



Pierre Klossowski

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**LIVING CURRENCY**

Edited by Vernon W. Cisney, Nicolae Morar,  
and Daniel W. Smith

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# LIVING CURRENCY

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# **LIVING CURRENCY**

Followed by SADE AND FOURIER

**Pierre Klossowski**

**Edited by Vernon W. Cisney,  
Nicolae Morar and Daniel W. Smith**

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# PREFACE

This book brings together in one volume Pierre Klossowski's influential 1970 book *Living Currency* as well as an earlier piece entitled *Sade and Fourier*, which Klossowski had drawn on while writing the book. The project was initiated by Vernon Cisney and Nicolae Morar, and we would like to thank Liza Thompson, our editor at Bloomsbury, for her support in publishing a book that was written over forty-five years ago, but which remains as relevant now as it was in the 1970s. Cisney and Morar undertook the initial translation of *La Monnaie vivante*; Daniel W. Smith assisted in its revision and wrote the introductory essay. Klossowski's writings are notoriously complex, and we had the advantage of being able to consult two earlier translations as we prepared our own: an online version by Jordan Levinson posted in 2012 and a collaborative translation that was published by the Reena Spaulings gallery in New York in 2013. We are grateful to Michael Sanchez for providing us with a hard-to-find copy of the latter. An English translation of *Sade et Fourier* was published in 1985 in *Art & Text*, one of the landmark art magazines of the 1980s and 1990s, under the title 'The Phantasms of Perversion: Sade and Fourier', trans. Paul Foss and Paul Patton, in *Phantasms and Simulacra: The Drawings of Pierre Klossowski*, a special issue of *Art & Text*, No. 18 (July 1985): 22–34. Paul Foss-Heimlich, the former publisher and editor of *Art & Text*, has provided a newly edited and corrected version of the 1985 translation, as well as an accompanying essay, specifically for this volume. Finally, we would like to thank Frankie Mace at Bloomsbury both for her assistance in preparing the manuscript and for her patience as she awaited its completion.

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# INTRODUCTION: PIERRE KLOSSOWSKI: FROM THEATRICAL THEOLOGY TO COUNTER-UTOPIA

DANIEL W. SMITH

Pierre Klossowski's *Living Currency*, which Michel Foucault called 'the greatest book of our time,' takes its title from a parody of a classical utopia that appears at the end of the book.<sup>1</sup> Klossowski imagines 'a phase in industrial production where producers are able to demand "objects of sensation" from consumers as a form of payment. These objects would be *living beings*' (LC 72–3).<sup>2</sup> Human beings, in other words, would be traded as currency: employers would pay their male workers 'in women,' female workers would be paid 'in boys,' and so on. This is neither prostitution nor slavery, where humans are bought and sold using monetary currency. Rather, it is humans themselves that are used as currency, a *living* currency, and they can function as currency because they are sources of sensation, emotion and pleasure. Far from being imaginary or ideal, however, Klossowski insists that this counter-utopia *already exists* in contemporary capitalism. 'The whole of modern industry,' he writes, 'even though it does not literally resort to such exchanges, rests on a form of trade mediated by the sign of an inert currency that neutralizes the nature of the objects being exchanged. It thus rests on a *simulacrum* of this kind of trade.' *Living Currency* is an exploration of this claim that the monetary economy is a simulacrum or parody of the economy of the passions.

It would be difficult to overstate the influence *Living Currency* had on the generation of French thinkers that came of age in the 1960s. In his youth, Klossowski had been a confidante of Gide and Rilke, and in the 1930s he had participated in the infamous *Collège de Sociologie*<sup>3</sup> and contributed to Georges Bataille's short-lived but influential journal *Acéphale*.<sup>4</sup> During the Second World War, he studied theology in several seminaries, but quickly underwent a religious crisis that he explored in his semi-autobiographical novel *The Suspended Vocation*.<sup>5</sup> His notorious study *Sade My Neighbor* appeared in 1947,<sup>6</sup> followed by the two novels that would make him famous, *The Laws of Hospitality*<sup>7</sup> and *The Baphomet*,<sup>8</sup> the latter of which received the prestigious *Prix des Critiques* in 1965. In the mid-1960s, several remarkable essays on Klossowski appeared, which were evidence of the growing influence of his thought on the younger generation of French thinkers: Michel Foucault's 'The Prose of Acteon' (1964),<sup>9</sup> Maurice Blanchot's 'The Laughter of the Gods' (1965)<sup>10</sup> and Gilles Deleuze's 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language' (1965).<sup>11</sup> 'As far as I'm concerned,' Foucault would later comment, 'the most important authors who ... enabled me to move away from my original university education were Nietzsche, Bataille, Blanchot, and Klossowski – none of whom were "philosophers" in the strict, institutional sense of the term.'<sup>12</sup> Deleuze often acknowledged his deep indebtedness to Klossowski. In *Difference and Repetition* (1968), he praised Klossowski for having completely 'renewed the interpretation of Nietzsche' in a series of landmark articles.<sup>13</sup> When Klossowski collected these articles together in a book, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (1969),<sup>14</sup> he dedicated it to Deleuze, and Foucault hailed it as 'the greatest book of philosophy I have ever read, on a par with Nietzsche himself'.<sup>15</sup>

Of all Klossowski's books, however, it was perhaps *Living Currency* that had the greatest influence on his contemporaries. Shortly after the book appeared, Foucault claimed that the ideas of the thinkers that mattered most to him personally had reached their culmination in *Living Currency*. 'It is such a great book that everything else recedes and counts only half as much anymore. This is what we should have been thinking about: desire, value, and the simulacrum.'<sup>16</sup> The book was enthusiastically appropriated by a number of his contemporaries: Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972),<sup>17</sup> Lyotard's *Libidinal Economy* (1974)<sup>18</sup> and Baudrillard's *Impossible Exchange* (1999)<sup>19</sup> were all direct responses, in one way or another, to the ideas developed in *Living Currency*. One of the reasons *Living Currency* enjoyed such a reputation is that it was seen to have successfully overcome the duality between Marx and Freud – or, more generally, the tension between *political economy* and *libidinal economy*.<sup>20</sup> Roland Barthes had

thrown down a gauntlet to his contemporaries: ‘How can the two great *epistemes* of modernity, the materialist dialectic and the Freudian dialectic be brought together so as to fuse and produce a new order of human relations? This is the problem we have posed ourselves.’<sup>21</sup> If Klossowski had succeeded with this ‘Freudo-Marxist synthesis’ where others – such as Herbert Marcuse and Wilhelm Reich – had failed, it was because in the end his approach was indexed neither on Marx nor Freud, who scarcely appear in his texts, but rather on the more obscure and subterranean pairing of Sade and Nietzsche. ‘In his recent works’, Deleuze and Guattari declared in 1972, ‘Klossowski indicates to us the only means of bypassing the sterile parallelism where we flounder between Freud and Marx.’<sup>22</sup> Perhaps more than any other thinker, it was Deleuze who would take up the ideas of *Living Currency* and push them in new directions. While he was writing *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze penned a revealing letter to Klossowski:

You introduce desire into the infra-structure or inversely, which amounts to the same thing, you introduce the category of production into desire: this seems to me of an immense importance; for it is the only means to get out of the sterile parallelism Marx–Freud, Money–Excrement ... Once again, I’m following you.<sup>23</sup>

The theory of desire developed in the first two chapters of *Anti-Oedipus* was Deleuze and Guattari’s attempt to work out the theses proposed in the opening of *Living Currency*.

By the time *Living Currency* was published, Klossowski (1905–2001) was already sixty-five years old. Although he would live another thirty years, he largely abandoned writing after 1972 – in what he would later call his period of ‘mutism’ – and instead devoted himself to art, that is, to creating full-scale coloured pencil drawings, usually of scenes drawn from his novels. (Klossowski was the elder brother of the painter Balthus.) Today, Klossowski is as well known for his artworks as he is for his essays and novels, though it is hoped that the publication of this translation of *Living Currency* will spark a reassessment of Klossowski’s entire oeuvre.<sup>24</sup>

## Klossowski’s concepts

Klossowski was a novelist, essayist, translator, actor and artist, and his idiosyncratic work defies an easy summation. In the philosophical work that stimulated his contemporaries, however, Klossowski developed a set of

interrelated concepts that would remain at the core of his reflections, and that constitute a starting point for a reading of *Living Currency*, and indeed all of his work: *impulses*, *phantasms*, *simulacra* and *stereotypes*.<sup>25</sup>

## 1. Impulses

In his early writings, Klossowski often appropriated the description of the soul found in Christian mystics, for whom the soul is the uncreated part of humans that escapes the comprehension of the created intellect (Augustine), an ‘abyssal depth’ that can only be known negatively (Meister Eckhart), a place of suffering that knows no determination (Teresa of Avila). When Klossowski says that the depth of the soul ‘does not signify anything’ (NVC 40), he is refusing the theological idea of a ‘will’ that would preside over its destiny or command its interpretation. Against these determinations of the will, he opposes the free play of the ‘impulsive forces’ [*forces impulsives*] that inhabit the depth of the soul, and which, through their incessant combat, are constantly constituting and disintegrating the self: what Klossowski calls the *suppôt*, utilizing an old scholastic term.<sup>26</sup> The *suppôt* cannot comprehend these impulses, even though it experiences their effects. In and of itself, the nature of the soul is *incommunicable*: the soul is irreducible to the words that would translate it, or the images that would try to contain it. *Non formata sed formans*: productive of forms, the soul is itself unformed. The movements of the soul can be portrayed in discourse or in figures – in simulacra – but they are thereby caught in the snares of language and its everyday codes, or deformed by the illusions of vision. ‘How can one give an account of an irreducible depth of sensibility,’ Klossowski asks, ‘*except by acts that betray it?*’ (SMN 14).<sup>27</sup> One can easily sense Klossowski’s filiation with the gnostics and heresiarchs of the early Christian centuries, who opposed to the material world a pneumatic world, or with certain negative or apophatic theologians, for whom only the unspeakable is susceptible to discourse, and the invisible, to vision.<sup>28</sup> But one can see how Klossowski modifies the theological tradition: if there is an apophaticism in his writings, it is related exclusively to the immanent movements of the soul, and not to the transcendent attributes of God.

However, Klossowski’s early discourse on the soul would give way to an emphasis on the *body*. Klossowski described his books on Sade and Nietzsche as ‘essays devoted not to ideologies but to the *physiognomies* of problematic thinkers who differ greatly from each other.’<sup>29</sup> The focus on physiognomy was derived in part from Nietzsche’s insistence on taking the body as a model for philosophy rather than the mind, since the body

is the more accessible phenomenon, less surrounded by illusion, myth, and superstition.<sup>30</sup> But what is incommunicable in the organic body are precisely what Klossowski calls its 'impulses' [*pulsions*] or 'impulsive forces' [*forces impulsives*]. Nietzsche himself had recourse to a varied vocabulary to describe what Klossowski summarizes in the term 'impulse': 'drive' (*Triebe*), 'desire' (*Begierden*), 'instinct' (*Instincke*), 'power' (*Mächte*), 'force' (*Kräfte*), 'impulse' (*Reize, Impulse*), 'passion' (*Leidenschaften*), 'feeling' (*Gefühen*), 'affect' (*Affekte*), 'pathos' (*Pathos*), and so on.<sup>31</sup> The problem with many of these terms, however, is that they inevitably interpret the impulses from the viewpoint of the subject or *suppôt*. A 'passion' (from the Latin *pati*, to suffer or endure) is something that 'happens' to a person, which he or she does not actively choose but experiences 'passively'. Spinoza defined a 'mode' in terms of a relation between affections (*affection*) and affects (*affectus*): every body that produces an 'affection' in my own body at the same time produces a rise or fall in my capacity to exist, an 'affect' that is experienced as a joy or a sadness. The term 'desire' traditionally implies that a person is experiencing a lack that they want to fulfil.<sup>32</sup>

If Klossowski prefers the terms *impulse* or *force* to these other terms, it is because they ascribe a physical positivity and autonomy to the 'obscure depth' of the body or soul. For Leibniz, 'force' is the sufficient reason of movement, and Klossowski uses the term in a similar fashion in order to put impulsive forces on the same plane as physical forces. The extensive organic body finds its sufficient reason in the intensive impulsional body, which is what Deleuze would later call, following Artaud, a body *without* organs. One could say that pharmaceutical efforts to control states of depression, mania, obsession, panic, and so on, take the impulsional body as their object and are aimed at manipulating the state of the impulses.<sup>33</sup> In Klossowski, the philosophical line of demarcation does not lie between body and soul, but rather between our impulsional forces, which are incommunicable, and the expression of these impulses in consciousness, language, and rational and economic norms, which fundamentally falsify the nature of the impulses.

By their nature, the impulses remain largely unknown to the conscious intellect:

No matter how hard a person struggles for self-knowledge, nothing can be more incomplete than the image of all the *drives* taken together that constitute his being. Scarcely can he call the cruder ones by name: their number and strength, their ebb and flow, their play and counterplay, and, above all, the laws of their *alimentation* remain completely unknown to him.<sup>34</sup>

Each of us contains within ourselves such 'a vast confusion of contradictory drives' that we are multiplicities, and not unities.<sup>35</sup> Nietzsche's notion of *perspectivism* does not mean that I have a different perspective on the world than you, but rather that *each of us has multiple perspectives* because of the multiplicity of our impulses. Similarly, Nietzsche proposed his concept of the *will to power* to describe the nature of the impulses or drives: 'Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm.'<sup>36</sup> In one of the most subtle analyses of impulsive forces, Deleuze has shown that drives are not 'things', but rather the differential relations between active (affirmative) and reactive (negative) forces.<sup>37</sup> It is only when the effects of these relations between impulsive forces are experienced by the subject or *suppôt* that they become qualified as 'passions' or 'affections', and the conscious intellect interprets them as *its own* 'feelings', 'inclinations', 'dispositions' or 'emotions' (NVC 37–8).

What makes each individual an 'idiosyncrasy' is its particular constellation or assemblage of impulses. Indeed, one of the primary functions of *morality* is to establish an order and hierarchy among the impulses. 'Wherever we encounter a morality, we also encounter valuations and an order of rank of human impulses': industriousness is ranked higher than sloth, obedience higher than defiance, chastity higher than promiscuity.<sup>38</sup> For Klossowski, the 'singular' is opposed not so much to the universal, but to the gregarious, the species, what Nietzsche calls the 'herd', which reduces its singularity to a common denominator, and expresses only what can be communicated. 'All our actions are altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual – there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness *they no longer seem to be*.'<sup>39</sup> The function of morality carries over into language, which treats the impulses as things and only expresses what is gregarious:

Words actually exist only for *superlative* degrees of these processes and drives — but then when words are lacking, we tend no longer to engage in precise observation because it is painfully awkward for us to think precisely at that juncture ... Wrath, hate, love, compassion, craving, knowing, joy, pain — these are all names for *extreme* states: the milder middle degrees, to say nothing of the lower ones that are constantly in play, elude us and yet it is precisely they that weave the web of our character and our destiny.<sup>40</sup>

## 2. Phantasms

This brings us to the second fundamental concept of Klossowski's tripartite economy of soul: the *phantasm*. The term comes from the Greek *phantasia* (appearance, imagination), and Klossowski uses it to refer to *an obsessional image* produced within us by the forces of our impulsive life. The concept was taken up in a more technical sense in psychoanalytic theory (theory of fantasy), although for Klossowski a phantasm is not, as in Freud, a substitution formation. As Lyotard explains, a phantasm 'is "something" that grips the wild turbulence of the libido, something it invents as an incandescent object.'<sup>41</sup> Falling in love is the most obvious example of a phantasm: love is an impulse with a high intensity, but what we fall in love with is a phantasm or obsessional image that comes to dominate the entirety of our impulses. If we tend to fall in love with the same 'type' of person, if we tend to repeat the same patterns and mistakes, it is because our loves form a series in which something is being repeated, but always with a slight difference. This 'something' is nothing other than a phantasm, which we repeat obsessively, but which in itself remains incommunicable and continues its secret work in us, despite all our attempts to decipher it.<sup>42</sup> Klossowski was, of course, fascinated by the perverse phantasms that populate the writings of Sade.

But Klossowski gives a much broader provenance to the domain of phantasms, interpreting the thought of philosophers and writers in terms of the phantasms they express. 'Thoughts are the signs of a play and combat of affects,' Nietzsche wrote – 'they always depend on their hidden roots' (NVC 216). Sade postulated that 'it is temperament that inspires the choice of a philosophy, and that reason, which the philosophers of his time invoked, is but a form of passion' (SMN 67–8). Hamann 'experienced himself as a riddle, but was conscious of the presence in his soul of forces and energies that constitute an irreducible totality, which he knew it was impossible to communicate.'<sup>43</sup> Kant said that we can never get beyond our representations; Klossowski insists that we can never get beyond our impulses and phantasms. A philosopher is only a kind of occasion and chance through which a phantasm is finally able to speak. 'What did Spinoza or Kant do? *Nothing but interpret their dominant impulse*. But it was only the *communicable* part of their behavior that could be translated into their constructions' (NVC 3). Nietzsche's fundamental phantasm, for example, was the eternal return, which was 'revealed' to him in Sils-Maria in August 1881, and experienced as an impulse, an intensity, a high tonality of the soul – and indeed as the highest possible intensity of the soul. What we consider to be the 'doctrine' of the eternal return found in Nietzsche's

writings is nothing but a *simulacrum* of this phantasm, an attempt to express the incommunicable phantasm in a verbal and conceptual form. 'The phantasm', Klossowski says, 'is the obsessional and constrictive fact for all those who strive to create.'<sup>44</sup>

Readers of Klossowski's fictions will be familiar with the phantasm that was the primary object of his own obsession: the figure of Roberte, which he calls the 'unique sign' of his work.<sup>45</sup> 'My true themes', Klossowski wrote of himself, 'are dictated by one or more obsessional (or 'obsidial') instincts that seek to express themselves ... I am only the *seismograph* of the life of the impulses.'<sup>46</sup> Since every phantasm is by nature incommunicable, the subject who submits himself to its irresistible constraint can never have done with describing it. Klossowski's narrative work is thus traversed by a single repetition, carried along by one and the same movement; in effect, it is always the same scene that is repeated. The rape of Roberte in *Roberte ce soir*, the theatrical representations in *Le Souffleur*, the vision of the goddess in *Diana at her Bath*, the description of the statue of St Therese in *The Baphomet* – all articulate one and the same phantasm: the woman discovering the presence of her body under the gaze or the violence of a third party, who, whether an angel or a demon, communicates a guilty voluptuousness. Klossowski describes the entirety of his literary output in terms of his relation to this fundamental phantasm: 'I am under the spell [*dictée*] of an image. It is the vision that demands that I say everything the vision gives to me.'<sup>47</sup>

### 3. Simulacra and stereotypes

This brings us to the third term in Klossowski's vocabulary, or rather a pair of terms: the simulacrum and the stereotype. A simulacrum is a willed reproduction of a non-willed phantasm (in a literary, pictorial, plastic or even conceptual form) that simulates the invisible agitation of the soul's impulses. 'The simulacrum, in its *imitative* sense, is the actualization of something in itself incommunicable and nonrepresentable: the *phantasm* in its obsessional compulsion' (R 76). The term *simulacrum* comes from the Latin *simulare* (to copy, represent, feign), and during the late Roman Empire it referred to the statues of the gods that often lined the entrance to a city. Klossowski applies the term, by extension, to pictorial, verbal and written representations as well. Simulacra are transcriptions of phantasms, artifacts that *count as* (or are *equivalent to*, can be exchanged for) phantasms. In Klossowski, *mimesis* is not a servile imitation of the visible, but artefactual simulation of an unrepresentable phantasm.

For Klossowski, our fundamental phantasm is the ego or the *suppôt*, a complex and fragile entity that bestows both a psychic and organic unity upon the moving chaos of the impulses. It does this in part through the grammatical simulacrum of the 'I', which interprets the impulses in terms of a hierarchy of gregarious needs (both material and moral), and dissimulates itself through a network of stabilizing concepts (substance, cause, identity, self, world, God). Even our 'inner experience' – that which is seemingly most personal and most immediate to us – is subject to the same falsification: "Inner experience" enters our consciousness only after it has found a language the individual understands ... "To understand" means merely: *to be able to express something new in the language of something old and familiar*.<sup>748</sup> In Klossowski's terms, the shared function of the intellect, language and morality is to convert the (unconscious) *intensity* into a (conscious) *intention* (NVC 51, 70, 112).

For this reason, simulacra stand in a complex relationship to what Klossowski, in his later works, calls a 'stereotype'.<sup>749</sup> On the one hand, the invention of simulacra always presupposes a set of prior stereotypes – what Klossowski sometimes calls 'the code of everyday signs' – which express the gregarious aspect of lived experience in a form already schematized by the habitual usages of perception and thought. 'The stereotype corresponds to the normative schemata of our visual, tactile, and auditory apprehension, the schematization that conditions our primary receptivity'.<sup>750</sup> At the same time, however, every stereotype is nothing other than a worn-out simulacrum: 'stereotypes are merely residues of phantasmatic simulacra that have fallen into common use, as much in language as in art' (TV 132). Every creation of the new, whether in language, art or morality, has its origin in the impulses. But this is why, as a writer, Klossowski can speak of a 'science of stereotypes': by being 'accentuated' to the point of excess, a stereotype can itself bring about a critique of its own gregarious interpretation of the phantasm: 'Practiced advisedly, the institutional stereotypes (of syntax) provoke the presence of what they circumscribe; their circumlocutions conceal the incongruity of the phantasm but at the same time trace the outline of its opaque *physiognomy*'.<sup>751</sup> Even when it has been reduced to the status of a stereotype, the simulacrum (whether sculptural, pictorial, written or conceptual) has its own *physiognomy* – its own *style* – that betrays the presence of the phantasm and the impulses.

