by the *sadistic* stomping of machinelike music takes place, and each person slowly erases the lines delimiting his or her singularity. From one confusion to the next, the raver, who intended to escape the false community of the commodity and the paranoiac separation of corporal and psychic egos, finds no other means of reducing his distance from the Other than reducing himself to nothingness. He thus certainly will have no Other left, but he won't have any Self left either. He'll just remain there at the center of himself, in the lunar landscape of his inner desert, which rushes him along, obsesses him, and stalks him. If he continues down the path of annihilation that *people* have *deliberately* directed him down, so as to turn him away from the *revolutionary* project of producing *socially* the conditions for a possible authentic community, he will only make his every moment of lucidity all the more painful. In the end he will have to choose to abrogate his suffering in one way or another - by regularly ingesting ketamine for example. For the raver, the cure has always been the same as the disease.

And that, at bottom, is the third object of his quest: a certain *self-destructive pathos*. But since what he's destroying has no value, that self-destruction itself is insignificant. As a kind of suicide, it's pathetic. That act, which once was the most dazzling affirmation of sovereignty, has now been stripped by this world of all its grandeur. *People* have now found a *social function* for suicide: it serves domination. This kind of leisure is exactly what the post-industrial society demands to bury any too-flagrant signs of its *decomposition* beneath striking colors, since it serially produces the kinds of brainless ectoplasms that productivity-hypnosis requires. One might even see a sort of overtime work in this kind of leisure where people submit *voluntarily* to traumas that only make them all the more resistant to the growing hardness of the world and of work. But to put it plainly, we don't believe in this desperate and premeditated pursuit of death at all. Everyone, at a rave, is quite simply behaving in the image of this society as a whole: it self-destructs in the most frenetic unconsciousness, entrusting the repair of the damage done to some hypothetical future technology, ignoring the fact that redemption does not count among technology's competencies. Because in the end, the raver is "the most contemptuous of people, who doesn't even know how to have any contempt for himself," the *last man*, who skips along on the now quite cramped surface of the earth, and shrinks everything down to size; he is of a species even more indestructible than the aphid. "We invented happiness," he says, and gives a sly wink. "A little bit of poison now, here and there, to get yourself some pleasant dreams. And a lot of poison in the end, to die pleasantly." Certainly, he goes on working, but his work most often is little more than a distraction. And he sees to it that that distraction will be maintained. "We don't get rich or poor anymore; too boring. Who still wants to govern? Who still wants to obey? Both of those are too boring. No shepherds at all, just one big flock! Everyone wants the same

thing, they're all equal: whoever has other feelings can be put away; they'll fit in perfectly at the madhouse. 'In the old days, everyone was insane,' he says, and gives a sly wink." (Nietzsche). He's prudent, in fact; he doesn't want to spoil his appetite. But there's ice in his laughter.

Finally, what the raver seeks is *Festival*. He wants by all means to escape the hopeless mediocrity of alienated everyday life, as it is planned out for him by organized capitalism. In his own way, he is engaged, as were so many others, in the pursuit of *truly lived time*, and its agonizing intensity. But in all the apparent chaos of his dancing, we only see the imperious boredom of identical lives, identically uninhabited. The time when he's at raves is no less hollow and empty than the rest of his time is, and it fills his excited, consumer passivity only all too imperfectly. And when you watch him thrash about in it, what you're seeing is just *absence* gnawing away at him from the inside. But these aren't really parties: they're *get-togethers*. That is, they're additive multitudes of beings gathering in places where a few other people will have the decency to get them to SHUT UP. There, at the rave, there are but the shadows of men who have forgotten what they wanted to forget, runaways who think they're safe in the folds and recesses of their measly discourse-less sensations, the sterile rioters of a chemical happiness stupidly communing in a supermarket hedonism. Because the real Festival is none other than revolution, which contains within it the whole *Tragedy*, and the whole sovereign conscience, of an upside-down world. Whereas the revolution is the being at the highest summit of being, the rave is but the nothingness at the deepest depths of nothingness. This apparent negation of the rest of his existence is really nothing but the *custom-built* supplement that makes that existence tolerable to the raver: the chimerical abolition of time and consciousness, individuality and the world. All of this is little more than crystallized diarrhea for domesticated pigs.

We claim that the energy that's squandered to pure loss in raves should be spent otherwise, and that what we're dealing with here is the end of a world. We've just said a lot of things. It is urgent that they be discussed.



On May 21st, 1998, at 8:05 AM, Kipland Kinkel, 15 years of age, entered the cafeteria of his high school in Springfield, Oregon, dressed in a beige overcoat and a hat, climbed up on a table and calmly began to fire into the crowd of his little schoolmates gathered there for a school function. At first they thought it was a joke, or a show put on by a candidate for class president, and didn't immediately react. "*I thought it was all a show. I'd never heard a gunshot before. It was like we were in a movie,*" remarked Stephanie Quimby, 16 years old. When the first spurts of blood appeared, the high schoolers' torpor came to a sudden end, and, screaming, they rushed to the doors and dove under the tables among the gunshots. A few of them were so petrified they couldn't even move, and stood there incredulously, staring at their executioner, probably because "*he looked totally calm, like someone who was doing something quite normal,*" as one of them recalls. It was only when the young

man went to look in his bag to get out his 9 mm pistol, since his semi-automatic rifle was out of ammunition, that he was finally tackled by a courageous student. Barely an hour after the events, which left two dead and twenty-three wounded, Kipland Kinkel lunged with a knife at the police officer interrogating him; he had stolen the knife at the police station and hidden it in an inner pants pocket. But there were no victims that time; he was immediately subdued. Upon searching the house, five homemade bombs were soon found which had been set to welcome the police, only one of which actually exploded; they also found the corpses of Kip's father and mother. According to investigators, they had been shot the evening before the massacre. While waiting for his sixteenth birthday, the suspect was placed in solitary confinement in a juvenile detention center. Because of his suicidal impulses, all solid objects were kept out of his reach, and he was put under constant video surveillance; a report on his behavior was made every fifteen minutes and he was provided with only paper clothes.