Klossowski's prose is itself an example of this science of stereotypes. By his own admission, Klossowski's works are written in a "conventionally" classical syntax' that makes systematic use of the literary tenses and conjunctions of the French language, giving it a decidedly erudite, precious and even 'bourgeois' tone, but in an exaggerated manner that brings out its

phantasmic structure. 'The simulacrum effectively simulates the constraint of the phantasm only by exaggerating the stereotypical schemes: to add to the stereotype and accentuate it is to bring out the obsession of which it constitutes the replica' (R 78). This exaggerated style is immediately evident in Klossowski's writings. In 1964, Klossowski published a translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* that provoked a strong critical reaction, since he had attempted to reproduce the physiognomy of the Latin text in his translation, which made it almost unreadable in French, and offended some Latin scholars.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, when *The Baphomet* was awarded the Prix des Critiques in 1965, one of the jury members, Roger Caillois, resigned in protest and published a scathing critique in *Le Monde*, pointing to Klossowski's stylistic insufficiency and grammatical inaccuracy.<sup>53</sup>

If Klossowski gave up writing after 1972, it is at least in part because, in attempting to express the incommunicable phantasm, he wound up preferring the eloquence of bodily gestures and images – what he calls 'corporeal idioms' – to the medium of words and syntax. 'There is but one authentic form of communication: the exchange of bodies through the secret language of corporeal signs' (LC 69). Klossowski cites Quintillian: the body is capable of gestures that prompt an understanding contrary to what they indicate.<sup>54</sup> One arm may be used to hold off an aggressor, for instance, while the other is held open to him in seeming welcome. In language, the equivalents of such gestures are called 'solecisms', and in Klossowski's drawings the hand can be seen as the organ of solecisms. Such gestures are the incarnation of a power that is also internal to language: dilemma, disjunction and 'disjunctive synthesis.' But what the whole of Klossowski's oeuvre sets in motion is an astonishing parallelism between body and language: in his texts, one finds a pantomime in language just as, in his drawings, one finds solecism in gestures.

Such is the economy of the soul elaborated through Klossowski's work: first, there are *impulses*, with their rises and falls in intensity, their elations and depressions, which have no meaning or goal in themselves; second, these impulses give rise to *phantasms*, which constitute the incommunicable depth and singularity of the individual soul; third, under the obsessive constraint of the phantasm, *simulacra* are produced, which are the reproduction or repetition of the phantasm through the exaggeration of stereotypes. *Impulses, phantasms, simulacra-stereotypes*: a threefold circuit.

## A singular use of theology

If there is an obstacle that contemporary readers encounter when reading Klossowski, however, it is his profound immersion in theology. The religious crisis Klossowski experienced during the Second World War led him to withdraw from the world and pursue a complex trajectory of theological studies with the Benedictines and the Dominicans, under the guidance of the Jesuit Father Gaston Fessard, followed by a brief flirtation with Lutheranism.<sup>55</sup> The crisis was short-lived, but it had profound effects on his subsequent thought. Yet if readers are deterred by Klossowski's theological references, it is no doubt because of the very prejudices Klossowski seeks to dispel. There is no mention in his writings, for example, of the tedious arguments for or against the existence of God or the immortality of the soul; nor does he put forward superficial definitions of what 'religion' might be ('belief in supernatural beings'); nor does he talk about theology in terms of 'belief.' Rather, one of Klossowski's primary points of reference is the polytheism of Roman paganism, where the term *theologia* was understood in its literal sense as discourse about the gods. As a result, Klossowski's theology has little to do with Christianity – it is non-Christian and even anti-Christian – but one could say that Klossowski has completely renewed theology by reviving heterodox modes of thought that were closed off by monotheism and Christian orthodoxy.<sup>56</sup>

If one could speak of a 'canon' of theologians in Klossowski's work, it would include the unlikely cast of J. G. Hamann,<sup>57</sup> Marcus Varro, Hermes Trismegistus, Sade and Nietzsche, though his approach to theology seems to have been shaped primarily through his study of the Church Fathers. Klossowski was an accomplished Latinist, and published translations of Tertullian,<sup>58</sup> Suetonius<sup>59</sup> and Virgil.<sup>60</sup> In 1950, he signed a contract with the French publishing house Gallimard to translate Augustine's *City of God*, though the translation (of the first seven books) never appeared and was apparently 'mis-laid'.<sup>61</sup> But for Klossowski, the ultimate significance of the works of Tertullian and Augustine, in particular, is that they provided glimpses into the last vestiges of paganism that they themselves helped to destroy. The copious citations in their books, especially Augustine's *City of God*, remain our sole source for numerous texts that have long since disappeared.

The success of Christianity was so complete that it is difficult to recover the pagan thought that the Church Fathers destroyed, since our own sensibilities have been determined by their victory. Augustine, for example, was scandalized that not a single Roman god discussed by Varro

showed the slightest interest in eternal life, readily admitting that eternal life had become the obsessive phantasm of the Christians.<sup>62</sup> Paganism treated the gods as 'products' offering certain services, and one invested in the gods through participation in their cult; but none of the Roman gods were offering the service that Augustine craved. Similarly, Augustine rails against the pagan assumption that *the gods were created by humans*, and 'that "divine matters" are a human institution, like pictures and buildings.'<sup>63</sup> Yet for paganism, the question 'Do the gods exist?' is parallel to the question 'Do paintings or sculptures exist?' The answer is *yes*: like pictures and sculpture, the gods exist because *we have created them*. If this response sounds strange to modern ears, it is because we simply take for granted the success of what was no doubt one of the most successful crusades in the history of thought, namely, the critique of idolatry. The Judaic tradition criticized the fabricated gods of paganism, such as the golden calf (Exod. 32), for being mere 'idols' – statues whose 'eyes do not see' and 'ears do not hear'. This critique was redoubled in the colonial period with the concept of the primitive 'fetish' (derived from the Latin *facticius*, 'made by art, artificial'), which was popularized by Charles de Brosses in his 1760 book *On the Cult of Fetish Gods*.<sup>64</sup>

Yet what replaced the idols were still simulacra: rather than statues with eyes and ears, the gods became concepts or 'idealities' marked by lists of various attributes (omnipotence, omniscience, goodness). The 'problem of evil' became a problem of predication: how can the attributes 'all-powerful' and 'all-good' be simultaneously ascribed to the creator of an evil world? Yet sculpting a material statue and creating an ideal concept are both acts of fabrication. Even the notion that the gods were *not* created is itself a simulacrum that has been *created by us*, just as Plato created the concept of the Idea (εἶδος) as a form anterior to all creation. The *object that one fabricates* and the *idea that one believes* are both simulacra, produced from obsessive phantasms. Yet there is obviously a difference between a material statue and an ideal concept: it was in one and the same movement that the gods were made *transcendent* to the world and the proposition (or concept) was separated from the world in order to *denote* or 'correspond' to everything in it (the relation of 'truth'), to the point where 'God' and 'Truth' were made into identical idealities. The reasons for this change are complex, and include the invention of writing, and the apt title of a book on Klossowski, *Lénoncé dénoncé* (the 'statement denounced', or 'the denunciation of the proposition') encapsulates his attitude toward this latter tradition, and was perhaps one of his own reasons for largely abandoning writing.<sup>65</sup>

One of Klossowski's great audacities is to have revived the tradition of idolatry by resurrecting the pagan concept of the *simulacrum*, the Latin

term for Roman statues or idols. The theological engagements that led Klossowski to this position are complex, and we will simply attempt to isolate three critical moments.

## 1. Marcus Varro

For Augustine, one of the greatest representatives of paganism, and thus one of his greatest enemies, was Marcus Varro (116–27 BCE), a Roman theologian, grammarian, philologist and rhetorician. He ceaselessly attacks one of Varro's (lost) texts, *Antiquitates rerum humanarum et divinarum* (*Antiquities of Human and Divine Things*), a forty-one-volume work in which Varro distinguished between three fundamental types of theology in the Roman world: mythical, physical and civil. "The name 'mythical'", Varro wrote, 'applies to the theology used chiefly by the poets, "physical" to that of the philosophers, "civil" to that of the general public.' Augustine preferred to call mythical theology *fabulous theology* ('since the name "mythical" is derived from *mythos*, the Greek word for fable'), and to call physical theology *natural theology* ('*physis* being the Greek for "nature"').<sup>66</sup> Augustine's aim in the *City of God* was to condemn the fabulous and civil theology of ancient Rome ('both "fabulous" and "civil" theology merit condemnation') and to distinguish them from the natural, discursive and philosophical theology of Christianity, which was the only true theology.<sup>67</sup> His triumph was complete: Aurelius Augustinus was the thinker 'in whom the world of myths died' (DB 13).

Klossowski's own aim is the exact opposite of Augustine's. In his 1968 book *Sacred and Mythic Origins of Certain Practices of the Women of Rome*, Klossowski attempted to recover the 'fabulous' or 'mythical' theology that Augustine helped to destroy.<sup>68</sup> If 'civil theology' referred to the temple cults upon which the health of the Roman state depended, 'mythical theology' referred both to the fables of the poets (*fabulous theology*, strictly speaking) and to the *theatrical theology* (*theologia theatrica*) that took place on the stage in theatres and circuses of Rome.<sup>69</sup> The sacred rites of civil theology were conducted by priests, whereas the fables of theatrical theology were composed by poets and mimed by actors (who nonetheless were sacred officiants, like priests) (DB 82). According to Roman tradition, it was the gods themselves, invoked during the ravages of a plague, who ordered the institution of stage shows in Rome. Sociologists often (and rightly) interpret temple gods as legitimations of the social order. Yet in theatrical theology, 'the mythic world spilled out well beyond the rituals of the temples, flowing out in torrents into the circuses and onto the theater

stages' (WR 132). Klossowski argues that *theologia theatrica* played a very different role than the temple cults, since it was guided by a principle that went far beyond utility or rational knowledge. What appeared on the stage shows of Roman theatre functioned as a precursor to the debaucheries depicted in writing by Sade.

In the Roman theatre, or 'stage shows' (*ludi scaenicae*, literally 'stage games'), the immoral escapades of the gods were represented on a theatrical stage by actors and mimes. According to contemporary accounts, it was the *gods themselves* who wanted to be worshiped in their most immoral and most shameful behaviour. 'These gods *take pleasure* in their own *shame*' (DB 82). Arnobius observed that:

the *personae* of very sacred gods are made to appear amidst the worst obscenities, in such a way as to incite the mirth of the carefree spectators. The deities are insulted, are covered with ridicule; the theater resounds with shouts and stands up as one, the better to see, amid the din of the applause and approval of the crowd. (WR 133)

Valerius Maximus said that for the most part the stage shows consist of acts of debauchery; Minucius Félix 'finds that the adulteries furiously portray the gods' turpitudes, which the actor exposes, demonstrates, and acts out, and in this way penetrates the spectators' souls' (WR 133). Varro himself writes that, in mythical theology, 'we find stories about thefts and adulteries committed by the gods, and gods enslaved to human beings. In fact, we find attributed to gods not only the accidents that happen to humanity in general, but even those which can befall the most contemptible of mankind.'<sup>70</sup> Seneca was outspoken about the cruelty of some of the ceremonies: 'One man cuts off his male organs; another gashes his arms.'<sup>71</sup> In fact, the Romans themselves considered certain erotic practices to be depraved – there is an entire tradition of Roman austerity that prepared the way for the reaction of the Church Fathers.

Next to nothing of this *theologia theatrica* has come down to us: a few scenes from Terence, the names of a few writers such as Naevius, Pomponius, Laberius and Lentulus. Hence Klossowski's reliance on critical witnesses such as Augustine and Tertullian. 'The authors of your farces only entertain you by covering your gods with disgrace,' writes Tertullian. 'In these mimes, in these jests, do you think that you're laughing at the actors or at the gods when you state *Anubis the Adulterer*, *The Moon Man*, *The Flagellation of Diana*, *The Testament of the Late Jupiter*, *The Three Starving Hercules*?'<sup>72</sup> Augustine describes *theologia theatrica* as 'fictions, sung by poets and acted by players', revelling in 'obscenities' and 'the complete

degradation of the gods<sup>73</sup> (CG VI 7 241). Klossowski notes that Augustine presumes the doctrine of Incarnation, which readily admitted that gods could take on human form ('the Word made flesh') (DB 83). Augustine's issue with *theologia theatrica* lies elsewhere: he follows Plato's strictures in the *Republic* (379a–383c) that the gods must be good, unchanging and truthful. For Augustine, 'he who says *god* presupposes a *good god*, since an evil deity is a contradiction in terms – hence the idea that those gods are *demons*' (DB 83). For a Christian theologian, deities who take pleasure in their debaucheries are a perverse absurdity: they represent the mischief of demons, which makes the entirety of pagan mythology a vast enterprise of demonic imposture, a world of inconsistency and contradiction.

But this is precisely where Klossowski locates the greatness of the lost tradition of *theologia theatrica*. 'Civil theology' was the object of a temple cult, and 'the purpose of a cult – with its expiatory, propitiatory sacrifices which serve to intercede with a deity in order to avert his anger, gain his assistance, or mind him of favours granted in a given situation – is to bind the god to his functional role' (WR 128). The very term 'religion' is often said to be derived from the Latin *religare*, meaning 'to bind, to tie', that is, the god is bound to his or her function, and the celebrant is bound to the god and its cult; the antonym of religion is *negligence* (of both god and cult).<sup>74</sup> But theatrical theology began where civil theology ended: it recounts what befell gods or goddesses when they ceased to play their civil function (WR 128). In both the myths of the poets and the mimes of the stage shows, the gods were *liberated from their veneration*: 'The stage shows reserved for the divinities a sphere in which they manifested themselves not in actions beneficial to society, but in the sovereign and purely gratuitous pleasures of these gods' (WR 129).

*The Women of Rome* analyses the various dimensions that *theologia theatrica* assumed when it was freed from its cultic restrictions. First, the 'pan-theology' of pagan myth 'presupposes a notion of space were the inner *life of the soul* and the *life of the cosmos* form a single space, in which the event – which for us is "psychological" – is situated as a spatial fact' (SDD 119n). Already, the demonology of the Neo-Platonists was tending toward a psychology, that is, toward a separation of the human (images of a psychic 'interiority') from the universe (what we call 'objective reality'). But in the pagan world, 'the entire soul managed to situate these images in space, and to render them indistinguishable from the soul' (SDD 120). In the eminently spatial conditions of the mythic world, the forces of the cosmos and the forces of the soul (impulses and phantasms) coexisted in a single *topos*, where they received their simulacral expression in statues and theatre (WR 123). Second, within this *topos* of myth, the impulses were

magnified through the disproportionate optics of what Klossowski calls a ‘gulliverian’ vision – the gods as omni-debauched, omni-perverse:<sup>75</sup>

If these deities were ever to resemble humans, they had to borrow from them the very thing that, by their own [impassible] nature, distinguished them from mortals: the *passions*. Is it any surprise, then, that in assuming human passions, *the gods magnified them to an excessive degree equal to their divine nature?* (DB 83)

The vices adopted by the gods on the stage, through the actor, assumed limitless proportions – ‘the most dreadful, most pernicious passions of human nature’ – which humans themselves could not practice with impunity given their mortal situation (DB 83–4). Finally, the gods themselves were *sexual beings* who pursued, avoided and copulated with each other, and their divine sexuality assumed disproportionate dimensions in the stage shows (SDD 119). Although ‘procreation is useful to the temporal prosperity of the state’ (WR 91), the sexual act was freed from this limitation in the stage shows: the gods were shown to embody a sexuality that was inexhaustible because it was eternal, and eternal because it was aimless and hence *useless* (WR 91). Such was the ‘debauchery’ that Tertullian and Augustine condemned in the Roman stage shows, although it was only the rational language of Roman austerity that could reduce the divine relations to mere ‘adulteries’ or ‘fornications’. Interestingly, Klossowski speculates that ‘the disappearance of sexually determined divine figures, which were replaced by monotheism’s conception of asexual divinity, did not occur without causing a shock, a profound imbalance in humanity’s psychic economy, of which we apparently have not yet by any means felt the final repercussions’ (WR 135).

What Klossowski finds in the *theologia theatrica* of the Roman stage was a polytheism that had become unmoored from its cultic anchor, and had become the *topos* of gods and goddesses that were sexed and sexual, who celebrated their vices and debaucheries as much as their virtues, and existed in a space that made no distinction between the soul and the cosmos. All of Klossowski’s fictions – from *Diana at Her Bath* to *The Laws of Hospitality* and *The Baphomet* – can be read as attempts to reopen the scintillating and now-lost space of the *theologia theatrica*.

## 2. Hermes Trismegistus

Varro, however, was not the only figure Klossowski retrieved from Augustine’s *City of God*. If Varro was the paradigmatic pagan, Hermes

Trismegistus ('thrice great') was the paradigmatic idolater. Hermes was the purported author of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius*, which lie at the origins of the Hermetic tradition, and was similarly attacked in the *City of God*. Hermes claimed that it was his ancestors who invented 'the art of making gods', but he immediately added: 'Since they could not create souls, they called up the souls of *angels and demons* and made them inhere in sacred images ... so that by their means the idols could have the power of doing good or inflicting harm.'<sup>76</sup> Angels and demons, for the Neo-Platonists, were intermediaries between gods and humans, and for Hermes, idol-makers needed to call upon demonic forces in order to animate their simulacra of the gods.<sup>77</sup>

In his article 'Return to Hermes Trismegistus' ('On the Collaboration of Demons in the Work of Art'), Klossowski explains how he incorporated Hermes' conception of the demon into his understanding of simulacra. Hermes, he says, 'constantly comes to mind when I stand before a work of one of our modern (or even contemporary) masters ... *What relation is there between such artworks and idols?* How can we claim, today, that a painting or a sculpture derives from the same [demonic] principle?'<sup>78</sup> Klossowski's response is that the demons invoked by the artist are nothing other than the hypostases of the impulsive forces and phantasms that 'possess' the artist. When artists create a work, they 'imitate' the obsessive constraint of a phantasm produced by the impulses (demons), externalizing the phantasm in a simulacrum (a god or idol), so that the phantasm can be 'exorcized' from the *topos* of the artist's soul in order to be placed in the simulacrum (a sculpture, a picture, a text). In this sense, *every theophany is a pathophany*.<sup>79</sup> Once the artwork or idol is finished, the techniques used by the artist tend 'to coincide with the "style" that is indissociable from the aspect under which the initial obsession of the artist is made visible in the work' (TV 145). The spectator and the artist, to be sure, do not 'interpret' the work in the same manner: the obsessions of the artist never coincide with the joy or anguish of the spectator. Yet what can account for the power of the finished work, if it is not the movement of a 'demonic' presence coming-and-going between the artist and his simulacrum, and between the simulacrum and its viewers?

If demons are defined by their power of metamorphosis, it is because a demon is never identical to itself, but is constantly changing and morphing, intensifying the view of the contemplator or modifying the object being contemplated. In other words, through the demonic presence, the obsession exerted by the phantasm 'acts simultaneously but *differently* in the artist and its simulacrum, and in its viewer'.<sup>80</sup> It is such a demon that lies at the heart of *Diana at her Bath*, Klossowski's retelling of the

myth of Diana and Acteon. ‘The demon *simulates* Diana in a theophany’, Klossowski explains, ‘and creates in Acteon the desire and the hope of possessing the goddess’, thereby becoming ‘Acteon’s imagination as well as a mirror-image of Diana’ (DB 35). The demon inhabits not only what it reveals (the goddess Diana) but also the spectator (Acteon) to whom the image of the goddess is revealed. Tertullian critiqued the strategy of demons in precisely these terms: ‘The demon was in both the thing it made visible and in the person who saw the thing’ (TV 144). In this sense, we must say that the demonic is not the opposite of the divine, but something much more bewildering and vertiginous: *the Same*, the perfect double, the exact semblance, the doppelgänger, the angel of light whose simulation is so complete that it is impossible to tell the imposter (Satan, Lucifer) apart from the reality (God, Christ). The simulations of demons imply a liquidation of the principle of identity: behind every simulated mask there lies, not a face, but only another simulation, another mask, and another mask behind that mask. ‘If we demystify’, Klossowski concludes, ‘it is only to mystify further’ (NVC 131).

There are thus as many demons as there are obscure forces and impulses in the human soul, and as many divinities as there are simulacra. To be sure, the word ‘demon’ (*daimôn*), like the word ‘god’ (*theos*), has a complex history, and the Neo-Platonic demons are not the same as the demons of the Gospel or Socrates’ demon. But if Klossowski is willing to rehabilitate the very notion of a demon, he says, it is because demonology

does not consider possession to be an illness, but a spiritual fact. The soul is always inhabited by some power, whether good or bad. Souls are not ill when they are inhabited, but when they are no longer inhabited. The illness of the modern world is that souls are no longer inhabitable, and they suffer from it ... To rehabilitate demonology is to establish an authentic *pathophany* that is both a method and a protest [*contestation*]. The *theatrical* character of theology came to it from its belief in the human soul as a locus inhabited by autonomous powers – a spiritual topology, *pathos* conceived as a *topos*. For an artist to achieve his ends, to obtain the effect he seeks, he has to maintain the hypothesis of a demonic universe analogous to the forces that inhabit him; and he will treat every movement of his soul as a correlate to a demonic movement. (R 107–8, 105–6)

One could hardly overemphasize the fact that, for Klossowski, gods and goddesses are *not* projections of the human imagination – which would reduce them to a ‘human, all too human’ transcription of experience – but

processes that simulate the inhuman forces and impulses that inhabit and possess the human soul, and are the explication of being itself.<sup>81</sup> Indeed, ‘the imperative to “objectively” reproduce “nature”’, Klossowski notes, is itself derived from ‘a modern phantasmatic obsession’ (R 78), but it is through the creation of simulacra that, as Nietzsche predicted, the world becomes a fable again.<sup>82</sup>

### 3. Nietzsche

The third, and perhaps most unlikely, of Klossowski’s paradigmatic theologians is Friedrich Nietzsche. Klossowski’s landmark 1957 lecture ‘Nietzsche, Polytheism, and Parody’ (SDD 99–122) is an analysis of Nietzsche’s relation to ancient polytheism and the depths of his theological proclivities. Nietzsche’s famous declaration of the ‘death of God’ is in no way synonymous with the empty claim that ‘God does not exist’. Rather, the proposition ‘dramatizes’ the polytheistic fact that gods are ceaselessly born and killed, created and destroyed, in multiple ways and for multiple reasons. ‘When gods die,’ Nietzsche said, ‘they always die several kinds of death.’<sup>83</sup> The phrase ‘God is dead’ can be used to dramatize innumerable divine deaths: the good news of the Christian gospel (Jesus died for your sins), the dismemberment of the Greek god Dionysus by the Titans, the death of belief in the Christian god in the nineteenth century, and so on. Nietzsche even provides a parable to describe how the gods of polytheism died: when one of the gods declared that there was only one God, the other gods rocked on their chairs and laughed and laughed until they *laughed themselves to death*. The gods of myth and theatre died of laughter.<sup>84</sup> The rise of monotheism meant that one impulse had become dominant at the expense of all others, an impulse Nietzsche identified, in *On the Genealogy of Morals*,<sup>85</sup> as *ressentiment*. But Nietzsche was equally interested in the creation of gods: he himself created his own concept of the god Dionysus, with his prophet Zarathustra, and summarized his entire philosophy as a combat between two gods (‘Dionysus versus the Crucified’), and it is not by chance that it was a *demon* that introduced his doctrine of the eternal return.<sup>86</sup> ‘How many new gods are still possible!’ Nietzsche exclaimed. ‘As for myself, in whom the religious – that is to say *god-forming* – instinct occasionally becomes active at impossible times – how differently, how variously the divine has revealed itself to me each time!’<sup>87</sup> Such texts not only go against the grain of the popular image of Nietzsche, but they indicate the degree to which Klossowski’s own approach to Roman polytheism took place through the lens of Nietzsche’s thought.

Nonetheless, Klossowski takes seriously the usual interpretation of the 'death of God', and one of his most persistent themes is that the monotheistic God was the guarantor of the identity of the self and of its substantive base, the integrity of the body. Like Sade, he saw radical atheism – the 'the supreme act of normative reason' (SMN 15) – as little more than an inverted monotheism, since it replaces the identity of God with the 'the possession and identity of a responsible ego' (SMN 5), and thus changes nothing. But the death of God implies more than the death of the reasonable and moral self. 'The normative structure of the human species is expressed physiologically by the subordination of its life functions to the preservation and propagation of the human species,' he continues, 'which corresponds to the need to express and perpetuate oneself in language' (SMN 14). This is why Klossowski interpreted *sodomy* as the key to all of Sade's perversions (62): sodomy is a gesture that strikes at the law of the propagation of the species, and thus bears witness to the death of the species in the individual ('integral monstrosity'). Indeed, as Deleuze saw clearly, the order of God, in its most general form, can be said to include the following elements: 'the identity of God as the ultimate foundation; the identity of the world as the ambient environment; the identity of the person as a well-founded agency; the identity of bodies as its base; and finally, the identity of language as the power of *denoting* everything else.'<sup>88</sup> In Sade, as in the Roman stage shows, this divine order of integrity will be exploded by the pan-demonium (literally) of an order of perversity: 'a perversity in the lower world where an exuberant, stormy nature reigns, full of raping, shameful debauchery, and travesty ... and a perversity up above, where spirits are already mingling with each other.'<sup>89</sup>

The divine order can thus be opposed point by point to the order of the Antichrist, which 'is characterized by the death of God, the destruction of the world, the dissolution of the person, the disintegration of bodies, and the shifting function of language, which now expresses only intensities.'<sup>90</sup> Kant had already seen this in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, when he subjected rational psychology (the Self), rational cosmology (the world) and rational theology (God) to a common death. What then opens up before us, as Deleuze puts it, is a field of a-cosmic, impersonal, and pre-individual singularities, 'mobile, communicating, penetrating one another across an infinity of modifications.'<sup>91</sup> Such is the upshot of Klossowski's singular use of theology, which is no longer a reflection on the nature of a transcendent being, but a place where theatrical theology and demonology merge with Nietzsche's Dionysianism to become a discourse on the immanent impulses that constitute the life of the soul as much as the life of the cosmos.

## Living Currency and counter-utopia

With this conceptual and theological context in hand, we can return, finally, to *Living Currency* and its companion piece 'Sade and Fourier', where Klossowski's reflections on the nature of impulse, phantasms and simulacra are brought to bear on a domain he had scarcely dealt with earlier: the socio-economic.<sup>92</sup> 'I wanted to introduce into the economy a dimension that was absent from it', he would later comment.<sup>93</sup> The fundamental thesis of the book is that economic norms are '*modes for the expression and representation of impulsive forces*' (LC 47). *Living Currency* is meant to be a challenge to traditional Marxism, since for Klossowski the 'infrastructure' is not economic but *impulsive*, and phantasms play a generative role equivalent to that played by labour power in Marx. 'Emotion, like labor, is "productive" ... The real producer and consumer is *not* the purely fictional unity of the individual, but rather his *impulsive phantasms* ... *Pathos* is the first producer, the first fabricator, and the first consumer.'<sup>94</sup> The idea that the economy is linked to psychology, each with its own depressions and crises, is commonplace, but by making the economy a direct expression of the impulses, Klossowski was able to create the synthesis of political economy and libidinal economy that many of his contemporaries had been seeking.

Yet a more radical and more complex thesis immediately follows from this. *Living Currency* opens with the observation that 'industrial civilization has been anathematized for ravaging the life of the affects' (LC 45). But if this is true, and industrial civilization is itself a product of the impulses, then one can only conclude that *the impulses are creating the means for their own repression* (LC 48). Klossowski had already argued that the impulses repress themselves through the creation of 'the organic and psychic unity of the subject [*suppôt*]' (LC 48), but he now extends this claim to the economy, which supports the subject like a scaffolding or prosthesis. Each implies the other, for once an individual acquires an organic and moral unity, its impulses and phantasms can only be expressed insofar as it is the possessor of this unity, which is itself supported by the hierarchy of material and moral needs of the social formation in which it exists. 'This hierarchy of needs is the economic form of repression that existing institutions impose by and through the consciousness of the subject onto the inponderable forces of its psychic life' (LC 48).

Klossowski's aim, however, is *not* to 'liberate' the impulses from their repression by either the *suppôt* or the economy, but quite the opposite: he wants to show that commodification is inherent in the impulses, given their ability to create their own object (LC 60), which is why they can be

commercialized and turned into economic commodities. In their 1972 book *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari famously took up and developed Klossowski's two theses: 'drives form part of the infrastructure' and 'desire desires its own repression.'<sup>95</sup> Klossowski, they indicated, had posed in precise terms the fundamental problem of political philosophy: 'Why do humans fight *for* their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?'<sup>96</sup> More importantly, perhaps, if the impulses create their own repression, Klossowski argues that they are also capable of creating 'the means of *breaking* the repression' to which they have subjected themselves (LC 48). When Deleuze and Guattari wrote *A Thousand Plateaus*, however, they replaced the term 'repression' with the term 'assemblage' [*agencement*], since the former seemed to imply that the impulses could somehow be unshackled from their repressive chains. They cannot: impulses and phantasms are always assembled, arranged and organized in determinate ways by both the *suppôt* and the economy. This is why Deleuze and Guattari argue that phantasms are never individual but always collective: all phantasms are necessarily *group* phantasms,<sup>97</sup> although, as Klossowski will show, group phantasms diverge into two differing regimes – those that find their immediate satisfaction in the already existing stereotypes of the codes of everyday signs, and those that instead manage to simulate the obsessional constraint in a new simulacrum.

Despite its brevity, *Living Currency* is a dense and complex text that develops these themes in numerous directions. We will simply highlight here the ways in which Klossowski was led to rethink two of his fundamental concepts – simulacra and phantasms – in light of the contemporary socio-economic situation, which he often calls, simply, the 'industrial regime'.

## 1. Simulacra and utensils: Toward an 'impulsive' theory of fabricated objects

One of Klossowski's primary innovations in *Living Currency* is to locate his notion of the simulacrum within a larger theory of fabricated objects. What the industrial regime has brought to the fore is the distinction between objects manufactured to sustain human existence – *utensils*, or objects of *use* – and the objects produced by art – *simulacra*, which are 'useless' for subsistence and economically sterile. This distinction is based, in part, on the thesis of the famous article by Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproduction', which Klossowski had translated into French in 1936.<sup>98</sup> Initially, even objects of use were inseparable from

'custom' or ritual: 'the fabrication of objects was first inspired by the gods' in the production of idols, which were qualitative and singular. With the advent of technologies of reproduction, however, Benjamin argued that the fabricated object lost the 'aura' it once had as a simulacrum, and instead became a reproducible and exchangeable utensil.

What then is the relation between *the act of divulging a phantasm in a simulacrum* and *the act of fabricating a utensil* (LS 64)? It has been suggested that 'useless' works of art have survived in the industrial regime only because they have been reduced to quantifiable commodities within the so-called 'art market'. But Klossowski argues that the useful/useless distinction is an inadequate one: there is as much useless waste in the production of utensils as there is usefulness in the simulacrum, which is one reason why Klossowski strongly rejects the modern notion of the 'priceless' nature of art, and of 'pure art' in particular (LC 47). *Living Currency* puts forward a far more original thesis: the distinction between the 'noble' simulacrum and the 'ignoble' utensil can only be understood through an analysis of the phenomenon of *perversion*.

Klossowski largely adopts the concept of perversion developed in the nineteenth century, which presumed the existence of a sexual instinct or impulse that was directed toward procreation. Any deviation from this goal was deemed to be a diversion or 'perversion' of the sexual instinct, which led to Krafft-Ebing's famous typology of perversions in his 1886 book *Psychopathia Sexualis*: inversion, fetishism, sadism and masochism.<sup>99</sup> In a similar manner, Klossowski suggests that the 'sexuality' encompasses two propensities, 'the *procreative instinct* of the species, and the *voluptuous emotion* that precedes the act of creation', and that a perversion therefore 'denotes a *fixation* of the voluptuous emotion at a state *prior* to the procreative act' (LC 49). By separating sensual pleasure – which Klossowski always calls 'voluptuous emotion' – from the instinct of propagation, a perversion is any activity that holds the procreative function in suspense, and instead seeks out new objects of investment by *diverting* or rerouting the procreative impulse and directing its energies elsewhere – namely, to a *phantasm*. Klossowski sometimes calls these diversions *prélèvements*, 'deductions' or 'debits', as if one were withdrawing from an account. But once the impulse is reinvested and 'captured' in the phantasm, it strives to reinvest its forces outside of itself in the form of a *fabricated* object, that is, in a simulacrum (LC 60, 62, 81). A simulacrum is thus the product of a 'perverse' phantasm.

What then is the origin of the *utensil*? Klossowski argues that utensils *also* have their origin in phantasms, but the initial constraint of the phantasm is first *renounced* (LC 61) and then *reconfigured* (LC 25, 51):

the obsessional constraint of the phantasm is now presented as a *need* of the individual, and the act of fabrication is reduced to the production of economic *goods* that satisfy those needs. Similarly, the voluptuous emotion associated with the phantasm is ensconced in a *stereotype*, which is ‘what the industrialist spirit suggests and then imposes on the receptivity of individuals as *the most satisfying of objects*’ (TV 105). Through all these means, the industrial regime is able to manipulate phantasms in order to convert their obsessive constraint into an obsessive urgency to produce and consume goods, thereby commercializing them and making them profitable for its institutions. Such is the paradox that Klossowski locates at the heart of the industrial regime: it is by nature *perverse*, powered by voluptuous emotion that has been diverted from its procreative role, yet takes this diverted energy and puts it in the service of maintaining the unity of the economic subject (the *suppôt*).

Both utensils and simulacra, then, have their origin in phantasms, which are as productive for Klossowski as labour power was for Marx. The difference between the two types of objects lies in their relation to the individual unity of the subject, the *suppôt*: a fabricated utensil must *serve* this unity, whereas a simulacrum can only persist at the *expense* of the individual’s unity and integrity (LC 60–1). More generally, utensils serve gregariousness (the herd instinct) and the perpetuation of the species, whereas simulacra serve the singular and the exceptional. Both Sade and Nietzsche insisted that ‘the species only merits being named the raw material of life through the elaboration of exceptions, or monsters’ – whence the Sadean idea of an ‘integral monstrosity’, which is the opposite of the idea of an ‘integral person’ (LC 69–70). What defines a monster is the *lack* of individual unity, and an individual becomes monstrous when its unity is shattered in the service of its phantasms. In other words, in the fabrication of utensils, the phantasm is *used* by the economic individuals, whereas in the production of a simulacrum, the phantasm *uses up* the individual (33). ‘There are thus two circuits that interpenetrate each other within the unity of the individual,’ Klossowski concludes. ‘The individual can never break apart the two circuits; it can only defer the perpetual urgency of one or the other circuit’ (LC 40).

## 2. Phantasms and industry: The price of ‘voluptuous emotion’

The second major innovation of *Living Currency* concerns the question: under what conditions can *voluptuous emotion* in particular be

commodified, once it is separated from the act of procreation? The industrial regime has reconfigured the impulses into a mere demand of goods and has commercialized phantasms in order to redirect them toward its own ends. But as Klossowski points out, ‘what we call “erotic pleasure” cannot be treated as if it were simply the enjoyment of one good among others ... because it is related to a very particular object – a *living object*, and hence a body’ (LC 51). Is it possible to speak of a right to ‘own’ pleasure, as Sade put it, if this pleasure is related to a living body (LC 51)?

This is the question Klossowski began to address in his 1970 article ‘Sade and Fourier’, which staged a ‘hypothetical debate’ (SF 79) between the two thinkers, ultimately contrasting Fourier’s utopian vision with Sade’s counter-utopia.<sup>100</sup> Charles Fourier (1772–1837) was the boldest and most original thinker among the early nineteenth-century social theorists whom Engels called ‘utopian socialists’.<sup>101</sup> Klossowski’s interest in Fourier had no doubt been provoked by the publication, in 1967, of *The New Amorous World*, a manuscript containing Fourier’s proposals concerning love and sexuality that he had completed in 1818 but never dared to publish.<sup>102</sup> The appearance of the book 150 years after its composition was thus something of a literary event. If Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Things*, had famously analysed the trinity of ‘labour, life and language’, one could say that Fourier had been interested in a fourth term: love.<sup>103</sup> What Klossowski found revolutionary in Fourier’s manuscript was that Fourier treated ‘erotic pleasure’ as a *primordial need* and thus had ‘dared to extend the “communal ownership” of all goods to *living, erotic objects*’, that is, to human beings (LC 52).

For Fourier, voluptuous emotion is ‘the passion best suited for the formation of social ties’, but the problem with what he mockingly called ‘civilization’ is that it had failed to recognize the sheer diversity and inconstancy of human sexual proclivities, which were essentially polygamous. How else could one account for the ubiquity of adultery in civilized societies? Fourier therefore proposed to ground his reorganization of civilization in the impulses and their phantasms, that is, in what he called ‘the free play of the passions’ (SF 82). Fourier divided his society into affective units or ‘passional’ groups that he called ‘Phalanxes’, whose goal was not simply to satisfy material needs but ensure all men and women a rich and satisfying sexual life. ‘Each affective grouping’, Klossowski notes, ‘was based on emotions whose phantasms cannot be communicated beyond their immediate circle’ (SF 84). One of the fundamental conditions for the realization of Fourier’s amorous utopia was what he called the ‘sexual minimum’: every mature man and woman would be guaranteed a satisfying minimum of sexual pleasure, just as one is guaranteed a ‘minimum

wage' in the world of work. For Fourier, love was neither a private matter, nor a recreation that distracts from work, but an essential and institutionalized part of collective life.<sup>104</sup>

Klossowski, like many others, was obviously intrigued by Fourier's proposals, but as one of Sade's most famous interpreters he also drew attention to a number of revealing differences between the two thinkers. Sade, for his part, had developed 'a form of communal life based on the violation of the physical and moral propriety of persons' rather than the free play of the passions (LC 54–5). Similarly, Sade had confined his perverse activities within the limits of clandestine societies, whereas Fourier thought that 'the basic principle underlying clandestine groups should be upheld and extended to the rest of society', that is, everyone should be divided into categories based on age and social position, and sorted into different affective units based on his principle of 'passional attraction' (LC 52; SF 85). Most importantly, unlike Fourier, Sade recognized the essential function that *money*, as an abstract equivalent, played in the kind of 'universal prostitution' he envisioned. For Klossowski, it was this emphasis on the role of money that set Sade apart. At bottom, Sade agreed with Fourier that there could be only one form of universal communication: 'the exchange of bodies through the secret language of corporeal signs', in which the arousal and the living object of the emotion were one and the same – a living currency (LC 69; SF 90). But Fourier's utopia was based on the idea that a direct 'exchange between individuals could take place at the level of the passions' (SF 88), and that this exchange could be realized through a principle of *play*, that is, through 'entertainments, spectacles, ritual ceremonies, contests' not unlike those found in the *theatrica theologica* of the Romans (SF 86). In Klossowski's terms, the 'creative freedom' of play would be the *simulacrum* capable of establishing a free and gratuitous exchange between individuals at both the material and psychic level (SF 86).

Klossowski argues that this is precisely what Sade would have objected to in Fourier. Since phantasms are incommunicable, no direct exchange is possible between individuals at the level of their perversions. A *simulacrum* of communication indeed exists, but can only be provided by money, and not by play. 'Sade has the distinction of being the first modern thinker to recognize the close relationship between the phantasm and its commercial valorization, and thus the role of money as a *sign of the incalculable value of the phantasm*' (SF 89). In his secret societies, Sade insisted that men and women had to be *saleable* as trafficable objects, and even members of the Society of the Friends of Crime had to pay dues of 10,000 francs per year (SF 91). Money circulated through the clandestine societies as

a simulacrum of exchange through which one could appraise the value of phantasms and ensure the circulation of their objects. For Sade, in other words, 'money forms an integral part of the representative mode of perversion' and is an essential 'instrument of integral monstrosity' (SF 89). Just as industry has appropriated phantasms and voluptuous emotion for its own profitable ends, Sade appropriated money, a sign of wealth and hard work, to sustain the circulation and value of perversions.

For Klossowski, it is this Sadean gesture that marks the birth of the modern commercialization of voluptuous emotion: 'Even in economics, perversion itself is the ground of value' (LC 54). Indeed, Klossowski shows how two specific forms of perversion pervade industrial production. For Sade's characters, the *quality* of a single victim, on whom the torturer inflicts his tortures, sometimes takes precedence over the concept of the specific act, while at other times, it is the same repeated act, indifferently inflicted on a large *quantity* of victims, which affirms the quality of the act. The same principles have been carried over into the modern industrial economy: either industry uses the same repeated act (automation) to mass produce identical objects-in-series, or it experiments with various manufacturing methods to confer quality on a single product in order to increase its rarity and price (LC 57–9). 'Sade intended to demonstrate', Klossowski argues, 'that the existing institutions of any regime implicitly advance the cause of the so-called polymorphously perverse, and thus structure perversion' (SF 83).

In Klossowski's hypothetical debate between Sade and Fourier, then, it is Sade who wins out over Fourier. Fourier had wanted to ground his utopia on the free play of the passions – 'free' meaning *free-of-charge* – but Sade showed that voluptuous emotion, which always includes an element of aggressiveness, necessarily presupposes value and appraisal, that is, *a price to be paid* (LC 53). Sade thus validates Klossowski's argument that commodification is inherent in the impulses. Both Stendhal's proverb ('Many manage to sell what they could never give away') and Nietzsche's aphorism ('No one wants her as a gift, so she has to sell herself') express the fundamental principle of voluptuous emotion: *nothing in the life of the impulses is free* (LC 68, 65).

Just as every individual is caught up in two intersecting circuits of objects, so every individual faces an incessant dilemma between two types of perversions: 'either an *internal* perversion, which is a dissolution of the unity of the individual – or else an internal *affirmation* of the individual's unity, which is an *external* perversion' (LC 65). The parody of a classical utopia that gives *Living Currency* its title is nonetheless Klossowski's testament to the greatness of Fourier. Fourier's entire effort was aimed

at overcoming the *external* perversion of the industrial economy (the monstrous hypertrophy of ‘needs’) so that humans could consent to their *internal* perversion (the dissolution of their fictive unity), thereby producing a ‘harmony’ between the life of the impulses and the productions of the economy. As such, Klossowski concedes that Fourier’s utopia conceals a profound reality. ‘But until that reality appears,’ he concludes, ‘it is in the interest of industry for Fourier’s utopia to remain a utopia, and for Sade’s perversion to remain the driving force behind the monstrousness of industry’ (LC 66).

Lisieux, May 2016

## Notes

- 1 Pierre Klossowski, *La monnaie vivante* (Paris: Losfeld, 1970). The original hardcover edition incorporated a series of photographs by Pierre Zucca, which were not included in the subsequent paperback editions (Paris: Joëlle Losfeld, 1994; Paris: Rivages, 1997). The initial draft of *Living Currency* was presented to the Institut Français in Florence in April 1970 under the title ‘La mercantilisation des phantasmes érotiques selon les norms industrielles’ (‘The Commercialization of Erotic Phantasms in Accordance with Industrial Norms’). In English, the best works on Klossowski’s oeuvre are Ian James, *Pierre Klossowski: The Persistence of a Name* (Oxford: Legenda, 2000) and Hervé Castanet, *Pierre Klossowski: The Pantomime of the Spirits*, trans. Adrian R. Price with Pamela King (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014), which contains analyses of both ‘Sade and Fourier’ (69–75) and *Living Currency* (142–59).
- 2 The following works by Klossowski will be cited in the text using the following abbreviations:

DB = *Diana at Her Bath*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli, in *Diana at Her Bath and The Women of Rome* (Boston: Eridanos Press, 1990), 3–84.

LC = *Living Currency*, in this volume.

NVC = *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997; London: Continuum, 2005). Page numbers refer to the Chicago edition.

R = *La Ressemblance* (Marseille: André Dimanche, 1984).

SDD = *Such a Deathly Desire*, trans. Russell Ford (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007).

SF = 'Sade and Fourier', in this volume.

SMN = *Sade My Neighbor*, trans. Alphonso Lingus (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991).

TV = *Tableaux vivantes: Essais critiques 1936–1983* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).

WR = *Sacred and Mythic Origins of Certain Practices of the Women of Rome*, trans. Sophie Hawkes in *Diana at her Bath and The Women of Rome* (Boston: Eridanos Press, 1990), 89–138.