To this day, nothing has come out to explain the reasons behind this act. "Efforts to find an explanation for this tragedy are being made once again." (*Liberation*, Saturday-Sunday, 23-24 May 1998). Kipland Kinkel's professors considered him as an "*American high schooler like any other*," and the school's principal maintained that as far as he could tell "*there were no exterior signs of anything like this*." As for the murderer's mom and dad, they were unanimously praised by those close to them as model parents, who always made sure at least one of them would be at home when their son was there so as not to leave him there all alone, and who were very imaginative in coming up with things to do to interest their son, often taking walks together and going on family sailing and skiing trips. "Their friends described the Kinkel couple as patient but strict, very devoted, loving, attentive and enthusiastic parents" (*Chicago Tribune*, May 25th, 1998). Like her husband Bill, Faith Kinkel taught Spanish at a nearby University. Passionate about her job, radiant and dynamic, she was as well-liked by her colleagues as by her students. "Violence was something totally foreign to her approach to life; she always promoted mutual understanding among cultures through education, communication, and travel." (*Scripps Howard News Service*, May 26th, 1998). "Kip's father, a distinguished tennis player, had tried to get his son into the sport, but he never really caught on to it. He was a loner, a timid child, small and slight, who clowned around in class to get attention" (*Chicago Tribune*, May 25th, 1998). It must indeed be admitted that Kipland Kinkel was a problem child. Not just because he "rejected any kind of authority," as Barry Kessinger, Bill Kinkel's friend and tennis partner, but above all because of his inexplicable fascination with destruction; no one knew where it came from, and it had never ceased to grow within him, in spite of his being on Prozac. His friend Aaron Keeney, 14 years old, "had stopped hanging out with him as much recently because he'd started doing strange things" (*Associated Press*, May 22nd 1998); it seems that Kipland Kinkel had a dark side. We have various corroborating evidence about this: "he dressed in black, and used to brag about having dismembered his cat and blown up a cow. He often put little bombs in people's mailboxes, and used to like to throw stones at passing cars from overpasses. The evening before, he'd wrapped his neighbors' house in toilet paper... His schoolmates had voted him the student '*most likely to set off the third world war*.'" (*Le Monde*, May 26th, 1998). Two of his classmates, Walter Fix and Shawn Davidson, even said that he'd shown them a black list of enemies one day, which he kept

in a folder in his desk. And so, when it was his turn in literature class to read from his personal diary, he stood up on the podium and in a controlled voice revealed to the class his plans to “kill everybody.” “Everyone laughed at him, because we thought he was kidding,” recalls Jeffrey Anderson, 15 years old. It was in that same school semester, moreover, that he’d done an detailed, serious exposé in Spanish class about how to make a homemade bomb, even illustrating it with a drawing of his own where you could see how to attach the explosive charge to a clock. “He spent most of his time in class talking about weapons and blowing stuff up,” says Sarah Keeler, 18 years old, his neighbor. “He’d tell you just like that about how he wanted to kill stuff; I think he just likes how it feels to kill things. He was obsessed with weapons, bombs, and anarchy,” said his friend Jeff Anderson. At his fifteenth birthday party, he’d offered Jeff a tool for breaking into cars, and then gone and painted the word “KILL” in whip cream on the driveway leading to his house. Jeff’s mother didn’t appreciate these little jokes much, and she forbade him to ever come to her house again. The day before his bloody rampage, Kip Kinkel had been suspended for having brought a gun to school. His father had then called the Oregon National Guard to sign his son up for their youth program.

As goes without saying, with the mysterious proliferation of motiveless massacres perpetrated by children – Kip Kinkel was the fifth case in one year in the United States alone – school killings have now taken on a real ritual aspect. They’ve even come to compete with the profession of postal employee, so infamous for these kinds of tragedies that it’s even used as a generic term to designate them (“going postal”) – and have given rise to a good number of debates, which always have a certain fundamental aspect in common: should gun ownership be prohibited? Should the age of criminal responsibility be lowered? Should the death penalty age be lowered? “Have we entered into a new culture of violence where children can no longer distinguish between reality and fiction? ... Why are we so reticent to recognize the ever growing evidence that when children kill it’s most often the result of a brain dysfunction?” (*ABC News*, September 9th, 1998) In such conditions as these, how can we not be afraid of our own children? Should we double-bolt our bedroom doors at night before we go to sleep? What kinds of hints could parents look out for to indicate that their child could be a natural born killer? What’s left to do with them when antipsychotic drugs and behaviorist techniques aren’t enough anymore? Do they have to be put in cages, be given injections?



Unable to tolerate any longer the inept blather of those ideologues of capitalism’s next modernization process, the Negriists, on June 15th 1998 the critical metaphysicians sabotaged their monthly seminar. By our use here of the word “Negriists” we aren’t just talking about that handful of morons that come to Paris to hear the official interpreters of their imprisoned master’s pomposity, nor even just those who more generally consider themselves close to the “thinking” of Toni Negri. By “Negriism,” we are referring to all the whole pseudo-leftist, post-workerist, para-autonomist nebula of those who, since they’ve now grown old and currently occupy a slightly envied position in society, would like to believe that capitalism can still be revolutionary, and that therefore all they have to do is earn their living as employees, community militants, or artists in order to advance

the communist cause. Moreover, it's his way of still preserving his heroic vision of himself as a "dragon rider" (the expression is his) even in the most ordinary and banal situations, even in the depths of the most notorious servitude, that lets one recognize the negriist. So in his nullity he'll never fail to quote Spinoza, Leopardi, Deleuze, Marx – the flattest parts of Marx, that is – Foucault, from whom he'll only retain what's accessible to him and which he can't really even understand, the old senile Gorz, or even a hint of situationism. Indeed, if the Negriists could ever manage to discover the existence of the concept of "contradiction," they'd have to abandon their sole ambition, which is to critique capitalism without critiquing its categories. But such a possibility is not to be feared among these slobberers, who can't help but be profoundly fascinated by the commodity's faculty for subsumption – nothing touches the Negriist emotionally so much as the "parable of Apple Corp," since it shows that people like him, cagey leftist parasites, can become millionaires and even sit on the board of directors of a multinational corporation without ever renouncing their penchant for posing as revolutionaries and champions of freedom. In any case, if he's allowed to talk theory he'll always limit himself to describing the contemporary mutations of the capitalist mode of production, while religiously cleaning out of it even the slightest trace of the negative. Thus the negriist can deliver dissertations all day long about "affect-value," "free labor," "precarious hipsters," "inflationist biopolitical entrepreneurs," "subjective capital," "machine-brains," "cyber-resistance," "existence wages," or "putting emotions to work," and do it without even the slightest touch of irony. The negriist's biased unilaterality makes his discourse easily recognizable; it's supposed to compensate, comically, for the frustrated reality he's condemned to by his refusal to take the negative into account. It's not rare to find, in Negri himself, that dense, pedantic gabble of university-professor logorrhea, that Deleuze and Guattari have left us the most undying examples of. Thus we can read from his pen, in number 42 – so early! – of *Future Anterior*, such lightning bolts as this: "expansivity, in all the directions of affect, exhibits the moment that transvalues its concept even so far as to make it able to sustain the shock of the postmodern." Well, how about that! As for their utopia – because these people are utopians, the *utopians of capital* – it consists in the fine hope that when the world has in every way become a gigantic supermarket, there will be no more cash registers. It's this aspiration to a kind of *commodity communism* that allows the negriists to applaud every new bit of progress made by capitalism in the chorus with all the other assholes, while reserving the sovereign right to do it with a sly wink. The "Benetton ideology" offers a spontaneously repugnant example of this manner of delivering oneself over to the existing order of things with hands and feet tied, and still putting on airs of intelligence. In spite of all our efforts in this direction, we've been unable to separate out what's just naivety and what's just opportunism in all these aberrations. Unless it's all just plain stupidity. It seems, in effect, that the negriists are incapable of conceiving that we don't just want to live in a world without cash registers, but one without commodities too.

Faced with the progress of negriism diffused throughout the pseudo-contestation milieus – primarily within AC! – and the upcoming launch of the negriist meteorology magazine *Alice*, the critical metaphysicians decided to make these worms know the fate they've got coming to them. A poem for four voices was therefore recorded, with very nice letterist wordplay, such as an ecstatic "trilili!" accompanied the howling of our hydrocephalic

friends' most fetishized concepts, all over a background voice chattering in negriish. No one was surprised that our ferocious little revolutionaries were gathering in the *Protestant Students'* hall – not much changes, apparently – in Paris, right in the middle of a famously red neighborhood, the 6th arrondissement. Upon arriving we found a little social climber from said magazine in the middle of entertaining them all with his defecations. These specters of theory proved worthy of themselves in practice, because they didn't manage even to come together enough to stop us from playing our tape recording, or even responding to our insults, and in the end they sat there frozen with fear at the red hot cast iron voice of comrade Raguet. Thus it is our glorious duty to report the death of this newborn negriist group. We'll take care of informing the victims' families.



“The psychiatrists found nothing to explain the act of 23 year old Alain on Father’s day, when he coldly killed his father and shot his mother.”

Marius Oreiller, 51 years old, a model employee at the SNCF, never saw who killed him on Sunday, the 18th of June 1995, Father’s day. And the only gift given him by his only son was a 8 mm bullet in the neck, fired point-blank.

Alain Oreiller is 25 years old now. But he doesn't like talking about *“that story.”* When asked by the president of the Creteil criminal court, he responds: *“I’ve told the story fifty times, both to the police and the judges. It’s the past; talking about it won’t bring anyone back!”* But president Yves Courneloup insists. Visibly infuriated, the young man consents to giving a short summary again, which he tells with a scornful grin. *“I’d taken a pill of ecstasy at some friends’ house, and I hadn’t gotten much sleep. My dad woke me up. We didn’t argue about it or anything, nothing special. I went up behind him; he was watching TV and didn’t hear me coming. I fired. Then my dad was dead, that’s all.”*

Yves Corneloup gets angry: *“Your father isn’t dead, you killed him!”*

“Yeah, same thing.”

“No, it’s not the same thing at all!”

“Alright, fine, I killed my father, that’s it!”

François, his mother, who survived it all, comes up to the bar to tell about her son’s sudden explosion of hate and violence.

Her voice shows no rancor or anger, just an immense sadness.

“Around 1 o’clock, Marius and I had finished preparing our meal. My husband went to wake up Alain, who was still asleep in his room.” At the time, his being woken up at any time whatsoever was always a subject for arguments. So was Alain’s refusal to work. The evening before, the boy had told his friends: *“Man, I’m sick of my parents always hassling me to get a job.”* But since June 18th was a day off, the couple weren’t thinking about such things. In their small living room loaded with rustic furniture, Marius and Françoise had even opened up a bottle of champagne. When Alain went into the room, he found his parents sitting there holding their glasses. *“Oh yeah, that’s right, it’s Father’s Day. Happy father’s day, dad!”* he said. His father offers a toast to him; Alain refuses; it just so happens that he’s on a fast. Since the whole family’s there, François invites Marius and Alain to go into the dining room and she goes into the kitchen to fetch some snails. *“When I came back, Alain pointed a revolver at me; I thought it was a toy.”*

And then I saw my husband slumped over the table, his bleeding head lying in the leftovers. I approached him; I really didn't grasp what was happening. And then Alain hit me in the face with the butt of the gun and knocked me down. 'My son,' I asked; 'what's got into you?'

The reply froze her in fear. *"There's no more son. You're going to suffer. I'm not acting out of sentiment anymore!"*

Then Alain Oreiller shot his mother. But the gun, a smuggled pellet pistol, didn't work. He pulled the trigger a dozen times with no effect. He opened the barrel, and aimed again. *"I put my hand in front of my eyes and then a shot went off,"* Françoise went on. *"Everything went black; I felt like I was dying and I was so angry because I couldn't help my husband."* The shot Alain fired passed through his mother's hand before lodging itself in her forehead. When she opened her eyes again, Alain had put music on, and poured himself a glass of Veuve Clicquot. *"Things are gonna change around here. I'm the boss around here now!"* Françoise tried to get up. *"I thought I was dreaming. But he said, 'What, you want another one?' and fired again."* This shot only grazed Françoise. Alain stood up, hands in his pockets and his body hunched over, and said: *"I want a bitch, see? So you're gonna be my bitch now!"*