- 3 See Denis Hollier, ed., *The College of Sociology*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), which includes essays by Klossowski, Georges Bataille, Alexandre Kojève, Michel Leiris, Jean Paulhan, Denis de Rougement, Jean Wahl and others.
- 4 See Klossowski's retrospective reflections, 'De Contre-Attaque à Acéphale' ('From Contre-Attaque to Acéphale'), in TV 91–5.
- 5 Pierre Klossowski, *La Vocation suspendue* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950).
- 6 Pierre Klossowski, *Sade, mon prochain* (Paris: Seuil, 1947). A revised and expanded edition of the book appeared in 1967, which is the edition translated into English by Alphonso Lingus.
- 7 Pierre Klossowski, *Les Lois de l'hospitalité* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), with a new preface and postface. *The Laws of Hospitality* is a trilogy that includes three previous published works, *Roberte, ce soir* (Paris: Minuit, 1954), *La Révocation de l'édit de Nantes* (Paris: Minuit, 1959) and *Le Souffler ou le Théâtre de société* (Paris: Pauvert, 1960). The first two volumes have been published in English as *Robert Ce Soir and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (London: Marion Boyars, 1969). For an analysis of the *Laws of Hospitality*, see Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).
- 8 Pierre Klossowski, *Le Baphomet* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1965). English translation: *The Baphomet*, trans. Sophie Hawkes and Stephen Sartarelli, with a foreword by Michel Foucault (Boston: Eridanos Press, 1988).
- 9 Michel Foucault, 'La Prose d'Actéon', in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 135 (March 1964), 444–59. English translation: 'The Prose of Actaeon', trans. Robert Hurley, in Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: New Press, 1998), 123–35

- 10** Maurice Blanchot, 'Le rire des dieux', in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 151 (July 1965): 91–105, which is an analysis of *The Baphomet* and *The Laws of Hospitality*. English translation: 'The Laughter of the Gods', in Maurice Blanchot, *Friendship*, trans. Elizabeth Rotenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 169–82.
- 11** Gilles Deleuze, 'Klossowski ou les corps-langue', in *Critique* 214 (March 1965): 199–209. English translation: 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language', in Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense* [1969], trans. Mark Lester; ed. Charles Stivale and Constantin Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 280–301.
- 12** Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 28–9.
- 13** Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 312 n.19.
- 14** Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche et le cercle vicieux* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1969). English translation: *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997; London: Continuum, 2005).
- 15** Michel Foucault, letter to Pierre Klossowski, 3 July 1969, reproduced in *Cahiers pour un temps* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1985), 85–8.
- 16** Michel Foucault, letter to Pierre Klossowski, Winter 1970, included in this volume. Despite his frequent praise, however, Foucault soon lost touch with Klossowski. David Macey, in *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (New York: Vintage, 1993), provides the following explanation, drawing on a conversation with Gilles Deleuze, as reported by Claude Mauriac: 'Early in 1973, Klossowski had a conversation with Foucault in which he suggested how to deal with the CRS on demonstrations. A platoon of thirty very handsome young men armed with sticks would, he claimed, immobilize the police, so struck would they be by their beauty. Foucault's reaction is not on record, but it is clear that his political trajectory had by now taken him far away from Klossowski's world' (341). 'CRS' refers to the Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité (Republican Security Companies), a reserve of the French National Police devoted primarily to crowd and riot control and the re-establishment of order.
- 17** Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* [1972], trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin, 2009).

- 18 Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy* [1974], trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).
- 19 Jean Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange* [1999], trans. Chris Turner (London and New York: Verso 2001), esp. 122–33. One should note that Baudrillard's (and Deleuze's) concept of the 'simulacrum' have different components than Klossowski's, and should not be conflated.
- 20 The phrase 'libidinal economy' first appears in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, which uses the term on three occasions, in each case contrasting it with 'political economy': 'Abstract labor on the one hand, abstract desire the other: political economy and libidinal economy' (303); 'Libidinal economy is no less objective than political economy, and the political no less subjective than the libidinal' (345); 'Schizoanalysis makes no distinction in nature between political economy and libidinal economy' (381).
- 21 Roland Barthes, 'Réponses', in *Tel Quel* 47 (Autumn 1971): 16, as quoted in Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 172.
- 22 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 63.
- 23 Gilles Deleuze, letter to Pierre Klossowski, 21 April 1971, as cited in Sarah Wilson, 'Pierre Klossowski: Epiphanies and Secrets', in *Pierre Klossowski*, ed. Anthony Spira and Sarah Wilson (London: Hatje Cantz, 2006), 4–17: 15.
- 24 For this latter phase of Klossowski's career, see *Pierre Klossowski*, ed. Spira and Wilson, the superb catalogue to the exhibition of Klossowski's drawings that took place at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, the Museum Ludwig in Cologne and the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2006–7. One should also note that the directors Raul Ruiz and Pierre Zucca made films based on Klossowski's work, and they form an equally important part of Klossowski's work in images. See Gilles Deleuze, Letter to Pierre Klossowski, 1979, in *Europe: Revue Littéraire mensuelle* 1034–5 (June–July 2015), special issue on Klossowski, 61–2: 'It seems to me that, at the moment, there are four great authors who are truly thinking the image – not only theoretically, but through its practices as a modern element of the present world: yourself, Godard, McLuhan, and Burroughs.'
- 25 Portions of this section are adapted from Daniel W. Smith, 'Klossowski's Reading of Nietzsche: Impulses, Phantasms, Simulacra, Stereotypes', in *Diacritics* 35/1 (2007): 8–21.
- 26 The archaic French term *suppôt* translates the Latin term *suppositum*,

which in scholastic philosophy generally indicated a substantial reality considered in its totality, and specifically, a being endowed with reason; as such, it was used as a synonym for 'person' or 'individual'. For a late usage, see Leibniz, *Theodicy*, trans. E. M. Huggard (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1985), I, §59, 155: 'Many moderns have acknowledged that there is no *physical communication* between soul and body, despite the *metaphysical communication* always subsisting, which causes soul and body to compose one and the same *suppôt*, or what is called a person.' The term is not in current usage in contemporary French, apart from phrases where the word has assumed the meaning of an 'accomplice' or 'partner in crime', such as *suppôt de Satan* (agent of Satan), or *suppôts du dictateur* (the dictator's henchmen). Klossowski always uses the term in its scholastic sense.

- 27** Klossowski, *Sade My Neighbor*, 14. See also Pierre Klossowski, 'Protase et Apodose', in *L'Arc* 43 (1970), 19: 'In the domain of communication (literary or pictorial), the stereotype (as "style") is the residue of a simulacrum (corresponding to an obsessional constraint) that has fallen to the level of current usage, disclosed and abandoned to a common interpretation.'
- 28** On all these points, see Alain Arnaud, *Pierre Klossowski* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), 7–10. Arnaud's concise book is one of the best studies available on Klossowski's work.
- 29** Pierre Klossowski, 'Postface', in Jean Decottignies, *Klossowski* (Paris: Henri Veyrier, 1985), 137, emphasis added.
- 30** See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967): 'The body and physiology as the starting point. Why? ... The phenomenon of the body is the richer, clearer, more tangible phenomenon ... Belief in the body is more fundamental than belief in the soul' (§§492, 489, 491).
- 31** In English, the only treatment of Nietzsche's conception of the impulses comparable to Klossowski's is Graham Parkes' marvellous book, *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche's Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).
- 32** This is the conception of desire critiqued by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*.
- 33** See Gilles Deleuze, 'Schizophrenia and Society', in *Two Regimes of Madness, Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), 17–28: 'A chemistry at once intensive and experiential seems able to go beyond the traditional organic/psychic duality, at least in two directions:

- (1) the experimental schizoid states induced through mescaline, bulbo-capnine, LSD, etc.; (2) the therapeutic initiative to calm the anxiety of schizophrenics, while dismantling their catatonic shell in order to jump start the schizophrenic machines and get them running again (the use of “major tranquilizers”) (26).
- 34 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Dawn*, trans. Brittain Smith, vol. 5 of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Alan D. Schrift, Keith Ansell-Pearson and Duncan Large (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), §119.
- 35 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §259.
- 36 *Ibid.*, §481.
- 37 Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), esp. Ch. 2, ‘Active and Reactive’, 39–72: ‘Qualities are nothing but the corresponding difference in quantity between two forces’ (43).
- 38 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), §116.
- 39 *Ibid.* §354.
- 40 Nietzsche, *Dawn*, §115.
- 41 Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, 72. See also NVC 133: ‘Nothing exists apart from *impulses* that are essentially *generative* of *phantasms*.’
- 42 See Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 213: ‘What appears in the phantasm is the movement by which the ego opens itself to the surface and liberates the a-cosmic, impersonal, and pre-individual singularities which it had imprisoned.’
- 43 Pierre Klossowski, *Les Méditations bibliques de Hamann* (Paris: Minuit, 1948), 34–5.
- 44 Klossowski, as cited in Castenet, *The Pantomime of Spirits*, 296.
- 45 Klossowski, *Les lois de l’hospitalité*, 334–5.
- 46 Klossowski, ‘Protase et Apodose’, 10; and Jean-Maurice Monnoyer, *Le peintre et son démon: Entretiens avec Pierre Klossowski* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985), 61.
- 47 Cited on the back cover of Alain Arnaud, *Pierre Klossowski* (Paris: Seuil, 1990).
- 48 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §479.
- 49 For Klossowski’s theory of the stereotype, see ‘On the Use of Stereotypes

and the Censure Exercised by Classical Syntax', in 'Protase et apodose', 15–20.

- 50 Pierre Klossowski, 'Description, Argumentation, Narrative', in *Decadence of the Nude*, trans. Paul and Catherine Petit (London: Black Dog, 2002), 125–39: 129. See also R 103: 'No content of experience can ever be communicated except through the conceptual ruts that the code of everyday signs has hollowed out in minds; and conversely, the code of everyday signs censures every content of experience.'
- 51 Klossowski, 'Protase et Apodose', 16–19.
- 52 Virgile, *L'Énéide*, trad. Pierre Klossowski (Paris: Gallimard, 1964). In his introduction, Klossowski explains that, in the *Aeneid*, 'it is the voluntary juxtaposition of words that constitutes the physiognomy of each verse ... The poem itself is a theater in which the words mime the gestures and states of the soul of the characters ... It is the *words* that have an attitude, not the body; it is the words that are woven, not the clothing; that shine, and not the armor; that rumble, and not the storm; that threaten, and not Juno; that laugh, and not Venus; that bleed, and not the wounds ... Beyond grammatical intelligibility, but by following its cadence, we can thereby descend into the shadows and rise at the dawn of the fable, a place where we can no longer tell if it is the gods who create the fervor of our souls or if it is an irresistible desire that takes on a divine physiognomy ...' (xi–xii). Klossowski seems to have been following the translation technique advocated by Rudolf Pannwitz, as cited in Walter Benjamin's famous essay 'The Task of the Translator' in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 81: 'The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue.' Benjamin himself, we might note, pointed to the 'enormous danger' of such an approach: 'the gates of a language thus expanded and modified may slam shut and enclose the translator with silence' (81).
- 53 Roger Caillois, 'Roger Caillois dénonce 'Le Baphomet' pour cause de style' ('Roger Caillois Denounces "The Baphomet" on the Grounds of Style'), in *Le Monde* 19 June 1965, 14. For an analysis of *The Baphomet* and Caillois's critiques, see Ian James, 'Evaluating Klossowski's Le Baphomet', in *Diacritics* 35/1 (Spring 2005): 119–35.
- 54 Klossowski, *Robert Ce Soir and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, 7: 'Some think there is solecism in gesture too, whenever by a nod of the head or a movement of the hand one utters the opposite of what the

- voice is saying.' We are indebted to Deleuze's analyses of solecism in Klossowski, in 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language', 282–7.
- 55 No biography of Klossowski yet exists, but the catalog *Pierre Klossowski*, ed. Anthony Spira and Sarah Wilson (London: Hatje Cantz, 2006), contains a thoroughly researched and detailed 'Chronology' of Klossowski's life (133–64). For the events surrounding Klossowski's religious crisis, see 141–3.
  - 56 For Klossowski's explicit critiques of the Christian church, see Pierre Klossowski, 'Reponse de Pierre Klossowski a Yves de Gibon' (1974), in *Europe: Revue litteraire mensuelle* 1034–5 (June–July 2015), 154–6: 'One of my complaints about the church is its moral behavior, by which I mean its revolt against the erotic wave. This stems from its refusal to recognize that religious belief is inseparable from Eros ... Erotic manifestations are inseparable from the religious sentiment. Animality is the root of the religious' (154–5).
  - 57 For Klossowski's interpretation of Hamann, which we here leave to the side, see his introduction to J. G. Hamann, *Les Méditations bibliques de Hamann*, trans. Pierre Klossowski (Paris: Minuit, 1948), which was subsequently published as a separate essay in *Les Écrivains célèbres* (Geneva: Mazenod, 1957), 238–41, and then as a separate book, *Le Mage du Nord* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1988). It was in this text that Klossowski first developed the themes of the incommunicability of the impulses and their expression in simulacra, though without using these terms. 'It is not so much that Hamann's writings have a style than that *their substance is found entirely in their style*. In everything that came from Hamann's pen, his personality is so insistent and predominant that the reader experiences it far more than the content, strictly speaking' (*Méditations bibliques*, 31).
  - 58 Tertullian, 'Du sommeil, des songes et de la mort, précédé d'une "Note sur le Traité De l'âme de Tertullien"', in *La Licorne* (Winter 1948), 103–8 (a translation of Chapters 43–7 and 52–3 of *De Anima*). The translation was reprinted in 1999 (Paris: Gallimard, Le Promeneur) with a new introduction by Jean-François Courtier, which replaced Klossowski's 'Note.'
  - 59 Suétone, *Vie des douze César*, trad. Pierre Klossowski (Paris: Club français du livre, 1959).
  - 60 Virgile, *L'Énéide*, trad. Pierre Klossowski (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).
  - 61 Castenet, *The Pantomime of Spirits*, xx.
  - 62 Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin,

2003), Book VI, §9, 247: ‘In the whole of this careful examination [of Varro’s *Antiquitates rerum humanarum et divinarum*], he never mentions or names any gods from whom eternal life is to be asked; and it is, strictly speaking, for the sake of *eternal life* alone that we are Christians.’

- 63 Augustine, *City of God*, Book VI, §4: ‘From Varro’s account it emerges that “human matters” preceded “divine matters” among the pagans ... Divine matters were established by men: “the painter exists before the picture, the builder before the building; similarly, human communities precede their institutions” ... Here he [Varro] plainly admits that “divine matters” are of human institution, like pictures and buildings, but his account of what he calls “divine affairs” is a collection of frivolous fantasies’ (232–3).
- 64 The classic analysis of the concept of the fetish is William Pietz’s trilogy of articles entitled ‘The Problem of the Fetish’, in *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* (Part 1, Vol. 9, Spring 1985, 5–17; Part 2, Vol. 13, Spring 1987, 23–45; Part 3, Vol. 16, Autumn 1988, 105–24). For a contemporary interpretation, see Bruno Latour’s important *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).
- 65 Bernard Lamarche-Vadel, *Klossowski: L’énoncé dénoncé* (Paris: Marval, Collection Galerie Beaubourg, 1998).
- 66 Augustine, *City of God*, Book VI, §5, 234.
- 67 *Ibid.*, Book VI, §8, 243.
- 68 Pierre Klossowski, *Origines culturelles et mythiques d’un certain comportement des Dames romaines* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1968). The word translated as ‘sacred’ in the English title [*culturelles*] literally means ‘cultic’.
- 69 For an excellent analysis of Klossowski’s use of *theologia theatrica*, see Jung Eui-Jin, *Une Étude critique de la théologie théâtrale de Pierre Klossowski, Du point de vue de la poésie historique*, doctoral thesis, 2006, University of Paris 8, under the direction of Gérard Dessons.
- 70 Augustine, *City of God*, Book VI, §5, 234.
- 71 *Ibid.*, Book VI, §10, 249.
- 72 WR 133. Klossowski frequently appeals to Tertullian’s *De Spectaculis* [*On the Spectacles*], written between 197 and 202 AD, which examines the consequences of Christians attending the circus, theatre or amphitheatre (‘the pleasures of public shows’). Spectacles such as the Liberalia, the Consualia, the Equiria and the Bacchanalia are pagan shows that ‘always

lead to spiritual agitation, subjecting the attendees to strong excitements and passionate desire.

- 73** Augustine, *City of God*, Book VI, §7, 241.
- 74** The etymology of the term ‘religion’ is notoriously obscure, however. Cicero derived it from *relegere* (‘to go through again’, i.e., in reading or speech), though the derivation from *religare* can be traced back through Augustine to Lucretius. See Sarah F. Hoyt, ‘The Etymology of Religion’, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 32.2 (1912): 126–9.
- 75** See Pierre Klossowski, *Roberte et Gulliver* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1987), and the discussion in Castenet, *The Pantomime of Spirits*, 167–172.
- 76** Augustine, *City of God*, Book VIII, §24, 334, citing a surviving text from the Asclepius: *Hermetica: The Greek ‘Corpus Hermeticum’ and the Latin ‘Asclepius’ in a New English Translation, with Notes and Introduction*, ed. Brian P. Copenhaver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 90. See R 95.
- 77** Curiously, Klossowski does not attempt to revive the concept of the angel in the same way he retrieves the concept of the demon. For one attempt to do so, see Michel Serres, *Angels: A Modern Myth* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), which interprets angels as modes of communication.
- 78** R 95. Portions of this article were incorporated into the essay ‘Du Simulacre’ [‘On the Simulacrum’] in TV 141–5.
- 79** See Jean-Paul Madou, *Démons et simulacres dans l’œuvre de Pierre Klossowski* (Paris: Méridiens Klincksiek, 1987), 49. Madou’s book is one of the best studies of Klossowski’s theological trajectory.
- 80** R 96–7. It is this demonic capacity of metamorphosis (the power of the Same) that Michel Foucault analysed in his essay ‘The Prose of Actaeon’ (see footnote 9).
- 81** See SDD 119–20n.: ‘What we call theogony is nothing other than a necessary participation in the explications of being in divine physiognomies.’
- 82** See Friedrich Nietzsche, ‘How the “True World” Finally Became a Fable: The History of an Error’, in *The Twilight of the Idols* [1888], in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954), 485–6.
- 83** Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Fourth Part, ‘Retired’, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 373.

- 84 SDD 121. See Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Third Part, 'On Apostates', 2, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 294.
- 85 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), First Essay, §10–13. *Ressentiment* is the French word for 'resentment' or 'bitterness' (against the pain and suffering of life), but is also derived from the verb *ressentir*, 'to feel or suffer the effects of something', implying that those whose dominant impulse is *ressentiment* can feel but not act.
- 86 SDD 8–10. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), §341.
- 87 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §1038.
- 88 Deleuze, 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language', in *Logic of Sense*, 292.
- 89 *Ibid.*, 293.
- 90 *Ibid.*, 294. For an analysis of these five themes, albeit from a literary point of view, see Daniel W. Smith, "'A Life of Pure Immanence": Deleuze's *Critique et clinique* Project', in Daniel W. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 189–221.
- 91 Deleuze, 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language', in *Logic of Sense*, 297.
- 92 The exception is the sixth chapter of *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 'The Vicious Circle as a Selective Doctrine' (NVC 121–71), which anticipates several analyses in *Living Currency*.
- 93 Arnaud, *Pierre Klossowski*, 190.
- 94 LC 30, 68; Klossowski, 'Protase et Apodose', 13.
- 95 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 63, 346. Deleuze and Guattari use the term 'desire' as a shorthand to indicate the life of the impulses, and they follow Kant in defining desire as having the capacity to produce its own object ('a faculty which by means of its representations is the cause of the actuality of the objects of those representations').
- 96 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 29, translation modified. Deleuze and Guattari note that this question was first formulated explicitly by Spinoza in the preface to his *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981), 3.
- 97 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 30: 'If there is such a thing as two sorts of group fantasy, it is because two different readings of this identity are possible, depending upon whether the desiring-machines are regarded from the point of view of the great gregarious masses that they form, or whether social machines are considered from the

point of view of the elementary forces of desire that serve as a basis for them.’

- 98 Walter Benjamin, ‘L’œuvre d’art à l’époque de sa reproduction mécanisée’, trans. Pierre Klossowski, in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Jahrgang V [*Journal of Social Research*, Vol. 5] (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1936), 40–68. English translation: ‘The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproduction’, in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 217–52. Klossowski later recalled that Benjamin was not satisfied with his French translation: ‘Benjamin, estimating my first version to be too loose, had begun to retranslate it with me. The result of this was a perfectly unreadable text due to the fact that it copied exactly certain poor German expressions for which Benjamin accepted no transposition. French syntax often literally gave cramps to this unwavering logician.’ Cited in Pierre Klossowski, ‘Letter on Walter Benjamin’, trans. Christian Hite, in *Parrhesia* 19 (2014): 14–21. For Klossowski’s relation to Benjamin, see Hollier, ed., *The College of Sociology*, 219 and Paul Foss-Heimlich, ‘Sade and Fourier and Klossowski and Benjamin’ in this volume.
- 99 Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: eine Klinisch-Forensische Studie* [*Sexual Psychopathy: A Clinical-Forensic Study*] (Stuttgart: Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1886). To my knowledge, Klossowski never explicitly refers to Krafft-Ebing. For a historical and conceptual analysis of the origins of the concepts of sexual instinct and perversion, see Arnold I. Davidson, ‘Closing up the Corpses’, in *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1–29.
- 100 Pierre Klossowski, ‘Sade et Fourier’, in *Topique: Revue freudienne*, 4–5 (October–November 1970), 79–98. One might note that Roland Barthes’ article ‘Vivre avec Fourier’ was published at the same time in *Critique* 281 (October 1970): 789–812, and was later incorporated into Barthes’ book *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* [1971], trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976).
- 101 Saint-Simon, Owen and Fourier had become recognized as a utopian trinity by the 1830s, and Marx and Engels dubbed them ‘utopian socialists’ in order to differentiate their own position of ‘scientific socialism’. See Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* [1880] (New York: International, 1972). Fourier himself, however, did not consider himself to be a utopian thinker; indeed, he used the term negatively to characterize his adversaries, which included the followers of Saint-Simon and Owen.

- 102** Charles Fourier, *Oeuvres Complètes de Charles Fourier*, Vol. 7, *Le Nouveau Monde Amoureux*, ed., with notes and introduction, by Simone-Debout-Oleszkiewicz (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1967). In the years that followed, several anthologies of Fourier's work appeared in English; among these, *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love, and Passionate Attraction*, ed. and trans. Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971) contains extensive selections from *The New Amorous World*.
- 103** Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970), chapter 8, 'Labor, Life, Language', 250–302.
- 104** For a detailed assessment of *Le nouveau monde amoureux*, see Jonathan Beecher, 'Parody and Liberation in *The New Amorous World* of Charles Fourier', in *History Workshop Journal* 20.1 (1985): 125–33. An expanded version of this article appears as Chapter 15 of Jonathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), which is the definitive English-language biography of Fourier.

# LETTER FROM MICHEL FOUCAULT TO PIERRE KLOSSOWSKI

Letter from Michel Foucault to Pierre Klossowski regarding *Living Currency*, Winter 1970:

Dear Pierre,

I should have written to you as soon as I first read *Living Currency*; it knocked the wind out of me, of course, but still I could have responded. Now, after having reread it several times, I know that it is the greatest book of our time. One has the impression that everything that matters in one way or another – Blanchot, Bataille, *Beyond Good and Evil*, too – leads straight to it, insidiously. But there it is, now it has been said, and indeed it is so great a book that everything else recedes and counts only half as much anymore. This is what we should have been thinking about: desire, value, and the simulacrum – the triangle that dominates us and has constituted us for many centuries of our history. Those who said it then and say it now, Freud-and-Marx, and who worked away at it deep in their mole tunnels: today we can laugh at them, and we know why.

If it weren't for you, Pierre, all we'd be able to do is to say we're against the truth that Sade had pointed out long ago, a truth no one but you has ever really approached – nobody, in fact, has even come close. We no longer know where it is, but we know it's there in what you've said.

What you have done for us all, Pierre, is truly beyond all thanks and recognition.