Having made this declaration Alain left, leaving his mother for dead. He spent two days wandering around the Vitry-sur-Seine area, then hit up the Vincennes forest area; *"I was thinking I could find a whore."* He was arrested by the police a few steps away. Neither the two days full of debate, nor the reports from all the experts, were able to explain Alain Oreiller's act. The psychiatrists talked about him having an Oedipus complex, but no one could explain the action itself. It was *"an enigma,"* said one of them; others suggested he was *"too spoiled"* a kid, blamed a *"suffocating"* climate, a *"scant"* environment, an *"authoritarian"* upbringing. Just like Marius the railwayman, Françoise, the daughter of a peace officer and an accountant at the same corporation since 1972, had dreamed of having a child that would share the same faith in her fundamental values: honesty and hard work. But, even early on, Alain, *"an adorable, very well behaved child,"* would just sit there looking out his window with envy at his friends playing in the courtyard in front of the building. *"I had lots of toys but I always stayed cooped up."* Later, in spite of the private schooling, scooter, and car offered him by his mother, the adolescent Alain went off this all too straight and narrow track. *"When I was 9 years old I dreamed that if it weren't for my parents I could conquer the world,"* he wrote as an adolescent. Except that he was never brave enough to just leave the familial cocoon. He even went in for a test to be a TGV [high speed train] driver; he alone was accepted out of 500 candidates. *"We were in heaven!"* said Françoise. But for Alain work and authority were *"just annoying stuff."* After five days' professional training, he quit the job. And the tragedy happened not long after that. For the past three years, Françoise has visited the prison every other month. She brings him money and clothes. She started making visits as soon as she was able to move about again: *"no matter what he did, I can't abandon him; he's still my son,"* she told the court. The mother and her son write long letters to one another; Françoise's letters are really beautiful, simple, and poignant. Without the slightest affectation, she tries to explain her suffering to her son, and how she misses her husband, the man she loved. She wants Alain to understand that he still is and will always be his murdered father's son. Alain responds that he thinks he'll come back to live with her when he's free in their little apartment in Vitry-sur-Seine. *"We can't be*

separated, we're a family.” Françoise trembles with fear at such prospects. When Maurice Papon was freed at the beginning of the Bordeaux trial, she phoned her lawyer in a panic: “*Could it be possible that Alain might get the same treatment?*”

However, the three psychiatrists agree on one point at least: they’ve found no trace of any mental illness in Alain Oreiller. They can’t even find the slightest sign of any “*psychotic episode*” having taken place at the moment of his deed. One of them, because he had to report something, put forth the hypothesis that Alain was in a “*hypnopompic state*,” in other words, an “*incomplete awakens in a twilight state*,” which received only a polite skepticism from the magistrates.

On June 1st, the attorney for the prosecution, Marie-Dominique Trabet, requested twenty years’ imprisonment for this “*egocentric little pick up artist, this big narcissist who can’t stand anyone resisting him.*” And after three hours of debate, the jury passed that sentence. (*Liberation*, Thursday, June 18, 1998.)



On June 19th, 1998, a handful of critical metaphysicians publicly humiliated “the young and effervescent Laurent Gutmann,” who with his complacent theatrical direction had dared to transform Calderon’s metaphysical masterwork *Life is a Dream* into a hipster boulevard-theater show. The fact that his Pygmalion had just been rebuked and gotten told to look out or else one day he and his peers will be strung up “*for lack of profundity*” didn’t prevent the lead actor in this buffoonish play from proving us right and admitting that he’d been taken advantage of. And so yapping whores of both sexes there that day – mostly from the “*cultural milieus*” - got to experience true silence, probably for the first time in their lives. They don’t have to worry; they’ll get plenty more chances.



On Sunday, July 12th, on the fringes of the International Summit of Critical Metaphysicians at Arcachon (SIMCA), the motion to “*politicize the beach*” was adopted. A banner to such effect was thus painted, reading “*You’re going to die – and your mediocre vacations can’t do anything about it.*” And so, in the afternoon of that same day, at the time of the biggest crowds, the critical metaphysicians marched many hundreds of meters down the whole length of the beach called “*Pereire*” carrying said banner. If the sun can now be stared directly into, thanks to advances in the optics industry, it appears that such is not always the case with death, as the reactions of the beachgoers proved. The operation was a complete success. It revealed all the unimaginable disquiet hidden beneath the whole seaside meat rack. One sunbather thus came and asked us “*why*” he was going to die, and another inquired of us “*what*” he was going to die of. A third, certainly more familiar with the art of clairvoyance than the first little Heidegger, even tried to get us to tell him “*when*” he was going to die. A last one, clearly under the illusion that we were his peers, pushed the envelope of perceptiveness by observing, “*Oh yeah, you guys; you sure are positive about life!*” All the same, the

eight year old kid that replied to his little brother, “ah forget it, those guys are nuts!” and the old bearded fisherman who asked in a loud voice with a knowingly exaggerated Gascony accent, “what, you think they’re from around here?” showed at the very least a slight degree of dereliction of duty.



Arcachon, July 11th, 1998. Generalize disquiet.



“Cases of poisoning proliferating in Japan. TOKYO. A fifty-eight year old Japanese man was found dead Monday August 31st after having drunk from a can of tea containing a poison that same day, reported a police spokesman on Thursday, September 3rd. This death is part of an increasing spread of poisoning cases in Japan. On Tuesday, the manager of a supermarket in Suzuka, in the center of the country, spat out some canned tea because it tasted so bitter; police later found traces of cyanide in the can. On Wednesday, a taxi driver drank from a can containing a pesticide in Koryo (West). Four people died in July after eating a plate of curry containing arsenic, and at the end of August, a person unknown sent bottles of disinfectant labeled as a weight loss drink to twenty-three students at a school.” (*Le Monde*, Friday, September 3rd, 1998)