Yours,  
Michel Foucault

Cher Pierre,

Il aurait fallu que je vous  
rémontre la manière certaine de la  
monnaie vivante ; bien sûr j'aurais dû  
le souffler coupé, mais j'aurais pu rêver,  
maintenant pour savoir cela plusieurs  
fois, je suis que c'est le plus haut  
point de notre époque. on a l'impression  
que tout ce que compte Dieu / son ou  
Dieu autre - Babelot, Babilé, Bardé  
et B. et le an, ou - y conduisent in-  
diciblement : mais voilà, c'est dit

Letter from Michel Foucault to Pierre Klossowski

main brisée, et de si haut que tout  
recule, et ne compte plus que sa survie. c'est  
cela qu'il faut penser : désir, valeur et  
sûreté, - triangle qui nous domine et  
nous a construits, depuis ses siècles sans doute  
dans notre histoire. s'y acharnaient, au  
19<sup>e</sup> siècle de leur bourgeoisie, ceux qui disaient  
et disaient, Freud et Marx : on peut en être  
main brisée, et on sait pourquoi.

Sans vous, Pierre, nous n'aurions plus  
qu'à ~~survivre~~ rester sonnés cette nuit qui s'achève  
avec une seule bonne foi et que nul autre  
avant nous n'avait connue, - sans nul,  
à vrai dire, ne s'était approché. Vous avez dit  
et vous êtes notre salut. On ne voit plus  
elle est, mais on voit qu'elle s'est levée  
vous avez dit.

ce que vous avez fait pour nous tous et on  
vous en remercie et de ce remerciement.  
A bon croyez-moi. Inévitablement votre

Michel Foucault



# **LIVING CURRENCY, PIERRE KLOSSOWSKI**

**TRANSLATED BY VERNON W.  
CISNEY, NICOLAE MORAR AND  
DANIEL W. SMITH**

*Since the middle of the nineteenth century, industrial civilization has been anathematized for ravaging the life of the affections.*

*But by crediting industry with such a pernicious effect on the affections, we thereby ascribe to this mode of production, under the pretext of denouncing its 'demoralizing' influence, a considerable moral power.*

*Where does this power come from?*

*From the sheer fact that the simple act of fabricating objects calls into question the aim of this activity. In what way does the use of 'useful' tools differ from the use of the objects produced by the arts, which are 'useless', at least in terms of their subsistence value?*

*No one would ever dream of confusing a tool with a simulacrum, unless it is only as a simulacrum that an object finds its necessary use.*

*Useful goods* were originally inseparable from use *in the sense of a 'custom'*. A custom is perpetuated in a series of goods, whether natural or cultural, that take on seemingly immutable meanings because of the way we use them. Even one's own body, in the way it relates to other bodies, is a useful good whose alienable or inalienable character can vary depending on the meaning given to it by custom. (In this sense, it is like one's honour, in that its *worth* cannot be exchanged.)

As opposed to (natural) useful goods, *fabricated objects*, even though their meaning is still derived from custom (for example, metals can assume emblematic meanings depending on their use), tended to lose this characteristic as the act of manufacturing became more complex and diversified. As it became more diverse due to its increasing complexity, the act of fabrication substituted the efficient utilization of objects for the mere use of goods (natural or cultural). Once efficient fabrication began to produce profits, the use of natural or cultural goods, as defined by the interpretation of custom, was considered to be economically *sterile*. Use – in other words, *enjoyment* – was sterile as long as the goods were deemed to be *unproductive* in the circuit of manufacturing efficiency. In the slave trade, for instance, *using another person's body for enjoyment was considered to be unproductive*. In the industrial age, the fabrication of useful goods definitively broke with the world of sterile uses, putting in its place a world of manufacturing efficiency in which every good – whether natural or cultural, the human body as much as the earth – could be assigned an exchange-value or a price.

However, even the fabrication of useful goods has periods of intermittent sterility, especially since the accelerated pace of manufacturing must constantly find ways to prevent inefficiency in its production processes. And the only solution to the problem of inefficiency is *waste*. Trial and error, which is the condition of efficiency, necessarily leads to wasteful errors. Experimenting with what can be fabricated in order to create a profitable operation means eliminating the risk of product sterility, but the price of this experimentation is wasted materials and human efforts (the costs of manufacturing).

If wasteful experimentation is the prerequisite of efficiency (since the method of experimentation has now been universally applied to any good or object from which one hopes to make a profit), what attitude should we adopt toward a good whose use is presumed to be *immutable* – for instance, a *phantasm* that produces voluptuous emotions? This would be the domain *par excellence* of wasteful experimentation, and it would be expressed through the efficient fabrication of simulacra.

The intelligible act of fabricating requires a differential aptitude for constructing representations, which gives rise to its own dilemma: either

its waste is expressed in repeated acts of construction, destruction and reconstruction that can continue indefinitely, or else its constructions themselves become *expressions of waste*. How then can the world of useful goods avoid becoming the simulation of a phantasm? There is no difference between the fabrication of a useful object such as a *ballistic missile*, and the act of fabricating a simulacrum such as the *Callipygian Venus*, except that the reasons for their wasteful experimentation are the inverse of each other.<sup>1</sup> The sole *utility* of the ballistic missile is to cause *anguish* in the world of sterile uses, whereas the Callipygian Venus is simply the laughing face of the bomb, turning its utility into ridicule.

The utensilary superstition revolves around this absurdity – namely, the fact that a utensil can be a utensil only if it is a simulacrum. The utensil is thereby forced to try to demonstrate the opposite of this absurdity, even if to do so it must claim to be beyond the world of sterile uses by becoming the efficient sign of its own destruction.

It has been said that the fabrication of objects was first inspired by the gods, who provided the initial justification of the livelihood of artisans. But the moment the fabrication of idols was deemed to be useless, there began a long era of ignorance regarding the commodity character of the impulsive life lying at the heart of individuals, which led to a misconception of the various distortions and deformations that can be produced by a *pathological utility*. This is the origin of the completely modern notion of the ‘gratuitous’ or ‘priceless’ nature of art, and of ‘pure art’ in particular. It amounts to denying that pathos can be priced, since it is the pathos of the impulses that would lie at the source of every ‘gratuitous’ creation.

But it is precisely in those domains where we might *least* expect to be concerned with pathos – such as economic applications of science – that this pathological force has developed its craftiest invention yet, one we would not typically consider to be pathological: *the industrial regime*.

Could we not say that economic norms comprise a substructure derived from the affects, and are not themselves a final infrastructure? And if there *were* a final infrastructure, would it not be constituted by the behaviour of our affects and impulses? To answer this question in the affirmative amounts to saying that economic norms – along with the arts, moral and religious institutions and forms of knowledge – are *modes for the expression and representation of impulsive forces*. The way they are expressed in the economy, and ultimately in our industrial world, depends on the way they have been incorporated into the economy by our reigning institutions. It is undeniable that this first and final infrastructure is determined by its own reactions to previously existing substructures, but the forces involved are the same forces that undertake the struggle to turn infrastructures

into substructures. Hence, if these forces are expressed specifically in accordance with existing economic norms, then *they themselves create their own repression*, as well as the means of breaking the repression to which they are subjected in different degrees. This will continue for as long as the conflict among the impulses persists – a conflict which, in any given organism, is a struggle for and against the formation of the subject [*suppôt*], for and against its psychic and bodily unity. It is here that the first schemas of ‘production’ and ‘consumption’ come into being, the first signs of compensation and bargaining.

It is this initial repression of the impulses that forms *the organic and psychic unity of the subject*. From the viewpoint of the subject, this repression corresponds to *a constraint that the subject continues to suffer throughout the conflict waged by the impulses against those that have combined to constitute it*. This repression, and thus this conflict, will be prolonged outside the subject as long as its individual unity is integrated into, and thus defined by, a hierarchy of values translated into a hierarchy of needs. *This hierarchy of needs is the economic form of repression that existing institutions impose by and through the consciousness of the subject on to the imponderable forces of its psychic life*. Because of its acquired organic and moral unity, the individual, within its own milieu, can express its own impulsive life to itself only through a set of material and moral needs. The subject is incapable of asserting itself directly through the movements of its affective life; rather, as long as it maintains its unity, it asserts itself through its ability to possess goods external to itself – to produce and conserve some in order to receive and consume others – provided that these goods are objects and not living beings. Unless there are conditions under which *it would be ‘legitimate’ to possess living beings as mere objects*.

\*

*... There are needs, such as the sexual need, of which we cannot say that their satisfaction involves an economic activity as such: ... we can never exhaustively enumerate the needs of humans.* (Raymond Aron)<sup>2</sup>

How can a voluptuous emotion be reduced to a commodified object and thereby become, in our era of excessive industrialization, a factor in the economy? To answer this, we must consider what we mean by the terms ‘sexuality’ and ‘eroticism’. The various forms of voluptuous emotion might then reveal their connection, both secret and tragic, to the anthropomorphic phenomenon of economy and exchange.

What have we been able to learn from descriptions of perversion – and from the Marquis de Sade in particular (and thus long before Freud) – where a voluptuous emotion is related to an apparently incongruous object? The behaviours analysed by Sade, from what he calls simple passions to the complex passions we refer to as ‘perversions’, are nothing other than *initial reactions against pure animality*, and thus an initial interpretive manifestation of the impulses themselves. Such behaviours divide the general connotation of the term ‘sexuality’ into two propensities: on the one hand, *the procreative instinct* of the species, and on the other hand, *the voluptuous emotion* that precedes the act of procreation. *The convergence of these two propensities is what grounds the unity of an individual capable of reproducing*, whereas their prolonged divergence, despite the individual’s organic maturity, can threaten its life function. The term ‘perversion’ thus denotes a fixation of the voluptuous emotion at a stage *prior* to the procreative act. Sade’s terms (simple passions combining into complex passions) denote the various ruses through which the initial voluptuous emotion, in its interpretative capacity, selects new objects of sensation from among the various organic functions in order to substitute them for the procreative function, which is indefinitely held *in suspense*. What are these substitutions and ruses? They are so many forces that are diverted or *deducted* [*prélevée*] from the instinct to propagate the species. Once diverted, this impulsive force forms the *raw material for a phantasm* that is *interpreted by the emotions*. The phantasm here takes on the role of a *fabricated object*. This use of the phantasm by an impulsive force *puts its price on the emotion*, which becomes inextricably linked with this use; yet the perversion wants the emotions elicited through its use of the phantasm to be *unexchangeable*.

This is where the first value-appraisal of an experienced emotion arises: an *impulse* we deem to be *perverted* (because it refuses the *gregarious fulfilment of individual unity* in the procreative function) offers itself in its intensity as something *unexchangeable*, price-less. And although the unity of the individual may be complete physiologically, in its bodily appearance, in a way it is here exchanged for the *phantasm*, under whose constraint it is now exclusively maintained.

Strictly speaking, no economy of voluptuous pleasure could ever profit from the industrial regime – despite the claims of the moralists, who denounce such pleasure to our institutional watchdogs. On the contrary, the opposite is the case: it is industry itself that benefits from what we misleadingly call ‘eroticism’ considered as a variable economic norm. In the domains of marketing, advertising and film production – that is, the domains of *suggestion* – eroticism does not quite become the outright exploitation that industry might achieve if the means of production were

in the hands of those whom these 'products' directly concern. Nor can we say that propaganda or even advertising (in high fashion, say, or cosmetics) expresses eroticism. The economy of pleasure still remains latent, and perhaps it will never be able to emerge as long as the industrial regime limits the conditions of pleasure to the domestic sphere and a system of laws based on the family unit.

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Yet despite all this, everything about the operations of 'industry' has *already signalled a complete break with the spirit of this system of laws* – an overthrow of the very customs and norms that its institutions still claim to preserve.

As its basic underlying principle, industry presumes that every human phenomenon, like every natural phenomenon, can be treated as an *exploitable material* that is subject not only to *fluctuations of value* but also to the *vicissitudes of experience*. The same holds for the character, both spiritual and animal, of voluptuous emotion considered from the perspective of its own *power of suggestion*.

In the world of artisanal industry, representations of voluptuous emotion were communicated, like all knowledge, through instruments of suggestion such as paintings, books and performances. It was only through the labour invested in these instruments that the *emotion* they suggested managed to circulate in the form of a *rare object*. But here again, in conformity with the hierarchy of needs of classical economics, value was derived from the unique character of the *prestige* attributed to the instrument of suggestion, and not from the *emotion* it might produce. Since the *simulacrum* was still part of the world of 'ideas' and thus of culture, the suggestive object itself *cost more* than the sensation one might experience from contact with it.

The industrial regime, by contrast, because of its massive consumption, has managed to standardize the *mechanized instruments of suggestion*, just as it standardized the instruments of knowledge in general. As a result, communication became devalued as its nature and intention began to change. The powers of suggestion provided by *stereotypes* became increasingly 'gratuitous' or free in their effects, while *prototypes* remained outside the realm of price. The reversal was total: the *felt* sensation is now worth more than its suggestive image. However, the resulting tension has created a massive terrain of exploitation: the stereotyping of suggestion has allowed industry to intervene in the genesis of individual phantasms *in order to redirect them toward its own ends*. Industry is capable of rejecting or manipulating phantasms in order to make them profitable for its own institutions.

It might seem as if we are establishing a purely analogical relation between the 'economy' of the affects and the economy of needs as defined by exchange. But this would lead us nowhere – unless we *begin* from the perspective of *objects and needs* in order to examine the struggle of the affects *against their inadequate formulation*. In the industrial regime, the affects have been *materially reconfigured into a mere demand for goods*, which is an antagonistic inversion of their very being.

In this reconfiguration of the affects, we must consider, first, the function of *number*, on which depends both the *pricing* and the *means of acquiring* goods that are in themselves inadequate.

Second, there is the *use of these goods*, which *in turn reacts back upon the affects*.

Third, there is a more or less conscious *differentiation* between the *possession, use and value* (or non-value) of these goods, depending upon whether (or not) they merely *represent* affective states, or provoke *new* affective states (in which the initial claim of the affects is either provisionally overcome or else intensified in a *fundamental discord*).

A kind of intimidation – and even blackmail – seems to be inherent in the conflict between the need to survive and the ways one can enjoy oneself once survival is ensured.

This intimidation influences, in different degrees, the ways the affects establish their hold over individual needs. By submitting to norms of exchange, a group of individuals agrees to define itself morally and socially in accordance with a category of needs. But it is these needs, in turn, that determine the kind of *pleasure* the group will find, given its mode of survival, in the goods that correspond to these needs.

From the viewpoint of the economy, however, what we call 'erotic' pleasure cannot be treated as if it were simply the enjoyment of one good among others. It is only because it is related to a very particular object – a living object, and hence a body – that the enjoyment of this object (as something capable of being possessed) can be considered to be a good: an *object of use*. Sade expresses this using words that are both simple and equivocal: *the right to own pleasure*.

Within the *hierarchy of needs*, erotic pleasure tends to be confused with sexual 'need', that is, with the *inalienable need for a home* that forms the basis for the primary needs we consider to be 'domestic'. In this context, we can no longer speak of *erotic* pleasure as such, since such pleasure has been demoted to the status of a *vice*, and is indeed merely one vice among others. Eroticism can take on the sense of a 'demand' as a source of general prosperity only if the 'refusal to invest' (in reproduction) is simultaneously condemned as a source of public destitution.

It was only in the nineteenth century that erotic pleasure *itself* began to be seen as a primordial need, and it was 'utopian socialism' that dared to extend the '*communal ownership of all goods to living, erotic objects*'.

Charles Fourier's project, which has long been buried, has recently re-emerged in the form of careful exegeses, albeit in a context that is completely different from the one in which it was born.<sup>3</sup> The empirical experiments that Fourier's ideas inspired more than a century ago, particularly in the United States, never went beyond the improvised initiatives of a few generous and charismatic individuals, and they had no real chance of developing or enduring. The situation today, however, is very different. Industrial conditions have upended the old classes and brought about the proliferation of entirely new ones. The experimental spirit and direction of subsequent generations have motivated much larger groups of people to pursue similar projects. Either they have attempted to do away with the notion of utopia once and for all, or else they have retained the notion of *what is nowhere* (u-topia) by *identifying themselves* with this nowhere, thereby making it proliferate everywhere as the sole reality by the very fact of their *active presence*.

For Fourier, the nature of work would be completely transformed by communal life in the 'phalansteries', where passionate exchanges redistributed society into classes of affinities following the Laws of Attraction. The false notion of 'leisure time', which would be allotted to the various 'working' classes, was refuted in advance by Fourier. To overcome the punitive character of labour in communal life (which entailed not only the communal ownership of the means of production but also of individuals), the production of objects, even useful objects, would no longer be done in accordance with *an industrially determined need* but rather with a *passional aspiration*. Work would be performed in the euphoria of the imagination as the spontaneous and creative activity of humanity. Since these communities, organized into groups or 'hordes' with various classes of ages and affinities, were to inspire the emulation of others, the activity of work within them had to be organized like a ritual of playfulness: *the spectacle that stages the exchanges between groups of affinities had to ensure the equilibrium and skills of each and every individual, like a vast contemplative and spectacular recapitulation of the range and variations of the life of the impulses*. Whence Fourier's learned and subtle combination of polygamy and polyandry in a social principle he termed the 'Harmonium'.

We should note that the postulate that something can be 'free' (the idea that that communal life will allow the free play of the passions to flourish)

tends to disregard a primordial element of any voluptuous emotion, namely, its *aggressive* element, which presupposes and even demands resistance. Such aggression is implicit in creative work as much as in emotional interactions. Fourier was fully aware that, without the game, without playfulness, this aggression would remain *irredeemable*. His entire innovation, therefore, was to try to satisfy these aggressive propensities, and voluptuous aggressiveness in particular, through a ludic organization of passionate situations – situations that are not ludic in and of themselves.

But how could such a ludic organization incorporate the roles of provocation and defiance in such a way that the voluptuous emotion, in its very genesis, *would no longer be free* but rather would presuppose appraisal, value and bidding – in other words, *a price to be paid*? In this case, we might say that aggression had become the very substance of playfulness. By elaborating the various drives in the form of activities which are in fact only their simulacra, play aims to capture and channel the expressions of the perverse depth that is implicit in every voluptuous emotion. As a result, *either* playfulness drains all content from the depth that it wants to make flourish, *or else* it manages to make it flourish in the form of ludic activities that *leave this depth intact*. For there to be a simulacrum, there must also be an irreversible depth – this reality being inseparable from the phantasm that governs the reality of a perverse behaviour. Sade insisted that the phantasm that acts on the organism and its reflexes remains ineradicable and cannot be uprooted. Fourier contests this: the phantasm can be reproduced as a simulacrum.

However, the simulacrum, in this sense, must not be understood as a *catharsis*, which would simply be a redirection of impulsive forces. Rather, the simulacrum reproduces the reality of the phantasm at the level of play by *staging* its aggressive reality. Fourier was betting less on liberty than on the creation of a liberatory reality: the game. Sade himself never proposed to create an object compatible with perversion that could take on the appearance of a game, since perversion is *itself* a game in relation to the indomitable power of norms. This is why a perverse emotion cannot be separated from the destruction of its object: the death instinct and the life function are inextricably intertwined. Fourier, by contrast, insisted on the malleability or plasticity of the drives. There can be drives ‘for life’ or ‘for death’ only in a relative way, depending on the fixity or mutability of the phantasm. And Fourier always insisted that what motivated the game was the lived experience of resistance, aggression and ultimately violence.

Yet if play is indeed a simulacrum, how could it not diminish the lived experience of violence once this violence became the substance of the simulacrum? Sade would again object: for the singularity of a perversion or

mania to find expression, a subject [*suppôt*] is necessary. But if this subject followed the rules of Fourier's ritual playfulness, how could it 'seriously' simulate what it was feeling in any other (or better) way than by simulating its own phantasm, which would immediately turn the subject into a maniac or a pervert. The 'seriousness' does not reside in the frenzy with which the subject clings to its impulsive phantasm, but rather in the irreducible force through which the drives maintain the subject in its phantasm. In other words, the drives can manifest themselves only by devouring the subject. If there were no seriousness, there would be no real voluptuousness either, since the latter can only be felt if it is taken seriously. Voluptuousness can be light and frivolous in comparison to the rest of existence only if it 'pays the price' of being taken seriously.

Now Fourier's singular construction seems to have been determined by the fact that, at the time he conceived his project, the authority of playfulness was entirely conditioned by a social context whose 'rules of the game' prevented perversion from ever being displayed. Fourier's achievement was to have exposed and denounced this cover-up, most notably through his critique of economic norms, since this was the place where the cover-up had been operating in complete security.

However, the game of our own industrial world, which is more than willing to exploit every and any display, including displays of perversity, obliges us to rethink the Phalansterian utopia on the basis of entirely new presuppositions. Fourier's project was 'utopian' only in inverse proportion to the resistance put up by the bourgeois industrial world, out of greed, to his lucid prognostications. But perhaps this resistance should be explained by something else, something *radical*, something *other* than mere greed.

Fourier understood perfectly well what the *deliberate act of selling oneself* could do to the erotic imagination in terms of both its content and its psychic power. The consequences of such an act, deemed to be despicable and sinful by society, were similarly repugnant to him. It could leave deep wounds if the *meaning of the game* in 'civilization' (the industrial regime) did not ensure the *ludic redeemability* of the act, as would have been the rule in *Harmony*.

We can better understand the meaning of Fourier's ludic gratuity by comparing it with Sade's anti-utopian project, which revealed that, even in *economics*, perversion itself is the ground of value.

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Prior to Fourier's 'Harmonian' utopia and as its proto-refutation, Sade had developed a form of communal life based on the violation of the physical

and moral propriety of persons. He did so in the name of the universality of the voluptuous sensation and as a postulate arising from his full-fledged atheism. With the disappearance of the moral God, who had been the guarantor of the *self* as responsible for and identical to itself, everyone now belongs to everyone else in the form of *goods*. But what appears in Fourier as a *free* moral expropriation of persons in accordance with the differential law of affinities gives way, in Sade, to a principle of *universal prostitution*. Every man and woman was called upon *sell* him or herself or to be offered *for sale* by another. For persons to become *saleable* in this manner, however, they must retain their moral propriety, since this is what gives value to the individual being sold. Slaves are not inert objects deprived of self-esteem, but living beings that have been reduced to the status of an object. Their attraction lies in the fact that (deliberately or not) they can be humiliated in their dignity and integrity, that is, in their ability to possess their own good, to possess themselves. In Sade, it is the destruction of this integrity, through voluntary or forced prostitution, that produces the erotic emotion. The ‘quality’ of this prostitution is created by bidding up the price of subjects in inverse proportion to their moral degradation. The more they are ‘corrupted’, the higher their price, as is the case with the character of Juliette. Although the voluptuous sensation can be immediately intensified in this manner, its intensification is no longer *gratuitous* but rather is due to the fact that the object provoking the sensation is considered to be *saleable*. In Sade’s interpretation, this venality is grounded in the idea that beings can never communicate among themselves except as trafficable objects. This is why, before we can consider the role that money plays in this dilemma, we need to examine what plays the role of this incommunicability in a world that fabricates useful objects or tools. For the act of fabrication concerns the way humans behave not only toward goods (as fabricable) but also toward their own bodies and the bodies of others (as instrumentalizable objects). What propensity would benefit from such a fabrication, on the demand side? And what would be supplied?

The way industry operates, with its countless techniques, might lead us to believe that it neutralizes impulsive forces simply through the fabrication of objects, whether instrumental, machinic or utensilary. Yet the opposite is the case: through its own norms, industry has given rise to a phantasmic representation of these very forces, from a double point of view:

- 1 As the manufacture of useful objects became more complex, two or three physical capacities had to be exercised at the same time even for the most ordinary technical operation. As a result, the corporeal agent became increasingly separated from the sensible

(‘eyes that don’t see’ and ‘ears that don’t hear’). The body lost contact with the object and its manual exercise became more and more limited. Instead, the *instruments or machines* being used by the body were *projected into the objects being produced* as if the machines had differentiated physical and mental functions, which were then incorporated into the corresponding objects.

The invention of instruments and machines seemed to have led to the abandonment of practices where the manual act, still more or less guided by oneiric powers, had in some way managed both to capture these powers and to exorcise them by projecting them into its products. But when the instrument liberated the hand, eye and ear, it must have at the same time liberated these oneiric powers, which then appeared to the corporeal agent in an entirely new light. They became ever more clearly the powers of perversion (first utensilary perversion, and then perversion pure and simple), since they were now operating in the service of an extra-corporeal agent: the instrument itself. The instrument disclosed the object to be fixed and de-articulated in its representations, but precisely in order to bring about its instrumental re-articulation. As a result, the instrument became the immediate agent of the phantasm, since it is not only the materialized abstraction of the apprehension of the object but also the ‘mentalization’ of bodily contact.

This is the first aspect, and also the first consequence, of the strict relation between industrial behaviour and the phantasmic behaviour of perversion: the object *is disclosed only through its contact with an instrument*. Just as a perverse phantasm is formed into a use-object by voluptuous emotion through the disjunction of the organic functions which, through their incongruous redistribution, provide a more persistent pleasure than a ‘*healthy sensitivity ever could*’, so an instrument *apprehends* its object and its effects *differently and better* than the hand ever could, since it was conceived and designed for no other reason than to produce an explorable or fabricable object. An object, whether inanimate or living, can never be defined in any other way than as something explorable or fabricable.

Just as a perversion is inseparable from the phantasm it engenders, an instrument is inseparable from the object it presupposes, manufactures and explores. Both the perversion and the instrument determine and constrain the use of their product. Whoever wants the object needs the instrument. This is

why – and this is the second aspect of the strict relation between instrumental behaviour and perverse behaviour – operational repetition is common to both types of behaviour. The constraint drives the repetition. Perverse repetition is executed through the phantasm of a vital function, which is constraining because it is unintelligible, having been isolated from the organically intelligible whole. If an operation executed by an instrument (which is limited insofar as it is purely functional) immediately appears absurd when used contrary to its purpose, it is because every instrument externalizes a phantasm in its products. It is the phantasm that prevents instruments from seeming to have an ever-variable degree of utility (or inutility), even more than the fact that they constantly produce the same objects or the same effects (even though, without them, the objects would be unrealizable and its effects would remain unknown). Thus, the use of the object, or the effect it provokes, must be imposed by the instrument itself, which would justify its maintenance costs.

- 2 This brings us to a second perspective on the way industry intervenes in the field of phantasmic representation – that of quality and quantity, with regard to both the act of production and its product.

We need only look at the way that industry, using these same technical procedures, not only *can* foster but must *necessarily* foster (and thus develop) an inherently sensible automatism. Through this automatism, the sensible reactions experienced during the use of an object serve to separate the enjoyment [*jouissance*] (and thus the efficacy) of the object from the object itself. As a result, profit can be gained only through waste, quality belongs to objects only in a relative manner: it depends on both the *enjoyment* they provide and the *duration* of the pleasure. By contrast, their quantity ensures quality only at the *moment* the enjoyment is procured. For this reason, the act of producing the object takes precedence over the product itself: the more the act of production is perfected, the less important the individual product becomes. The *quality of the act* degrades and cheapens the products through its ability to produce them in mass quantities.

This is what Sade demonstrated at the level of the impulsive life itself, thereby revealing the inverse side of the industrial commodification of voluptuous emotion from the viewpoint of ‘mass’ production.

For Sade's characters, the *quality* of being a *single victim*, on whom the torturer inflicts his tortures, sometimes takes precedence over the concept of the specific act. At other times, however, it is the *same repeated act*, indifferently inflicted on a *large quantity of victims*, which affirms the *quality* of the act. Both cases show how the reversal of the relation between the sensation and its object initially takes place.

In the first case, the source of the sensation is the object: its irreplaceable character determines how one behaves toward it and provokes various attempts to possess it. Its intrinsic value is maintained, despite its *apparent destruction*, and it always exceeds the *use* to which it seems to lend itself.

In the second case, the object is little more than a pretext for the emotion, and for the act that produces the emotion by treating the object indifferently as a mere 'thing'. For the emotion of the destructive act (which is always the same) to be repeatable, the *use of the act* (which is experienced as the source of the emotion) must *take precedence over the object*, and the object will never exhaust the emotion.

Thus, Sade intuited, in the realm of emotion, what would ultimately become the principle of our modern economy in its industrial form: the principle of excessive production requiring excessive consumption. Produce destructible objects, and make consumers forget the very idea of a 'durable' object. In industry, the use of a determinate method to produce and manufacture objects-in-series corresponds to the quality of an act inflicted indifferently on a large quantity of victims. Conversely, experimenting with various manufacturing methods in order to confer quality on a single product and to increase its rarity corresponds to the diversity of acts inflicted on a single victim in order to possess whatever it is about them that is rare or unique.

The absurdity of this analogy is enough to reveal the reversal that is imposed on impulsive forces by the economic articulation of needs and manufactured objects that fulfil them. The relation between the act of production and the procured emotion (provided sometimes by the act, and sometimes by the living object) remains beyond our grasp, since these are two spheres of human behaviour that seem to be incompatible, at least in relation to the conditions that determine them. In the economic order, the capacity to work is *opposed* to our affective life in general, and to

voluptuous emotion in particular. How can an act expressing an emotion be assimilated to an effort exerted on inanimate matter (or even on living matter)? If the emotion is conveyed in a set of gestures that constitutes a deliberate activity, this can never be anything other than a mere *staging* of the emotion. With what can we more adequately compare our use of manufactured objects than the worst treatments we inflict on living beings?

Questions like these would be inconceivable in the economic domain if we forgot that emotion, like labour, is 'productive', and that a voluptuous emotion 'fabricates' an image – not an image of the living being that serves as its object, but an image of an *aspect* of this being. The emotion can then treat the aspect as itself an object, that is, as a phantasm that will elaborate and intensify the emotion. But 'fabrication' still seems to be an analogical term, since it cannot be separated from the emotion, which is the flip-side of effort.

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Now, what forms an indissoluble whole in the sphere of the impulses – the voluptuous emotion, the reproductive instinct and the phantasm – can be broken down at the level of conscious behaviour into several factors that find precise equivalents in the mercantile sphere: production, consumption and the manufactured object.

In both spheres the same phenomenon of *use* prevails.

From the perspective of the impulses, the producer and the consumer are the same.

From the perspective of the economy, producers must take into account numerous categories of consumers, which leads either to mass production or the multiplication of a single object.

In the sphere of the impulses, the multiplication of an emotion through contact with a single object (a phantasm) is effectuated through its intensity, or else a single emotion is sustained through its contact with different phantasms.

From the perspective of the economy, the conditions of fabrication (effort, labour) tend to make the fabricated object and its consumption a *point of no return in relation to the production of phantasms*. There is an opposition between effort, which is derived from 'need', and pure emotion (and thus the voluptuous consumption of the object by the emotion). This point of no return (no return to the impulses) opens on to the economic viewpoint of the production of useful goods.

This is the gradual victory of the reproductive instinct over voluptuous emotion, and, in general, over the original perversion.

However, the price of this victory of the instinct to reproduce – effort winning out over emotion – will in fact become the threefold revenge of perversion: a disproportion between the effort made and the product obtained; a disparity between the demand and its object (and not only a disequilibrium between supply and demand); and finally the disappearance of the unity of the individual (which is replaced by conglomerates of needs that become hypertrophied depending on circumstances).

The industrial phenomenon would thus be a perversion of the instinct to conserve and propagate the species. In it, the sterile enjoyment [*jouissance*] of emotion would finally have found its equivalent – indeed, its most deceptive but effective equivalent. The consent to subsist by one's own labour, and thus to redeem one's initial passivity, establishes the notion of needs and their variable hierarchy, through which the reproductive instinct manages to surmount its own 'gratuitousness' [*sa gratuité propre*]. Its arbitrary repetition becomes a necessary one, once it provides its human specimens with a reason to resist the sterile prolongation of the voluptuous emotion.

First the earth, then instruments, then objects and finally signs of objects. In the end, the signs are interposed between beings and their desires, and ultimately take the place of both desire and its objects as appraisable resources. These are all so many *deductions* [*prélèvements*] that the species instinct withdraws from the perversion and then structures as needs, starting with the individual exemplars of the species. The exemplary status of individuals, in their unity, can be verified only through the affirmation of these needs. But the needs they affirm take shape only in the objects they fabricate, and these objects increasingly distance the needs from what they desired in the first (and last) place. This is why they can only be sustained by indefinitely sub-dividing, within themselves, the instinctual force that would lead them back to the passivity of the voluptuous sensation.

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Let us consider the possible relation between the perverse elaboration of a phantasm on the one hand and the fabrication of a use-object on the other.

The two processes are divergent, since a phantasm, a product of the impulses, signals a threat to the unity of the individual, whereas a fabricated object presupposes the stability of the individual. A phantasm can only persist at the expense of the individual's unity, whereas a fabricated

object must serve this unity. The fabrication and use of an object imply an exteriority and delimitation with regard to its milieu as well as to other individual unities.

But a phantasm, for its part, needs to *use* something: its elaboration is bound up with the use of pleasure or suffering. The fact that the phantasm *uses up* the individual is a sign of the *constraint* that comes from the phantasm's own unity. The elaboration of the phantasm gives way to a state of *continuous compensation* and hence to *exchanges*. But for an exchange to take place, there must be an *equivalent*, that is, the fabricated object must be worth something else, both in the sphere of the phantasm, elaborated at the expense of individual unity and in the external sphere, at the level of the individual itself.

In the impulsive state, what corresponds to this constraint is the search for an equivalent. The organic unity that experiences the phantasm as an irresistible pleasure has to pay a price for it: it is held accountable for its sterile obsession by the species-solidarity of other individual unities.

Every equivalent, at the level of the organic unity of the individual, thus represents a double penalty: an *internal constraint* and an *external affirmation of oneself*. Hence the dilemma: either *pleasure without self-affirmation*, or *self-affirmation without pleasure* for the sole purpose of subsisting.

To account for *both* these penalties is possible only if one forms an *equivalent*, not of the internal constraint but rather of its *renunciation*. The conditions of labour and the species-specific act of fabricating are grounded in the equivalent of this renunciation.

If, according to Keynes' definition,<sup>4</sup> the '*disutility*' of labour (subjectively speaking) would indicate the ability to thwart a 'need', even if only through 'a desire to do nothing', then this single word would cover over the entire tension between sterile pleasure [*jouissance*] and the decision to fabricate objects.

The notion of *disutility* (and here we are modifying the Keynesian sense, as interpreted by Largentaye)<sup>5</sup> measures the difference between the *intelligibility* in the act of fabricating objects suitable for use and the originally *unintelligible* character of the 'phantasmic' constraint. By the equivalent it expresses, the act of fabrication – that is, the act of satisfying one or more needs and thus admitting a determined use but one that bears *no relation to what has been renounced* – is effectuated in inverse proportion to the obsessional irritation (vexation, aggravation). The 'desire to do nothing', in the economic sense, or the desire for an activity that could be valorized by an ability to elaborate affective propensities – this would be, implicitly (according to Keynes), the meaning of the salary given to (or denied) the

worker. But this is also what it would mean to purchase a product for a consumer who consents to use it in accordance with the product's limits.

Although there is a process of continuous compensation and exchange between our impulsive forces, which occurs at the expense of our organic unity, these exchanges cannot take place without leaving behind traces or 'notations' of what has been extracted and exchanged. The phantasm is indebted to the organism, just as the pleasure or pain experienced by the individual are indebted to the phantasm that procures them for the individual. This is the 'debit balance' [*solde débiteur*] of individual unity.

Does a similar notation exist in the fabrication of use-objects? Is it conceivable that the individual unity of the producer (as an economic subject) is limited to affirming its own identity – and distinguishing itself from other individual unities – through its ability not only to fabricate objects, but also to use them?

By the use it prescribes, a fabricated object would already be the variable sign of a propensity. But this propensity might exist in varying degrees –or absolutely not at all – in those who fabricate the object, since they could be indifferent to its use. It might exist in those who use the object without needing it, since they might be unaware of the need in the absence of an object that could reveal it to them. For this reason, there will always be either an (accidental) equality or (almost always) a fundamental inequality between the propensity to *use* an object and the propensity to *fabricate* it.<sup>6</sup> Would this be the 'free play of the passions'? Such a claim would mean that one was still reasoning within a circuit where every move is dictated by statistics or circumstances, and not by the players themselves. And indeed, with regard to the economic subject as an individual *unity* (unaware of what it 'wants' to do or even what it 'can' do), the fundamental inequality of the propensities – not only with respect to other unities, but primarily *within the unity itself* – would require that a compensatory signification intervene in the apparent decision to fabricate an object for a particular use. However, the sole concern of the industrial regime is that producers or consumers should spontaneously reveal only *one aspect of themselves* by deriving the form of their own subsistence and mode of being, as 'individual unities', from a single *form* of fabrication or consumption. But this is a pure truism, which does not seem to get us anywhere, any more than saying 'it cannot be otherwise', since the objects they fabricate and consume not only define economic subjects, but also guarantee their moral and material unity. However, it is in such truisms that there lies hidden the compelling motivation of the search for an equivalent. The unity of the economic subject can be an effective productive unity only *if it is made to identify its so-called propensities with their continuous rerouting*

or *misappropriation* [*détournement*]. But the fact that *this rerouting is effectuated by the* (indispensably legitimate) *act* of fabricating use-objects – this is a representation too absurd for the unity to stop and take notice. How could it refuse this fabrication, since it is in fabrication that it has found its rightful place? The unity of the subject cannot escape this obvious fact, because it cannot see that it is itself the fiction of a necessity that is as uncontrollable as it is deliberate.

The fact that a category of use-objects can be immediately substituted for any other use that might be dictated to the subject by its passionate abilities, or that, on the other hand, these abilities could blossom into various fabricated objects only if the economic subject stopped behaving as a ‘unity’ and instead took hold of its own ‘decomposition’, only recomposing itself in accordance with the *ability of every passion to fabricate its object* – none of this can be comprehended by the economic subject, since it can only interpret these abilities from the viewpoint of its own ‘individual unity’ as so many would-be propensities, which are determined in advance by the circumstances according to which one’s ‘needs’ are calculated.

Might the fabrication of useful objects that gives our world its physiognomy merely be an indication that an economic subject, starting with its individual unity and its ability to produce and reproduce, is trying to assert, lacking any equivalent to its impulsive state (like the simulacrum of art), and through an equivalent other than wages, its renunciation of that state in favour of pure subsistence? Do we fabricate only in order to subsist? Or would the *renunciation* of the impulse, or the capacity to express this impulse, require that the act of fabricating useful objects would itself determine the value of the *losses suffered* because of the specific use prescribed by these objects?

In the context of manufacturing efficiency, given its distinction between a sterile use and a productive use, utensiliarity cannot resolve the obsessional constraint through the fabrication of useful objects. Nonetheless, fabricators of simulacra – of a sterile use – still exist in the world of utensils. Not only do artists divulge their phantasms through products branded by their intellects, but, just like the fabricators of utensils, instruments and use-objects, they negotiate the price of their products, including the price of divulging them. Even if they work in poverty, they claim to enrich the understanding through the sensations they elicit. By contrast, producers of tools – workers in general – do not divulge anything, except perhaps the need to produce more objects beyond already existing objects. The perfected use of an object always prescribes and limits its exclusive use.

The divulging of a phantasm neither could nor should take place in the act of fabricating an object for an indispensable use – there is no question

about that. Whatever imaginative application the sciences might invent, it is pure insanity to try to find the slightest correlation or even analogy between the act of fabricating a utensil and the act of divulging a phantasm in a simulacrum.

The world of utensils cannot compensate for the inversion of an impulsive state into a fabricating activity through a mere sign, *since the act of fabrication already serves as a compensation*. Only the simulacrum of art is supposed to make this inversion *visible*: since art is a simulation, its products are taken to be use-objects. However, the impulses are not aware of this distinction between two categories of instruments – between the ‘noble’ simulacrum and the ‘ignoble’ utensil – even though the affects make use of utensils as much as do the pure operations of the intellect. But if the pure simulacra of art indicate the urgency of the impulses, and through the ingenuity of the artist they simply become utensils to be used by the affects, is it by chance that utensils would nonetheless become simulacra?

If the impulses indifferently make use of utensils for their own purposes, we need only consider this category of objects in order to discern what they are simulating – namely, tools, which are by nature the furthest thing from simulacra. Yet since their prescribed use is rigorously restrained in order to make them efficient (tools delimit an operation with irreversible effects that excludes any simulated result, no matter how complex the operation), for this reason they will become *simulacra of non-simulation*, and thus of a *fait accompli*, by means of which one can extract the part of the impulsive life redirected toward the fabrication of use-objects. However, if the simulacrum of art is a *utensil of the passions*, its simulation must likewise be an *efficient operation*. If it were merely a *simulated simulacrum*, it would be ineffective, since its effect is to be constantly reversible in its operations, and to have a use that is as malleable and variable as the life of the passions.

In an art-product, an affect would find a way to express its phantasm. In a utensil, which *refuses* to express the phantasm, the affect would act under the cover of the usefulness of a thing that the affect has nothing to do with.

The impulse acts nowhere else than in *the relation of the human being with what it does or does not fabricate*. It thus relies on the object in order to decide what is most urgent, and what is urgent (such as subsistence) must be taken seriously, and cannot be simulated in the same way that one simulates *what is not urgent*.

If the utensil objects, by themselves, could only guarantee *non-simulation*, there would be no urgency of the affects, nor any utensil urgency. The urgency of utensils is proportional to the urgency of the affects. And because affectivity can only be *deferred* by utensils whose urgency cannot

be *simulated*, affective urgency can only find in the utensil *the simulacrum of its own deferral*.

To defer voluptuous pleasure is to count on the future – a future that is guaranteed by the fabrication of use-objects. However, the impulses have no limit to urgency other than their own, and voluptuous pleasure as such is as immediate as it is latent and unpredictable. Thus, it must be ceaselessly deferred. If, from the viewpoint of utensils, *voluptuous pleasure is not urgent*, it is nonetheless *urgent that it be simulated* by any means possible in order to become properly *serious*, since an indisputable urgency *would not be simulated*.

Thus, not only does the voluptuous impulse not suppress the operation of simulation in the domain of utensils, but in fact it requires simulation the more its own urgency is disputed. It simply reverses the factors, and pushes the simulacrum to where hard necessity reigns.

There are thus two circuits that interpenetrate each other within the unity of the individual: *impulsive phantasm/simulacrum* and *non-simulatable subsistence/fabrication of utensils*. The individual can never break apart the two circuits; it can only defer the perpetual urgency of one or the other circuit.

The question of an equivalent is derived from this fact: to simulate (by effort) the deferral of what is not urgent but nonetheless immediate (the voluptuous emotion) amounts to simulating an urgency that is in itself non-simulatable. Voluptuous pleasure is as non-simulatable as subsistence, depending on which of them is considered to be more urgent than the other. Irreversibility appears as soon as a decision is made for one over the other – as when one starts to fabricate an object, a process that can only be reversed by the object's destruction.

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*Nothing* in the life of the impulses seems to be *free*, properly speaking. As soon as an interpretation directs their development (the struggle of the emotions to hold their own against the instinct to reproduce), there intervenes an evaluation and thus a *price*. But the one who ultimately bears the cost, the one who will pay, one way or another, is the subject [*suppôt*] who constitutes the *place* where the struggle is waged, where a possible or unattainable compromise is wrestled with and negotiated – *one's body*.

An initial dilemma emerges here: either an *internal perversion*, which is a *dissolution* of the unity of the individual – or else an *internal affirmation* of the individual's unity, which is an *external perversion*.

Any individual who refuses to pay the price for a voluptuous emotion and instead demands that the *instinct to reproduce* (and thus their own unity) should be *free* will wind up a *paying a hundredfold* for that free-ness through *the external perversion that creates the conditions in which the unity of the individual can be affirmed*.

The day human beings overcome, and thus subdue, this *external perversion* (the monstrous hypertrophy of their ‘needs’) and instead consent to their *internal perversion* (the dissolution of their fictive unity), a pact will be formed between desire, on the one hand, and the production of its objects in a rationally organized economy, in accordance with its impulses, on the other. Thus, the *gratuity of effort* will become the *price of the irrational*. Sade’s lesson will have demonstrated that Fourier’s utopia conceals a profound reality. But until that reality appears, it is in the best interest of industry for Fourier’s utopia to remain a utopia, and for Sade’s perversion to remain the driving force behind the monstrousness of industry.

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## What has a price and what is free?

If something is free, it means (apparently) either that one is enjoying something beyond the realm of price, or that one is deriving enjoyment from something without offering any compensation in return.

- 1 An *absolute* owner would never dream of exchanging what belongs to him (and which owes its immeasurable price to this possession) for anything he might receive in return.

Who is an absolute owner? A ‘divinity’, or an ‘inexhaustible life’ (given to each according to their measure) – an image of the ‘all-giving sun’.

- 2 But what is given to each and to all (if it can be obtained immediately by everyone, without any initial distinction or discrimination) not only has no price, but can be given and exchanged freely – for instance, the physiological act of procreation and the enjoyment it provides (voluptuous pleasure).
- 3 ‘Life’ has no price in and of itself: it is beyond the realm of price. No price is freely given to it, received by it or endured by it. Yet without voluptuous pleasure, it has no value. But voluptuous

pleasure, and the ability to experience it, is in turn freely given to everyone. And it too has no price.