Faced with the spectacle of so many bitter calumnies, so many predictable machinations, so many misunderstandings maintained on purpose, we feel it is necessary to make public what was probably the first ever honest critique of the Bourdieuvian imposture. We got our chance when one of the critical metaphysicians was invited, with near-total contempt, to participate in the 2nd International Marx Congress and speak on the impertinent theme, “daring to research critically.” None of them obviously would have ever consented to make such a grotesque engagement – everyone knows the role the Communist Party has in organizing these kinds of buffooneries – if the other puppets that’d been invited to pontificate hadn’t been two editors of *“the ‘December’ of the French Intellectuals,”*

published in the collection *Liber/Reasons to Act*, under the protuberant eye of the much-worshipped Bourdieu himself. The decision was thus made to accept the invitation for Thursday October 1st 1998, on the grounds of Nanterre University, building L, at 2 pm, but the subject of the presentation was not explicitly clarified. When the day arrived, a sudden attack of courtesy permitted the critical metaphysician to let the two dismal doctors of sociology go first to enumerate their ordered list of complaints about the University, which so contemptuously deigns to give audience to “critical researchers,” and in so doing slows the progress of the Sociological Sciences, whose marble-white objectivity is sacrificed so scandalously in futile “political arguments,” etc... Once his turn had come at last, after so many terrifying platitudes, he delivered his contribution to the debate. It began like this: “It must be considered one of the most singular manifestations of the present face of domination that under the auspices of a party in a position of power a handful of State employees have publicly gathered here today with the otherwise quite healthy concern of ‘daring to research critically.’ In other times, this might have been taken as a kind of provocation, or at least as showing some spirit, but since then domination has effectively adjudged to itself the monopoly on critique – that is, the inalienable right to denounce its failings and jeopardize itself – because that jeopardy is precisely the permanent state of emergency that it needs in order to force general consent to the proliferation of its *diktats*. It’s now considered extremely rude to not ask a worm-eaten social organization for its permission before demolishing it. But the extreme insolence with which this society speaks of its vices is in no way a sign that it’s all-powerful; it’s just part of the final phase of its decomposition.” One of the first paragraphs drew up the death certificate for the University: “That the right to critique is a privilege only enjoyed by the powerful is as true in the University as it is in the rest of this society. But that’s hardly a significant scandal. It’s no less absurd to want to reform the university than it is to intend to destroy it. ... Because within the heart of nihilism there is no true teaching or even any real technique possible anymore.” The conclusion went as follows: “All in all, the decline of the university and the disappearance of the student subject are but minor details within a much more titanic process: the decomposition of commodity society.” A second paragraph gave an easily recognizable analysis of the function of Bourdieu and his peers in the disaster economy: “The role of the intellectual within this movement, a movement which domination intends to freeze, must be measured in exactly inverse proportions. The intellectual’s strategic importance cannot be overestimated, and that’s all the more true if you take that as a critique. The intellectual certainly does in essence have a repressive social function. We say that as long as there are intellectuals – that is, as long as contestation, thought, and knowledge are seen as specialized, and not general activities of mankind - there will be no intelligence... And when at last the artificially prolonged survival of an evil and expired social order has been entirely stripped of its aptitude for rendering the gangrene consuming it invisible, that is, for preserving in the new reality the appearance of the old reality, the intellectual then finally ends up having a kind of power, even in all the powerlessness that he’s agreed to – a power that many people, especially those who sign up to get doctorates in sociology, even envy him for. The monstrous media inflation must also in the same way be considered connected to the absolute need – even beyond simple denial as imposed on him by everyday experience – to maintain the commodity mode of disclosure and all the categories it commands: usefulness, work, property, value,

exchange, interest, etc... All these patched-together concepts, now so obviously unfit for use in understanding anything really experienced by anyone, which do no more than render it unintelligible, must be maintained, kept-up, and recycled at all costs by the intellectuals, naturally with the use of an ever more aberrant range of terminology, which brings the more scrupulous among them to talk, for example, about such things as a 'calculus of impartiality,' which is certainly no small thing..." ... "The critical intellectual ensures the fine-tuned production of clear consciences. Simply by his long-winded existence, moreover, he reminds his listeners of the necessity of scientific analysis, the reasonable reform of everything, and the categorical imperative of dialogue – that is, of everyone's duty to express themselves in the only language domination understands: its own. It is not at all paradoxical that the critical intellectual is the most useful objective ally of domination precisely where he is the most critical; it is, for instance, by attacking 'market journalism' that he most effectively maintains the illusion that there can be such a thing as good journalism, and by stigmatizing 'the state nobility' that he implicitly permits people to talk of States without immediately implying their equation with enslavement ... Even when there's no other real critique in the "closed universe of discourse" besides practical critique, besides the most naked violence, even when critique unquestionably implies just absolute hostility and foreignness to the world of the commodity, the critical intellectual still puts forth his dreary considerations about symbolic domination. And it is at this point that he unfailingly goes back over to the side of this society: in the dedication he puts into totally emptying the realm of the politically sayable of the Unsayable. The Infinite does not fall within his field of study, which only comprehends the determined and given. According to him, it doesn't exist. And having said that he thinks the last word has been said. Anguish, passion, suffering, freedom, destruction, and, more generally, all the manifestations of human negativity are among the various things that he conscientiously works to hold back at the gates of Publicity. Just like Jünger's dominant-type characters, the social sciences 'live ceaselessly with the terrifying idea that not just a few isolated individuals but whole masses might one day cease to be afraid of them; that would mean their certain downfall. This is also the reason for their rage against all doctrines of transcendence. Those kinds of ideas, after all, hide the supreme threat: that men might lose their fear.' There are certain places in the University where the mere word 'metaphysics' is hounded like heresy. And so the social sciences assiduously work to keep man stuck within the shattered horizons of his finiteness, his scattered understanding, his mortal remains and his miserable limitations. 'It's impossible to imagine an institution where just to preserve it for the sake of preserving it would be of any value,' wrote Lukacs; but it is this society as a whole that can no longer justify its being preserved for any other reason than for the simple fact that it exists, aside, perhaps, from its remarkable way of portraying itself so clearly in every one of its perversions. Its nothingness calls for its destruction more distinctly each day. That's why the critical researcher needs to do his research – because what needs to be critiqued (i.e. pulverized) is so blindingly obvious that it takes years and years of schooling to not see it." Up to this point, the audience's only reaction to the content of the speech and its somewhat martial tone was one of extreme atmospheric tension; after all, there was little chance that even a single future critical metaphysician might have happened to have been astray among so many brains so eager to have the French Communist Party indulge them. But it was the end of the lecture that brought that

tension to its peak, which among certain spectators was signaled by a clearly recognizable hiccup-like hysterical snickering. And in fact the text's conclusion could hardly have let any doubts persist about our intentions: "But for the time being, critique only makes for doctorates in Sociology, and on all fronts, everyone agrees to just let them starve to death among the dried-up teats of their Science. Because what critique needs now is poets and theologians, not conscientious functionaries of social intelligence... Indeed, it has no more immediate enemy than this ever all-knowing 'sociology,' which works so hard to make the disturbing familiar, with all the unbelievable patience that mediocrity can be capable of. And so we'll have to leave the critical researchers to their miserable lamentations about the precariousness of their professional positions, and about how weak the resources the enemy allocates to them to make their dissertations about it with are. All those who can't bring themselves to abandon the ship when it's already so obviously sinking, just because even as it's being swallowed up they esteem their careers more highly than the perilous freedom of the partisan, tie their fates to that of a world that's doomed. Their mediocre yet detailed indignation gets no more than contempt from everyone. No one's about to follow them, and no one's even about to like them. Because they critique domination in terms that even domination itself isn't averse to using, they'll most likely end up facing the same firing squads as will those who, to the bitter end, they remained merely the fault-finding accomplices of. Whatever happens, they've no longer been keeping up with the times. Sociology is dead. We won't have any good memories of it." To finish it off, a codicil was uttered: "in spite of what one might have hastily concluded from the official documents for this congress, Marx was the man that wrote that 'in order to pardon itself its sins, humanity only needs to recognize them as such.'" Reduced to their primordial nothingness, and incapable of citing any of the master's books in his own defense, nor any of the books in his collection, we don't expect to see any expression of resentment on the part of the comic buffoon Bourdieu towards *Critical Metaphysics* before at least 2002 [three years after the time of writing]. The biggest big-shot doctor of Sociology of the doctors of Sociology there tried to act like the whole thing was just "some kind of joke." But he quickly realized that it was certainly no joke, when the crowd, having nervously applauded the intervention, attacked him without the slightest regard. In a cruel irony, he happened to be a kind of post-marxist confusionist whose speech was dependent on the newspaper *Le Monde Diplomatique*, and was forced by the virulence of their charges to leave the room before the conference was over. And having finished reading his text, the critical metaphysician just kept silent.



Illusion is not just one of the things we try to protect ourselves from each day; it is also among the various blemishes we need to annihilate. Not out of caprice, much less on orders from the *Weltgeist*, but simply because illusion is complicit in everything and we are not prepared to forgive this society a single one of its cowardly acts. But if there's any one "milieu" that has most particularly taken up the position as official janitor of *all* illusions, even illusion *as such*, it's indeed the infamous, suffocating, and noxious "cultural milieu." In the years to come it should be expected that domination will more and more authorize "art" to give the *ukases* that it couldn't otherwise dress up as truth anymore without being ridiculed. That is something that it is somewhat urgent to

undermine, before it gets too comfortably engaged. Though people might harbor other, more reprehensible kinds of indifference towards the present production of cultural commodities, this kind is nonetheless probably the most dangerous, for it is our most insidious enemy operating under cover of insignificance.

However repugnant and deeply absurd an idea it would appear to grant even a second's attention to the case of a man who still claims to make "art" and even "literature," the critical metaphysicians felt it would be unacceptable to let the wrong ideas spreading around about the para-buddhist Xeroxer Michel Houellebecq go on subsisting. This total abortion is certainly especially deserving of our hostility; after all he was among the first examples of the perfect Bloom to proclaim himself publicly as such, and this, beyond all his exaggerated self-adoration, would alone have gotten him a good place on our black list. Equally contributing to that, moreover, is the fact that he's constantly spurting from his putrefied buccal meatus the adjective "metaphysical," and using it as just some unusual synonym for "profound" or "spiritual," all terms which make for excellent marketing gimmicks on the new-age consumers' market. But experience has shown us well enough that it is vain to want to do battle with maggots, since the most you can do is crush them. We have no particular complaint against the person of Michel Houellebecq, since no such person exists. "Michel Houellebecq" is merely a pseudonym for nothingness. On the other hand, it was left up to *Tiqqun* itself, and as well to the efforts of the critical metaphysicians, to draw attention to the brutal outbursts of the language of flattery that the houellebecq's appearance on the surface of Publicity gave rise to in the "cultural milieu." The fact that in this matter we saw the journalist "opinion-makers" denounce the dictatorship of "self-righteousness," and a large publishing house opine that one of its writer-clerks had been the victim of "shopkeepers," and that the clerk in question, though unanimously praised by the puppet critics, had complained about his being persecuted, in the end was just a question of a difference in degree from the normal self-serving confusionism of the publishing industry. What is not so typical on the other hand is the *consciousness* with which everyone took their role-playing to the limit, enthusiasts and detractors alike, in faking a passion about it. The air of false absolutes in which the different gestures involved in the "literary comeback event" – which is how the various press organizations announced it, complying with Flammarion's instructions – took place objectively cried out for us to disturb the course of events a bit, while being careful to never let ourselves fall into the trap of being propelled onto the stage. When the Spectacle is impudent enough to try to glad-hand the masses, that's what it's exposing itself to. It wasn't a smart move for them to try to promote their trash in a "public" space like FNAC [a large French entertainment retail chain], as they did on the Saturday afternoon of October 24th, 1998. Above all because it's a delicate matter when the Spectacle has to explain to its consumers that it's fed them false advertising about its commodities, while assuring them that it won't do any good to complain about it anyway. And so it was not without discomfort that Michel Houellebecq went down to the FNAC that day to confess his point of view. What he said was basically: sure, the book was sold and bought on the pretext that it supposedly "passed judgment on society and civilization," that is, on the pretext of its political nature, and for the critical element it contained; but that that wasn't really the author's concern, since after all he's just another producer of cultural commodities like any other, who happened to have decided to exploit

the quite promising opportunity that the “death of ideologies” – this is the euphemism *people* use to designate hostility towards thought – has given to bastards like him. Insufficiently trained in the proper use of the language of flattery, the high school kids that happened to be there saw that as a glaring impropriety and didn’t understand why not drawing the consequences of what you write nevertheless had to be called “literature.” Once he’d acknowledged to them all that he was a “worm,” they let him know that they considered him to be more like a “buffoon.” In a word, the houellebecq didn’t manage to render his shame less shameful by offering it up to Publicity, for the kids that were there at least. As for the critical metaphysicians, they began by distributing a tract, which we reproduce here.