But everyone receives only what they are capable of receiving (first limitation). What they have received is what they *are*, and thus they can take on a value only through what they can give away, above and beyond what they are. This is why no one can tolerate receiving *more* than they can give away; otherwise they belong to whomever they constantly receive from.

- 4 However, whoever gives more than they are *in order to be worth more than they are* (more than they first received) believes that they are augmenting what they are. But what could augment them beyond what they are? And how can they increase their share in order to become capable, beyond their capacity to receive, of giving more than they received?

If you give, you augment yourself. But in giving, how can you augment oneself instead of diminishing yourself? You give in order not to receive, and because you are capable of this, you augment yourself. But how would this augment your value, and what makes you capable of giving? You have value only in the eyes of those who remain beneath you, since they cannot be worth more than what they have received. Thus, the value you acquire, in relation to those who receive without being able to give, is expressed in the right to take back even more than you have given.

If the *inability [impuissance] to take back* did not exist, despite the capacity to receive, then the *augmentation of those who give in order to avoid receiving* would not exist either. In every case, those who give but do not receive take possession of those who, having *received in order to be*, cannot give back. The latter is given over in advance to a power that augments, instead of diminishing, by giving without receiving in order to take back more than one gave.

In our world of industrial fabrication, what appeals to people is not what seems naturally free of charge, but rather the price that is put on what is naturally free of charge. Voluptuous emotion (not communicated or incommunicable) is above all *indifferent*: it has no value as long as it can be experienced by anyone and everyone. But as soon as someone who is still *capable* of experiencing it no longer has the *means* of immediately experiencing it, the emotion ceases to be indifferent and gains in value. If, finally, the emotion is one of a kind and only a limited number of individuals can acquire it, then either its value cannot be appraised at all or else the desire to experience it will guarantee the highest possible price. This is how industry is able to commercialize voluptuous emotion. However, to think

of this operation as a shameful deed undertaken purely for profit is to blind oneself to the nature of the voluptuous sensation.

Reworking the theatrical proverb cited by Stendhal, 'Many manage to sell what they could never give away,' Nietzsche writes, 'No one wants them even as a gift: so they must sell themselves.'<sup>7</sup> This expresses the very process of voluptuous emotion. Does this mean that industrial exploitation is a response to this implicit strategy of pleasure [*jouissance*]?

In the realm of exchange, the most general sign of equivalence will always be currency [*monnaie*], whose function is analogous to the role played by the *word* in the realm of communication. Given the syntax of money [*la syntaxe monétaire*], the (economic) intelligibility of the use-object as a commodity guarantees the same fraudulent operation (in relation to needs and their objects) as does the intelligibility of language (in relation to the life of the impulses). Except that the intelligibility of use is concretely circumscribed by the differences between the individual unities which, through use, express themselves through their mode of existence, voluntarily or involuntarily. The limit of intelligibility is found in the unexchangeable, in accordance with its degree of idiosyncrasy – that is, the obscure propensity revealed in the conventional word or in the supposed accord between the need and its object. In this universal case, only the creation of an equivalent can compensate for the use-object (inasmuch as the equivalent is irreducible to any other way of using something), and this is precisely the role of money.

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## Digression

To understand how currency [*monnaie*] can play the role of an equivalent without being confused with the object whose value it indicates, we need to return to Sade.

One of the operations inherent in the imagination of the pervert is his abolition of the ownership of both his own body and the bodies of others. He inhabits the bodies of others as if they were his own, and he attributes his own body to others – which amounts to saying that his 'own' body is recuperated primarily in the domain of the phantasm. His body becomes equivalent to the phantasm, of which his body is in turn the simulacrum.

Lying between the phantasm and its market valuation, money is a sign of the incalculable value of the phantasm, and it forms an integral part of

the representational mode of perversion. In itself, a perverse phantasm is unintelligible and unexchangeable, which is why money, given its abstract nature, constitutes its universally intelligible equivalent. We must thus distinguish between, on the one hand, the *phantasmic function of money* (the act of buying others or selling oneself), where money externalizes and reveals the perversity of the different participants, and, on the other hand, the *mediating function of money*, where money establishes a link between the closed world of anomalies and the world of institutional norms.

Money, the equivalent of rare wealth and the sign of effort and hard work in the institutional sense, now signifies the redirection or re-appropriation [*détournement*] of that wealth to support a perverse phantasm. If the phantasm requires an expenditure *measured in money*, the money will express the concretized equivalent of the phantasm, whose richness will be represented by the purchasing power of the money. Effort and hard work no longer count. Money, the equivalent of wealth, now signifies the destruction of that wealth, *even though it retains its value*. In a similar manner, language, as the sign of what exists (insofar as it has a meaning or sense), becomes in Sade's writings the sign of what does *not* exist. In other words, it becomes the sign of the *possible* (which is non-sense according to the norms of institutional language). Money, even as it represents and guarantees what exists, now becomes a sign of *what does not exist*, namely, the phantasm. Within the integral monstrosity of the phantasm, the transgression of norms is presented as the progressive conquest of the non-existent, that is, of the possible.

The act of transgressing existing norms in the name of a non-existing possibility, as suggested by the phantasm, is eminently represented by the very nature of money, notably in the freedom to choose or refuse one good from among all existing goods. This ability to choose or refuse diminishes the value of what exists in favour of what does not exist. What does not exist, according to the language of norms (the negative expression of these anomalies), is expressed positively by *money not spent* and thus *not given to what exists*. Through money, the closed world of perversion sanctions *incommunicability between beings*. This is the only intelligible way the world of abnormalities can react positively to the world of norms. In order to be understood in the institutional world, integral monstrosity borrows from it the abstract sign of exchangeable goods, which is tantamount to saying that there is only one authentic and universal form of communication: *the exchange of bodies through the secret language of corporeal signs*.

The argument proposed by Sade is more or less the following: institutions claim to defend individual liberties and the integrity of persons by substituting for the exchange of bodies an exchange of goods mediated

by the neutral (and hence equivocal) sign of money. But beneath this circulation of wealth, money secretly ensures the exchange of bodies in the name (and in the interest) of these very institutions. The disavowal of integral monstrosity by these institutions is turned into a *de facto material and moral prostitution*. The aim of the secret societies imagined by Sade is to make visible this dilemma: either *the communication of beings through the exchange of their bodies* or *prostitution through the sign of money*.

To the outside world, candidates for integral monstrosity can only assert themselves, morally, through the language of logic, and materially, by means of money. Morally, they find their accomplices among normal beings. Materially, they recruit their experimental victims by offering them a higher price than institutions, who usually pay a subsistence wage far below the 'norm'.

In the closed world of integral monstrosity, *the phantasm* – which *in itself is unappraisable*, elusive, useless and arbitrary – is *constituted as a rarity once it reaches the level of bodily prestige*. We are already witnessing the beginnings of the modern commodification of voluptuous emotion. The difference is that industrial exploitation will be capable of standardizing arousal at a low price, thereby placing the living object of emotion outside the realm of price. By contrast, in the time of Sade, an era still shaped by manufacturing, *the arousal and the living object of the emotion were one and the same*. In the closed circuit of the Sadean monstrosity, the living simulacrum of the phantasm is literally price-less. On the one hand, the statutes of the Society of the Friends of Crime stipulate that it would only receive as members 'persons who have a minimum yearly income of twenty-five thousand *livres*, since the annual dues are ten thousand francs per person.' Apart from this single condition, no discrimination on the basis of rank or origin was allowed. On the other hand, 'twenty artists or men of letters will be admitted upon remittance of the modest fee of one thousand *livres* per annum. The Society, as a patron of the arts, is happy to award them this special consideration; and it regrets that its limited means do not permit it to welcome, at this reduced price, a far greater number of such gifted men, whom it will always hold in the highest esteem.'<sup>8</sup>

In the final analysis, it is the man of letters (Sade) who gives substance to the society *he imagines*. The Society of the Friends of Crime is above all the society of Sade's own readers. Sade conceives of it as a space of minds, a secret society whose sole justification must be found at a spiritual level. But this spiritual level can only be made visible through the fabrication of a simulacrum, and the maker of simulacra is dependent on the demands of his clientele. The presence of writers and artists in the Society of the Friends of Crime is not unrelated to the role of the creator in society in

general, which are both linked to the problem of the production of goods and their value within the circuit of the economy, and in particular to the fabrication of objects related to psychic life, which in itself is unappraisable. As customers increasingly feel the constraint of their own phantasm, the supply of the corresponding simulacrum will go up in price.

According to Sade, the Society of the Friends of Crime shamefully exploits the makers of simulacra: it claims to 'honour' their inventions, but then declares that it is unable to remunerate them fairly. Such disproportionate relations are inscribed in the very nature of enterprise: the more the phantasm needs the simulacrum, the more the latter acts and reacts upon the phantasm, developing it further and increasing its value – to the point where the phantasm takes on the *seriousness* of everything that requires expenditure.

Now, the mere representation of venality increases the value of the phantasm, but it is not poverty that drives people to sell themselves; on the contrary, it is their own wealth that constrains them. For example, in *La Nouvelle Justine*, Verneuil notices an anatomical particularity in Mme d'Esterval that guarantees in her a lecherous propensity, which in his eyes is price-less; but he will agree to engage in this promising experience only if his partner accepts remuneration from him – an objectifying act of pricing that gives her an immediate orgasm.<sup>9</sup> The money here serves an obvious function of *transubstantiation*: it has no utility apart from this function, and is thus a purely ludic transaction. Similarly, Juliette appraises the value of the various charms that make up her body, although she is not (or is no longer) a professional courtesan and has settled down, the (deliberate) widow of the count of Lorsange, yet still an adventuress in moral corruption – all this enters into the subtlety of the phantasm that Juliette is determined to concretize.<sup>10</sup> Yet the fortune she has thereby accumulated drives Juliette into an endlessly repeated expropriation of her body. She always remains just short of her phantasm; she can never fulfil it. Her sole satisfaction lies in the fact that she has never helped relieve human misery by even one farthing. Why not? Because Juliette herself represents this misery. How could a monetary value be given to an invaluable phantasm? Or rather, where could its monetary value come from if not from the privation it simultaneously implies?

This is the highest degree of *evaluation*: the equivalent of the phantasm (the sum paid) represents not only the emotion in itself but also the *exclusion* of thousands of human lives. What appears to be a scandal, from the gregarious point of view, only serves to increase the value of the phantasm.

So any money spent in this way signifies: *exclusive voluptuousness = famine = annihilation* = the supreme value of the phantasm. Put differently,

the more *this money represents thousands of mouths*, the more it confirms the *value of the expropriated body* and the more *this body itself represents the value of thousands of human lives*. A *phantasm = an entire population*. If this reappropriation [*détournement*] did not exist, if it did not have the *weight* represented by this *misery*, the *evaluation would immediately fall into the void*. Money therefore has a positive meaning, since it represents the equivalent of thousands of human lives, but also a negative meaning, since it has to compensate for the *insignificance* of the phantasm. Yet this allocation of money is arbitrary, because the value of money is itself arbitrary: *money in itself is nothing other than a phantasm that corresponds to a phantasm*.

The precarious situation of the artist or man of letters – the maker of simulacra – in the Society of the Friends of Crime now becomes absolutely clear and comprehensible. The maker of simulacra serves as the intermediary between two worlds that have different modes of value-appraisal. On the one hand, he represents the intrinsic value of the simulacrum fabricated in accordance with institutional norms, which are norms of sublimation. On the other hand, his existence serves to valorize the phantasm in accordance with the obsessional constraint of the perversion. On both sides, the maker of simulacra is honoured for his spiritual detachment; he is treated, in practical terms, as a supplier. This was Sade's personal situation in the days after the Revolution. No one can serve two masters. But on both sides, it was the same master hiding under the cover of institutions, whose true face could be revealed only in the Society of the Friends of Crime. This master is, once again, integral monstrosity; *money*, the shameful sign of its wealth, becomes the sign of its glory in the Society of the Friends of Crime. By *spending its money on fantasies*, the clandestine society imagined by Sade holds the world of institutional sublimations hostage. Suppress the money, and you will have a universal communication between beings. By throwing down this gauntlet, Sade demonstrates that the notions of value and price are inscribed in the ground of voluptuous emotion, and that nothing is more antithetical to an orgasm than having it for free.

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## Living currency

Imagine, for a moment, an apparently impossible regression: to a phase in industrial production where producers are able to demand objects of

sensation from consumers as a form of payment. These objects would be living beings.

In this form of trade, both producers and consumers would become collectors of 'persons' who are apparently designed for pleasure, emotion and sensation. How could a human 'person' fulfil the function of a currency? How could producers ever get paid 'in women' rather than paying 'for women'? How would businessmen and industrialists pay their engineers and workers? 'In women.' And who would maintain this living currency? Other women. This also presumes the opposite: working women would be paid 'in boys'. And who would manage and sustain this virile currency? Those who use the feminine currency.

In fact, what we are describing here already exists. The whole of modern industry, even though it does not literally resort to such exchanges, rests on a form of trade mediated by the sign of an inert currency that neutralizes the nature of the objects being exchanged. It thus rests on a *simulacrum* of this kind of trade – a simulacrum that depends on the resources of the available labour force, and thus on a living currency that already exists, even though it is not openly admitted as such.

Even if the sophisticated perfecting of the instruments of production winds up reducing the size of the workforce, and even if time-saving techniques made more time available for sensation and the competitions of pleasure (Fourier), sensation itself would still not be free. The simulacrum of trade (created first by the monetary system, and then by the conditions of industrial society) would insist that the time saved be used only for further productions.

Paying workers in living objects of sensation instead of monetary wages would be practical only if the living object itself were appraised in terms of the quantity of labour required to ensure its subsistence. But if a living object (or objects) could be entered into the balance sheets of accountants, its possession by the worker would be purely symbolic and convertible into money. For an object of sensation to be worth a quantity of labour, the (living) object must, from the start, have a value (of sensation or emotion) that is equal to if not greater than the product of such labour. There is no common measure between the sensation the living object could elicit on its own and the quantity of labour that would be needed to provide the resources to sustain this object of sensation. What relationship could there be between the value of a tool or an acre of land valued according to their probable yield, and the price attributed to a living being, as the source of a rare emotion? None, if the uniqueness (and hence the rarity) of the living object, the source of emotion, is worth more than the cost of sustaining it. A tool can provide a certain profit; a living object provides

a certain emotion. The value of the tool must compensate for the cost of its maintenance; the value of a living object as the source of emotion is determined arbitrarily, and its maintenance costs can never be deduced from that value.

No one can object that we are reducing the living object, as a source of emotion, to the level of cattle bred on a farm, or assimilating it to a work of art or even a diamond. We are talking about an emotion that is sufficient unto itself, inseparable from the fortuitous and useless existence of an object that is 'convertible into currency' and thus arbitrarily appraised.

For a living object, the source of rare emotion, to be convertible into currency, we presume that a certain psychic state would have to be universally attained, a state expressed in the form of uncontested practices and customs. Would this mean that an equivalent quantity of living objects and inert money would have to be in circulation? Not if such customs meant the very disappearance of monetary practice. On the contrary, living currency, even if it existed in parallel with the market of inert currency, would be fully capable of being substituted for the role of the gold standard, once it is implanted in habits and instituted in economic norms. But these customs would profoundly modify markets and their meanings. Rare and inert objects, such as works of art, are never modified through their exchange. But a living object, source of voluptuous sensations, would either become a currency that suppresses the neutralizing functions of money, or else it would ground exchange value in the emotion it elicits.

Gold, whose arbitrary value and inherent uselessness make it the metaphor for any emotion procured from luxury and wealth, is a universal regime that is as inhuman as it is practical. Norms of value measured in terms of quantities of labour, while apparently more 'legitimate' from an economic viewpoint, still retain a punitive character. From the viewpoint of exchange, a living object, the source of emotion, is worth the price of its maintenance. The effort and sacrifice its obsessed owner inflicts on himself in order to maintain it represent the price of this rare and useless object. No figures can express it; only the demand can. But before even considering the living object as an exchangeable good, we must examine it as currency.

If a living currency, as living, must represent the equivalent of a certain amount of wages – although at first sight, natural barter would restrict the possibility of buying inferior goods, if they are goods we cannot live without – then a standard for its measure must be set. But this would make the disproportion between a quantity of labour (considered as a standard of value) and a living being (considered as a form of currency) even greater, especially in the context of the conditions of the modern economy.

If a given tool represents the amount of capital invested in it, this would be even more true for an object of sensation, which exists in a domain supposedly outside of commerce. A human creature who is the source of a possible emotion can, for this very reason, become the object of a possible investment. In the sphere of commerce, what counts is not the creature itself but rather the emotion it provokes in its possible consumers. To help us understand this, consider a false and banal example: the movie star, who represents only a single factor of production. When newspapers assess the dollar value of the visual qualities of someone like Sharon Tate, the day after her tragic death, or calculate the management costs or expenses of any other woman on the screen, industrialism itself is expressing the source of emotion in numbers, in terms of profitability or maintenance costs, and hence quantitatively. This is possible only because these women are not designated as 'living currency' but instead are being treated as industrial slaves. And on this account, they are regarded neither as actresses, nor as celebrities, nor even as illustrious people. If those whom we are calling industrial slaves were valued not simply as capital but as living currency (despite the obvious limitations of this phrase), they would assume the quality of a sign of value while at the same time constituting this value completely. The quality of the good would correspond to the 'immediate' satisfaction, not of a need, but rather of the initial perversion.

As 'living currency', the industrial slave has value both as a sign of wealth and as wealth itself. As a sign, she can be exchanged for any other kind of material wealth; but as wealth, she excludes all other demands except the one whose satisfaction she represents. Yet strictly speaking, that satisfaction is itself excluded by her quality as a sign. This is how living currency differs essentially from the status of industrial slaves (celebrities, stars, models, etc.). The industrial slave cannot claim to be a sign as long as she distinguishes between what she agrees to be paid, in inert currency, and what she is worth in her own eyes.

However, this explicit difference – which here, as elsewhere, is derived from morality – only serves to mask a fundamental confusion. In fact, no one would ever dream of characterizing this category of productive women as 'slaves'. The term 'slave' expresses, if not a supply, then at least their *availability* to a particular demand that expresses *limited* needs. Isolated from the living object which is its source and instead turned into a 'factor of production', emotion winds up being dispersed into a multiplicity of fabricated objects, which diverts the inexpressible demand into the limited needs defined by these objects. It is thereby rendered derisory compared to the 'serious' nature of labour conditions. As a result, the industrial slave is made *available* in a way that is no different from any other labourer: rather

than constituting herself as a sign, as living currency, she has to make an 'honest' living from inert currency. And if she is free to accept her wage (or not), then the term 'slave' becomes excessive, inappropriate, and insulting. Human dignity is preserved and money retains its full value. The range of choices implied in the abstract function of money means that no appraisal of value can ever compromise the integrity of the person. The concept of value can only be applied to her productive yield, which is assessed 'impartially' and in a way that assures the neutrality of its products. But this is a vicious circle: from the viewpoint of industry, the integrity of the person does not exist absolutely *except* in and through her productive yield, appraised in terms of currency.

Once the bodily presence of the industrial slave is included in appraising her productive yield (her physiognomy being inseparable from her work), it is specious to draw a distinction between the person and her activity. Bodily presence is itself already a commodity, independently of (and *in excess* of) the commodities its presence helps to produce. The industrial slave can either establish a strict relationship between her bodily presence and the money it brings in, or else she can substitute herself for the function of money, since she herself is already money: at once the equivalent of wealth and wealth itself.

## Notes

- 1 The *Callipygian Venus* ('Venus of the beautiful buttocks') is a Roman marble statue presumed to be a copy of an older Greek original, and is an example of the practice of *anásyрма* ('the lifting of the skirt' and the exposing of the genitals). It depicts a partially draped woman who has raised her peplos to uncover her hips and buttocks, and is looking back and down over her shoulder, seemingly in order to assess their beauty. It is currently in the collection of the National Archaeological Museum of Naples.
- 2 Raymond Aron, *Dix-huit leçons sur la société industrielle* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 101. English translation: *Eighteen Lectures on Industrial Society*, trans. M. K. Bottomore (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1967).
- 3 A reference to the publication of Charles Fourier's *Le Nouveau Monde Amoureux* [*The New Amorous World*] as volume 7 of *Oeuvres Complètes de Charles Fourier*, ed., with notes and introduction, by Simone-Debout-Oleszkiewicz (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1967). Fourier had completed

the manuscript for the book in 1818, but it had never been published, making its appearance in 1967 a literary event.

- 4 See John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* [1936] (New York: Harcourt, 1953), Ch. 2, Sec. I, p. 6: 'Disutility must be here understood to cover every kind of reason which might lead a man, or a body of men, to withhold their labour rather than accept a wage which had to them a utility below a certain minimum.'
- 5 Jean de Largentaye was the French translator of Keynes; see *Théorie générale de l'emploi de l'intérêt et de la monnaie*, trans. Jean de Largentaye (Paris: Payot, 1942). For his reading of Keynes, see Jean de Largentaye, 'A Note on the *General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*', in the *Journal of Post Keynesian Economics* 1.3 (Spring 1979): 6–15. This article is a translation, by E. A. Lloyd, of 'Deuxieme note du traducteur (1968)', which was included in a later edition of the translation, published in 1968 by Payot.
- 6 This is Klossowski's version of the distinction between 'user's knowledge' and 'maker's knowledge' that appears frequently in Plato (*Republic* 601c–602b) and Aristotle (*Physics* 194a).
- 7 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unpublished Fragments from the Period of Thus Spoke Zarathustra (I: Summer 1882–Winter 1883/84)*, trans. Paul S. Loeb and David F. Tinsley, Volume 14 of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Alan D. Schrift and Duncan Large (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming), 7[43], 7[46]. The Stendhal line is from *De l'Amour* (Paris: P. Mongie, 1822), vol. 1, 72; English translation: *On Love*, trans. H. B. V, under the direction of C. K. Scott-Moncrieff (New York: Liveright, 1947), 50. Our thanks to Alan Schrift for providing this reference.
- 8 Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 419–420.
- 9 Marquis de Sade, *Justine, or the Misfortunes of Virtue*, trans. John Philipps (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Mme d'Esterval has an enlarged clitoris, three inches long (459). 'Devil, what a clitoris!' Verneuil exclaims: 'You are more man than woman, I have no illusions in that regard; you don't need to hide anything' (454). *Justine* was published in three different versions: *Les infortunes de la vertu* (1787), *Justine, ou Les Malheurs de la vertu* (1791) and *La Nouvelle Justine ou Les Malheurs de la vertu* and *Juliette* (1797). The English translation is of the 1791 version; Klossowski is referring to the 1797 version.
- 10 See Marquis de Sade, *Justine, Philosophy in the Bedroom, and Other Writings* (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 465.