Michel Houellebecq, biographical note

(an excerpt from the *Encyclopedia of Redemptions*, 24th revised edition, Paris, 2074; translated from the future Latin)

Author and know-it-all born in 1958 on Réunion island, then a province of France. We know very little about what he did or what he was, since the newspapers, which set the era’s standards for the literary genre, have all but disappeared in the course of the great conflicts that local historians are today dedicating their efforts to taking an inventory of. None of his works has survived, even in fragmentary form. We have no direct witnesses of his person, but it seems that none of those that he called his “friends” – in the very strange sense that that era understood the word – considered it worthwhile to pay any homage to him. At most we have a short-lived wave of insults, from the years 2004-2005, which either transparently or just plausibly alluded to this obscure personage, among which we have: “houellebecq-for-brains,” “supermarket taxidermist,” “visionary little lapdog,” or the classic, “Houellebecq’s your mom.” It appears however that over a number of years he enjoyed a certain notoriety difficult to explain today, and was the subject of a mass of polemic arguments. One way or another, it is mostly from one of these that we draw the majority of what information is left about this person and his ideas. Thus we find in the archives of the Imaginary Party, entry number H.492-B-58, a tract entitled *Michel Houellebecq, biographical note*, as well as a text from number 2 of the historical magazine *Tiqqun* with the title, “Function of the houellebecq.”



From these documents we derive a large number of elements whose comprehension would require a deep knowledge of the sinister Anthracite Age, which lasted from 1990-2005. It should not be forgotten that the Houellebecq era was the backdrop for a formidable social regression in all the territories which at the time were called “developed,” and in all domains. A chronicler of those times thus reports that the confusion that reigned then even gave rise to the formation of a scientist, pro-state “revolutionary” party, headed by a mysterious character named Jean-Paul Bourdieu. Commodity society had long before given its last gasp, and was at the time only surviving thanks to an ever more glaring, ferocious, and spastic tyranny. Since this order

with no more justification couldn't defer the general acknowledgement of its bankruptcy, it needed to develop a kind of language where recognizing the kind of human suffering it engendered wouldn't imply any kind of a project of liberation from it, but where it would simply be condemned and then put at the service of another new modernization of domination. Various concurring sources indicate that there was such thing at the time, in these "developed" societies, as a kind of "cultural milieu," – since there were people around back then who really believed, without laughing, in the existence of a phantasmagoric "cultural milieu," and some of them were even demented enough to claim to be "part of it" – which collaborated in the spread of this *language of flattery*, which as we know from the venerable Hegel, "knows *being for itself* as separate from *being in itself*, or the aims and goal as separate from the truth" – in other words, this "cultural milieu's" impotent expression was an example of such language. In France, the singularly proselyte role of a certain press organ entitled "Les Inrockuptibles" [glossy French alternative cultural magazine; its name is a play on words mixing 'rock' and 'incorruptible'], can be pointed to as an example of this kind of disaster-aesthetics, or more precisely, an aestheticization of disaster.

It appears that it was said "cultural milieu's" special assignment to carry out this kind of underhanded repression. Their concrete use of language, symbols, and thought within the modes of production had the effect of reducing literature and art in general to a sadly ridiculous, showy, and weak-willed form of social activity, and they seem to have prided themselves on being cut off from any effectiveness at all. The most remarkable consequence of this state of things was the massive proletarianization of the whole fringe infatuated with that milieu, a fringe which otherwise was particularly averse to supplying the market with its share of spiritual tranquilizers, mundane topics of conversation, and miscellaneous curios, such as was required by the universal need for Entertainment which was the norm in those times. And so that fringe would go on producing this kind of "culture," totally neutralized because it was separate from everything else, with an irrepressible hint of *resentment* in the face of its own decline. Because it was not merely that the whole of society no longer had more than a gentlemanly indifference to the miserable agitations of the so called "cultural" milieu and its futile preoccupations; it was above all that it had disintegrated it, declassed it, left it alone, and basically starved it. It's clear how easy it would be in such conditions for a few soulless thugs, a few infamous failures, to want to make a career out of nihilism and drag it out as long as they could. Michel Houellebecq, it appears, was merely just another one of them.

In this era of absolute darkness, the function of the houellebecqs – and we are not talking about the individual person of the abovementioned Michel, who after all we don't know much about, but who appears to have been something rather, repugnant, viscous, flaccid, and insignificant, at least according to our sources – was to lift the state of degradation that man was in at the time to the level of a *philosophia perennis*. They contributed to integrating a fragmentary critique of consumption into the dominant discourse of the time, but only in the interest of making that misery out to be something ontological – that is, of excluding from all reflection the idea of any practice that might destroy this curse, and if possible even exclude the Idea itself. They critiqued alienation not in order to work towards its suppression, but towards depression, which at the time was the subject

of the production of whole industrial sectors. At all points, their business was similar to that of the pitiful Huxley, who would certainly have been forgotten had he not been so superbly put in his place by the Super-essential Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno: they eternalize all the reified antinomies, and all the arbitrary inconsistencies, proper to bourgeois thought... Hence the essential thing is not just the fact that in the deceptive choice between the abundance of traditional societies and the cybernetic “best of possible worlds” they’d chosen the latter; indeed, the choice itself and its very falsehood are the essential things, as the history of our century has so clearly demonstrated. Identically, the important thing wasn’t what they said – and everything leads us to believe that they said nothing consistent at all in the end – but the language they managed to get themselves heard by using. And so, the Houellebecq chose chimeras for his enemies, i.e., the typical fictions of the bourgeois aberration (the individual, liberalism, sexuality, etc.). And for these, above all, it was a question of making *people* grant an existence to them by their very faith in them. In so doing, the Houellebecq offered to the “Clear Conscience of the Left,” the stupefying hypocrisy of which it is impossible to imagine today, its dreamed-of chance to have a few obscure, hollow, and immensely boring debates – not like the good Boredom of today that we know and love, but the horrifying boredom of those times – to feast upon with total satisfaction, knowing that the lie would remain intact no matter what. Thus it gave the most hackneyed commonplaces from the old bourgeois trash-heap a sophisticated form, and a kind of second youth. Like so many of his contemporaries, he was incapable of imagining that anybody might somehow refuse to be reduced to being either part of the coercive collective system, or to being a contingent individual, and refused to imagine any meaning not totally contrary to life and a consciousness not totally opposed to happiness. In fact, it was a mere matter of sitting at the bedside of domination as it lay dying, soothing it by conjuring up a non-problematic version of reality, and describing society as if it had no contradictions in it which had just been due to a temporary technological backwardness. Michel Houellebecq and his peers did no more than to slightly stave off the unavoidable process of Tiquun. As for us, we’d known for a long while that “humanity doesn’t have to choose between the totalitarian Universal State and individualism.” (Saint T.W. Adorno)

Too weak to overcome his profoundly ignoble nature, Michel Houellebecq regardless couldn’t even make his abjection durably likeable. And, in the first years of our century, he was swept into the black hole of history. Doubtless having judged that Nothingness wouldn’t let itself be annihilated but would instead contaminate its enemies, its real enemies took care to attack it directly, and abandoned it to its insipid decomposition. Legend has it (cf. *Cruel Tales of the Anthracite Era* XCVI, 25) that he died some time around the year 2017-2018, thrown out of the window of a Pat Pong whorehouse by an authentic Thai virgin. It is also claimed that the stinking pile of his gangrenous viscera and his broken skeleton were thrown out to that area’s famed wandering dogs to nibble on, and that even they didn’t want to eat them. That at least was the hardly believable doom that was foretold for him by the Imaginary Party’s tract, entitled *Michel Houellebecq, biographical note*, dated October 24th, 1998.

- A *conscious* fraction of the Imaginary Party, October 24th, 1998.

The critical metaphysicians didn't need to let the houellebecq blather on for long before realizing that a dwarf like him wasn't on their level, and wouldn't be even if he climbed on the shoulders of his toad of a publisher. So they at first they were just going to limit themselves to verifying whether he still maintained what he'd told *Les Inrockuptibles* – namely that he liked Stalin “because he killed lots of anarchists (laughs),” a statement which could just have been some kind of a vulgar promotional provocation, intended to get a few impenitent leftists all worked up – and what he'd written in his epilogue to Valerie Solanas' *Scum Manifesto*: “in the middle of the sixties, in the middle of an unprecedented ideological mess, and in spite of a few nazi slip-ups, Valerie Solanas had the courage to maintain a progressive and reasoned attitude, which was in line with the most noble aspirations of the western project: man's establishment of absolute technological control over nature, including his own biological nature and evolution. And that's part of working towards the long term goal of rebuilding a new kind of nature, on a basis conforming to moral law - that is, establishing the universal reign of love, period.” What we found, however, was a public comprised of around a hundred persons, groveling there to lap up the words of the panicky, bilious little minstrel, talking about how interested he was in freedom, man, meaning, and language, and from the depths of his sophisticated nihilism was trumpeting the advantages of a herd future in an all-encompassing technological dictatorship, something a bit more worthy of us attacking. But this moribund bunch hardly had a chance to react with even a few imperceptible gelatinous vibrations when it was insulted with the qualifier “amorphous.” After we'd shown it the nightmare and the impossibility of such an end of history as that, and asked it whether that was what it wanted, a total silence, a viscid silence of hatred, swept in among the crowd. Finally a lethargic voice came up from some kind of a homunculus lurking in the middle of the room, speculating in a blubbery, resigned tone: “Well, one way or another that's what's going to happen, after all!” Upon hearing this, the audience, seeing its right to sleep questioned, hastily clamored that we ought to be talking about the book and only the book. Finally, the privilege of the last word went to a depressing old housewife around sixty years old, an old bag who devoured novels in the insomnia of her retiree's nullity: “Well, I don't know whether I'm amorphous or whatever, myself personally, but I'd just like to thank mister Michel Houellebecq. I just discovered his first novel. Me, I don't care about politics. I read novels from the extreme right, I read novels from the extreme left. And I have nothing to do with ideology. For twenty years I wasn't allowed to read Raymond Abellio. What's important to me is the pleasure of reading, letting myself be swept away by the story, the style, etc.” Clearly Michel Houellebecq can pride himself on having gotten himself at least some readers that are as much of flightless little creeps as he is. But as fanatically resigned as they are, and as numerous, the houellebecqs are of no account on the scales of fate, since even in their enthusiastic moments they side with this dead civilization.

Obviously after that there was no lack of stuck up old loonies from the literary milieu cropping up to take advantage of the situation and churn out a few pages full of stupidity, bleating, and bad faith in *Le Monde*. And after all it's perfectly understandable: these days no one hardly makes any kind of criticism, so of course it makes people talk. Hence

we read about “Houellebecq on trial” – as if it were the real person and not just his function that was attacked here – a trial presided over by some diabolic invisible authority, doubtless by this “group of youths methodically spread throughout the conference room” at the FNAC on October 24th 1998 (*Le Monde*, Sunday 8-Monday 9 November 1998). The whole thing was related in detail, of course without the writers being able to resist the reflex to falsify the events and propositions at least a little; but they were especially careful not to mention the existence of any tract, which could have hinted that the people from the Imaginary Party were able to engage in discourse articulate enough to shatter “the whole old, cracking edifice.” Other articles followed, all in the same gallant, hysterical mold, all invariably taking up the defense of Houellebecq against his supposed (yet never named) enemies, as is the rule in the Spectacle. They all called everyone’s attention to the urgent need to save “art” and “literature” from “ideologico-political constraints” (*Le Monde*, November 11th, 1998), even though it’s so painfully obvious that on the contrary it’s art that, *since it’s nothing anymore on its own*, is now forced to stick its dirty fingers into the “ideologico-political.” It’s only natural that the little decomposed literary milieu chose the moment when cultural commodities show themselves to be the very model of “ideologico-political” production to start whimpering and whining, and to cry out in defense of literature’s inalienable right to insignificance. Oh eternal spinelessness of art! Suffice it to say that we were not very surprised at all to receive, in the days following the incident, a variety of overtures coming specifically from that milieu, not the most harebrained of which was an offer to publish us. If the fact that they’d left it up to Houellebecq to raise a little hell wasn’t enough to prove how shipwrecked of a state they’re in, that right there should prove their total collapse. But we don’t connive with defunct bureaucrats of the mind. Rather, we’re proclaiming the dawn of a new kingdom. Already the vermin are trembling, since they know that sooner or later the enormous task of delousing will begin. And that they’re just part of the ruins.