# SADE AND FOURIER, PIERRE KLOSSOWSKI

TRANSLATED BY  
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Here we will only discuss the aspect of Sade's thought that might help us to shed light on the pathological behaviour of our industrial world, insofar as it was foretold in his descriptions. In addition, we will attempt to compare his tableau with the vision of Fourier who, starting from Sadian observations, anticipated certain *possibilities* that the modern economic system had in store for the realm of the impulses.

This hypothetical debate between Sade and Fourier will take as its point of origin the following question: in what respect does the economy – all on its own, but perhaps also by the very law of supply and demand that governs exchange – reveal itself to be a mode of expression, representation and self-interpretation of affective life?

Witnesses to the social upheavals of the Consulate and the Empire (Sade died in 1814, Fourier in 1837), both were, in a sense, augurs of the metamorphosis of affectivity in its combat with the repressive forces of modern institutions, and also the metamorphosis of these forces in their combat with affects. For if this combat gives rise to a reciprocal metamorphosis of prevailing forces, it is because the sexual impulses, particularly the forms of voluptuous emotion, are themselves directly related to existing economic norms.

The first force of repression to emerge in the impulses is the *formation of an agent of organic and psychic unity*, a repression that corresponds, for

the agent, to the *constraint to which he is subjected by the combat between conflicting impulses during the constitution of this unity*. Meanwhile, on the outside, this repression (hence also this combat) is reinforced once the agent of individual unity becomes integrated as, and as it were defined by, a hierarchy of values and a corresponding hierarchy of needs; these latter needs being the economic form of repression exerted by existing institutions, in and through the consciousness of the agent, on the imponderable forces of his psychic life. Thanks to this acquired organic and moral unity, the individual can now only express his impulses within his own milieu as a given set of material and moral needs; that is to say, he can no longer assert himself in accordance with the movement of his affections, but from the possession of unity, from the capacity to possess, conserve and produce goods in the outside world, to give something in order to receive something else, yet only so long as the exchange in question always concerns objects and not other entities, except in those circumstances where *it would be legitimate to possess living beings as simple objects*.

In order to understand how the voluptuous emotion also became an object of commerce and an economic factor in this period of rapid industrialization, we must first consider what is meant by the words 'sexuality' and 'eroticism'. Then the various forms of voluptuous emotion might begin to reveal their secret and yet tragic connection to the anthropomorphic phenomenon of economic exchange.

To take the notable example of Sade, what are we to make of his descriptions of perversion, namely the voluptuous emotion attached to a seemingly incongruous object? The behaviour analysed by Sade, the conversion of so-called 'simple' into 'compound passions', what we now call perversion, is nothing but *the first reaction against the animal act itself*, and thus the *initial interpretation undertaken by the impulses to separate what is combined under the generic term 'sexuality': on the one hand, the voluptuous emotion prior to the act of procreation, and, on the other, the specific instinct to procreate* (namely the preservation and propagation of the species) – *two propensities whose combination founds the unity of the reproductive individual*, yet whose prolonged separation, old age notwithstanding, presents a challenge to the reason for existing. So, the term 'perversion' simply refers to the fixation of this voluptuous emotion at the stage immediately preceding the act of procreation, while the conversion of what Sade calls 'simple' into 'compound passions' represents the various ruses by which the interpretative capacity of this voluptuous emotion enables it to pick and choose from all the different body parts in search of new objects of sensation, for no other reason than to convert them into *substitutes for the procreative function, thus keeping it in permanent suspension*. What are

these substitutions, these ruses, if not so many *deductions from the instinct to propagate*? Whence the anti-gregarious, anti-specific behavior that soon arises in the populace. Meanwhile, at the individual level, this behavior results in a number of gestures, or better yet, in a single gesture, which in Sade is the anti-gregarious gesture par excellence – that of sodomy, key sign of all the Sadian perversions. Then what presides over this gesture? *It is the very same interpretative capacity of the preliminary emotion that first instigated the deduction from the instinct to procreate.* The pulsional force thus *deducted* then supplies the *material for a phantasm, which is interpreted by this emotion* – with the phantasm here *taking on the role of a 'fabricated' object.* The *emotional value* accorded the use of a *phantasm* by a pulsional force *only occurs with this use*, in the same way that *the use of a phantasm in perversion to procure emotion precisely depends on its being non-exchangeable.* Therein lies the principal evaluation of this emotion: since it is indeed an *impulse*, which we call *perverted* because it impedes *the gregarious fulfilment of individual unity* (namely the procreative function of the individual), *it manifests itself by its very intensity as that which is non-exchangeable and thus priceless.* And whatever physiological unity the individual might eventually attain, in his physical appearance, it is still no match for the constraint of being under the exclusive control of a *phantasm.*

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The writings of Fourier may be just as remarkable, as important and as delusional as those of Sade, but Sade's form of lunacy is nowhere near as *bizarre*. On the contrary, Sade rigorously observes the rules of classical expression, even though he often looks forward to the pathos of romanticism.

Fourier, in an often rambling, yet no less reasoned prose, cobbled together (according to a system of his own devising) a rather crackpot and yet visionary kind of vocabulary, making it possible for him – and this was a truly inspired move – to aim his sarcasm at real life, that is to say at existing norms. Fourier used this bizarre terminology in his classification of the diverse human passions in order to reflect a *possible* scenario, but one that, thanks to this vision, seemed so realistic that it enabled him to launch a scathing attack on the manners and grotesque conditions of the society of his time.

Hence Fourier's prophecy of future (namely utopian or as yet non-existent) happiness contains an *explicit* critique of the existing economic system. Yet what distinguishes his critique from Sade's is that, with the Marquis, critique is always embedded in the violence of the social tableau described

in his work. One reason for this difference is undoubtedly that Fourier, as a member of the petite bourgeoisie, and employed as a shopkeeper during the Empire and the Restoration, was thoroughly familiar with the business practices of his day; whereas Sade, a high-ranking nobleman confined to the Bastille by his mother-in-law, though engaged in writing a grand opus, suddenly found himself, once he got out of prison, ruined by the Revolution and plagued by money problems, reduced to the level of an ordinary 'man of letters' in this modern society.

From Fourier's perspective, Sade seemed little more than a prophet of doom, because what he created on a purely imaginative level only confirms the persistent inequalities of the industrial world. Yet, even if the evidence now tends to favor Sade, the belief that Fourier's vision of future happiness is a false or utopian prophecy is only a supposition on our part, and a fairly biased one at that. In Fourier's eyes, choosing Sade over Fourier amounts to *wanting* the inalterable. On the whole, if Fourier was or behaved like a prophet of happiness, it was because for him *nothing is set in stone*, by reason of the erotic spark itself, which is 'divine' and thus essentially creative. To champion the *irreducible*, as Sade did (in the name of his integral atheism), is to betray and strike at this erotic spark, which he clearly wanted to make the basis of his thought, yet nonetheless linked to institutions, thus condemning them to mutual destruction. In other words, Fourier bitterly resented Sade for having explored identical territory in such a way as to make his own project – the free play of the passions – unrealizable from the outset, even though Sade's table of perversions had inspired Fourier's prophecy of 'phalansterian' happiness. Hence the cornerstone of Fourier's project, namely sensual delight, already implicitly existed in Sade, in the sense that his rational mode of expression had relentlessly tried to abolish it. To set aside certain passions as functional monstrosities in the life of the species is indeed to ruin them. If perversity is ever to resume its place as a natural function of life, then aggressiveness must be free to create its own object: the serious business of perversion must be replaced by fun and games.

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The highlight of Sade's definitive novel, *The Story of Justine and Juliette*, is the social tableau, which traces the various types of perversion presented in *The 120 Days of Sodom*. But here these perverse characters, drawn from known pathological cases, are no longer restricted to brothels, but operate as befits their social position, wealth or status – whether in private homes, country estates, palaces or laboratories, and no matter whether they are

noblemen or commoners, financiers, state ministers, prelates or bishops, lords masquerading as innkeepers, surgeons or chemists or highwaymen. By this line of reasoning (and under the influence of English novelists, whose realism he praised – not only Ann Radcliffe’s fanciful *roman noir*, but also the novels of Fielding among others), Sade intended to demonstrate that the existing institutions of any regime (whether the Directorate or *Ancien Régime*) implicitly advance the cause of the so-called polymorphous perverse, and thus structure perversions. For example, Justine’s (*Ancien Régime*) perspective is that of a victim who still fervently believes in norms and normative institutions. Juliette’s perspective, however, is that of torturers and monsters, in whose hands institutions are exploited so as to extract the last drop of abnormality from them. These privileged guardians of institutions promote the fundamentally institutional structure of perversity not only by reason of a perfect complicity with the means of repression (to which they were morally subjected themselves before openly engaging in violence and deriving pleasure from it), but all the better by actively serving these institutions by intentionally speaking their language, because without it their perverse cravings would not take shape in their own eyes, or assume consistency. This is also why Sade endows them with a rigor of expression and argumentation that is perfectly rational, and why he didn’t feel the need to invent a code language. Admittedly, this language is coded because it is precisely rational; it is coded for those whom he wished to recruit in thought and deed. Wherever monstrosity seeks to explain itself as such, there you will find the ‘Society of the Friends of Crime’. But the Friends of Crime have no need to overthrow institutions, because in a sense that has already occurred thanks to the very existence of this clandestine society.

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Fourier was no more interested in this idea of clandestine societies than he was in atheist philosophy: *clandestinity* may have served a purpose once upon a time, but it is still condemned to what it protests against. So Fourier took up the various groups of *accomplices* at their point of origin that is to say, *those passions at odds with the established order*. Here it is no longer a question of serving the esoteric interests of abnormality by means of the ambiguous expressions of rational language. Rather, we must invent a new language based on all the different *idioms of the passions* – something that Sade did not care for, and absolutely refused to do. Fourier, on the other hand, believed that *language should be reconstructed according to a logic adapted to the passions*, so as to *render intelligible those very*

*abnormalities made incommunicable by rational language.* It is only when perversity brings about a genuine flowering of *life-preserving* forces that it ceases to be perverse, or integral monstrosity ceases to be monstrous. That possibility alone, according to Fourier, would bring about the overthrow of institutions: they would no longer need to 'cultivate' perversions such as we find described in Sade's social tableau, but rather perversions would in turn create their own institutions.

How might this be accomplished? Through *specific kinds of activity* requiring the formation of groups: however, in the scheme outlined by Fourier, that of arranging the different age brackets according to shared interests, there is a preoccupation totally missing from the work of Sade – namely, *how does perversity develop once it has been granted its object?* Hence the emphasis placed on the psychology of children. For Fourier, the child or childhood is of paramount importance: *it is the site where institutions, while pretending to nip the libidinal development of human beings in the bud, only manage to breed sterile abnormalities.*<sup>1</sup> This has nothing to do with psychoanalytic therapy, nor with neurosis or perversion. Fourier, like Sade also, showed *not the slightest interest in curing people* of perversion, or of its opposite, neurosis. Once a phantasm of perversion captures the imagination, the latter seeks an outlet in the form of a *fabricated* object; that is to say, it strives to discharge its forces in such a way as to place itself *outside* this constraint and to make it explicit, and thus to recognize as law what motivates the emotion.

But it is also mistaken to believe that a sense of 'entitlement', ambition, pride or the exercise of power should be considered a vice, or evil. For Fourier (and Sade too), aggressiveness must be preserved at all cost. Yet what Sade advocated – the formation of *secret sects* allowing the imagination free rein – would have seemed a *sterile abuse of power* to Fourier. The clandestine society, since it is closed in on itself, is quite impoverished compared to the immense resources that each new generation represents. In return, the basic principle underlying clandestine groups should be upheld and extended to the rest of society: that is to say, everyone should be divided into categories based on age and social position, and sorted into different affective units. So it could be argued that in fact Fourier did contemplate, with respect to Sade, a competition of sorts between multiple kinds of 'clandestinities', but only to the extent that all the different affects, as propensities for a particular object, are to remain a collective secret until they find a precise match. On the whole, each affective grouping is based on emotions whose phantasms cannot be communicated beyond their immediate circle. So it becomes necessary to create an environment where *one or more simulacra* are able to bring about an *exchange of*

*complementary phantasms at the level of individuals*, and thus promote cooperation between the various groups.

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Long before Nietzsche, Sade grappled with the problem of gregariousness. Both recognized, but from different perspectives and by way of different formulations, that the species only deserves to be called the raw material of life through the elaboration of exceptions – or, in gregarious terms, monsters. But what defines the monster is precisely its lack of individual unity. That the monster is at once more than or far short of one individual, that it shatters unity in the service of phantasms, is what makes it truly monstrous. For Sade (and Nietzsche too), the individual is nothing more than the fortuitous encounter of contradictory impulses, from which he derives, as the designated agent of their expression, only an illusory and most fleeting sense of identity: a time of combat. What then is the exception? A solitary offshoot of ‘nature’ which, according to Sade, only does full justice to its name in any one instance of the species by destroying in the same movement the specific functions of that person. This is why Sade made sodomy the key gesture of integral monstrosity, because it strikes at the command to be fruitful and multiply.

From Fourier’s perspective, Sade appears to negate what he otherwise correctly affirms. This alleged monstrosity, according to Fourier, doesn’t belong to a few privileged persons to realize wholly at the expense of the species. The as yet unsuspected wealth of the so-called polymorphous perverse, of the diversity of the passions, is not simply the product of blind forces, but part of the plan of ‘divine creation.’ All of humanity constitutes the universal agent of Eros. To engage in erotic experiments on a grand scale is not the exclusive right of monsters, but stems from the malleable and combinatory character of the impulses themselves. Number or quantity, far from dissipating rare and singular emotions, bears witness to their diversification; the multiplication of partners does not repeat the same emotion, but expresses its infinite variety. Since the impulses always exceed individual unity in one’s own phantasms, rendering it *susceptible* to multiple passionate *associations* with the impulses in other unities, *the law of exchange* (of supply and demand) *must require like-minded subjects, and not subjects economically sanctioned by institutions. The real producer or consumer is not at all the purely fictional unity of the individual, but rather his impulsive phantasms – or as things stand, his alleged abnormality.*

Sade’s description of this appropriation of the polymorphous perverse by integral monsters is, in Fourier’s view, an entirely understandable response

to the fact that institutions have taken it upon themselves to appropriate the life functions of the individual in a mistaken belief in the norms of the species, which suits their purpose in the sense that, by stifling all perverse tendencies, it becomes easier for them to declare these tendencies impractical. On the other hand, the relationship of integral monsters to institutional norms simply mirrors the relationship of institutions to abnormalities in general: an analogue of this appropriation of perverse tendencies exists in the converse sphere, that of the existing economic regime. The accumulation of wealth by a privileged few establishes the *existence of fraud as much in psychic exchange as in the distribution of material goods*. In the absence of an economy based on the psychic nature of exchange – that is to say, in the absence of a pathological interpretation of (the laws) of supply and demand – ‘economic’ and ‘psychic’ monsters are merely polar opposites of each other.<sup>2</sup>

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At issue here is the sharing of ‘psychic goods’ or of the wealth of the polymorphous perverse, as well as the means of accomplishing this sharing by exchange, which presupposes that in order to be exchangeable, this wealth must also be ‘communicable’.

Both Fourier and Sade agree that the inherently incommunicable phantasm requires the *creation* of a simulacrum; but since Fourier *understood the simulacrum as a form of exchange*, he used it in a completely contrary way: for him, the principle of the simulacrum is *play* (entertainments, spectacle, ritual ceremonies, contests – thus not work, but creativity). Contrary to Sade, it is play that will establish a *total gratuity of psychic and material exchange*.

Yet what makes Fourier’s enterprise questionable is not only its *basic aggressiveness* or the way that he tries to overcome it by play, but the inimitable nature of perversion itself, its very resistance to simulation. For a simulacrum to exist it must have a solid basis in reality, inseparable from the *reality of the behaviour demanded by the phantasm*. If someone has a sudden impulse to *kill, torture, or engage in lesser forms of violence*, then the *phantasm* and its reflexes remain *ineradicable*. This is exactly what Sade *alleged*, but Fourier *disputed*. *So long as a phantasm exists, it must be reproduced as a simulacrum*: not in the sense of a catharsis, as that is only a waste of resources, but, rather, as a reconstitution or *duplication* of the reality of this phantasm in the form of *play*. Here Fourier gambles not so much on liberty as on *creative freedom*; whereas, for Sade, this notion of creating objects compatible with perversion (or of giving it

the appearance of a game) was inconceivable, if only because *perversion is a game itself with respect to the irreducibility of norms*. This is why the perverse emotion is inseparable from the *destruction* of its object, and why the so-called death instinct is *indivisible* from the life functions. What Fourier advocated was not sublimation in Freud's sense, but *the malleability and indeed plasticity of the impulses themselves*; hence antagonistic drives are only 'life' and 'death' relative to the fixity or mutability of the phantasm. It is precisely for this reason that Fourier insisted on the serial and combinatory character of the different perversions, because it makes them predisposed to the elaboration of renewable forms of pleasure.

This debate could go on indefinitely. Some basic *resistance* is necessary even if it's only an illusion: the pursuit of pleasure or enjoyment, ergo the voluptuous emotion, presupposes an act of resistance, and indeed the *simulacrum is worthless or ineffectual unless it encounters some form of external resistance*. And yet Fourier always discounted the idea that resistance (thus aggression and even violence) is the actual motor of play. But if play were in effect a simulacrum, why wouldn't it participate in violence itself once violence furnishes the material for this simulacrum?

Doubtless an agent is necessary to express the singularity of a certain perversion or mania. But how could anyone 'seriously' simulate what he feels except (and by no better means than) by simulating exactly the phantasm that *turned* him into this maniac or pervert? Seriousness here does not refer to the frenzy or impulsiveness of the agent's attachment to his phantasm, but rather to the unrelenting force with which the impulses subject him to this phantasm, only to manifest themselves in the very act of consuming him. Without this seriousness there would be no real sensual pleasure, and nor could it be pleasurable *unless it raised a very serious concern*, unless its light and frivolous appearance came 'at a price' with regard to the rest of existence.

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If in Sade's projects for a secret society he demonstrates that the monster or pervert always needs accomplices, this is because he could only conceive of the law of exchange in purely institutional terms: these accomplices (all of whom deny the existence of a 'one and only true God' as a guarantor of their own physical and moral integrity), hence these Sadian monsters, 'exchange' places or take turns in betraying one another. This is because nothing is more congenial to integral monstrosity than the practice of deception.

Nor could it really be any different, since institutions and the individuals defined by them only exist thanks to a fraud committed against those impulses that secretly guide them.<sup>3</sup>

Sade deliberately dismissed the possibility (and hence the very notion) that exchange can take place between individuals at the level of the passions, and most of all at the level of the perversions themselves. It is by virtue of the incommunicability of what they feel within themselves, with respect to each other, that only a simulacrum of communication exists for Sade, namely that of venal prostitution – a simulacrum (here signified by the universal equivalent of currency) that excludes all knowledge of what a person *momentarily represents* to the one enjoying him, unless it were in fact his body or the very *thing* that the expropriated body may be *worth* for and in the phantasm of the other.<sup>4</sup>

We mustn't lose sight of the principle that is integral to the practice of monstrosity in Sade: it is from the negation of a moral God, from the abolition of a responsible and self-identical ego, that he derives all the practical consequences of the expropriation, whether voluntarily or by force, of the 'body proper', or the body as the property of a self. Indeed, every case of perversity has to do with using this 'self-property', be it one's own or that of others, as an instrument for the dissolution of personal identity for the benefit of their phantasm. To abolish ownership of the 'body proper' is an operation intrinsic to the perverse imagination; the pervert inhabits the body of another as if it were his own, as if they shared the same attributes. This amounts to saying that the expropriated body is simply recuperated as the depository for a phantasm, and thus as the mere equivalent of this phantasm. But it only becomes a simulacrum of the phantasm on the sole condition that it is produced under the sign of an evaluation or cost.

Leaving aside all their historical and social differences, what principally distinguishes the world of Sade from Fourier's world is that the former world does not concern itself with the mediating role that Fourier assigns to the production of objects in relation to the passions. The sole production that Sade acknowledges in this regard, if only on a personal level, is the book he is writing, and more generally those artistic diversions taken into account by the Society of the Friends of Crime: here art and literature are only a means of *validating the phantasms suggested or described by them*.

Given that he interpreted unintelligible monstrosity by means of art and philosophical disputation, Sade was evidently drawn into the sphere of exchange himself: having written books, he clearly intended to propagate his own way of viewing and understanding the world. But that he was also highly contemptuous of traditional pornography is absolutely consistent with his moral stance, that is to say, with *his hypothesis of the universal*

*prostitution of beings*. For the existence of pornography contradicts this very hypothesis.

Sade has the distinction of being the first modern thinker to recognize the intimate relationship between the phantasm and commercial exchange, and thus the role of currency as a sign of the incalculable value of the phantasm. Indeed, money is an integral part of the representative mode of perversion. Because the perverse phantasm is fundamentally unintelligible and non-exchangeable, only currency is sufficiently abstract to constitute its universally intelligible equivalent. But here we must distinguish in Sade between, on the one hand, the phantasmal function of money, namely the act of buying or of being sold oneself, insofar as it is only the external expression of perversity, or a means of bringing different partners together; and, on the other, *its function in mediating* between the closed world of abnormalities and the world of institutional norms.

Here we find the same relationship in Sade that logically structured language has to abnormalities, a relationship of mutual transgression and condemnation between abnormalities and existing norms. Money, as the equivalent of scarcity, as the sign of institutional toil and hardship, necessarily implies the redistribution of this wealth for the benefit of the perverse phantasm. If the phantasm demands a *certain expense*, then its equivalence in concrete terms is expressed by as much wealth as the purchasing power of money will allow; or, in the outside world, by so much toil and hardship in vain. Hence money, as the equivalent of prosperity, necessarily spells financial ruin, *even while still retaining its value* – in the same way that language, as the sign of what exists (or has meaning), is for Sade a sign of the non-existent or of the merely possible (and thus devoid of meaning according to the norms of institutional language). In other words, money, in the world of Sade, even while it represents and guarantees what exists, is all the more the sign of *what does not yet exist* – ‘all the more,’ I say, because in integral monstrosity the transgression of norms (which is only what abnormality really means) takes the form of a ceaseless campaign against the non-existent, or the possible. Indeed, Sadian transgression is nothing more than the unending attempt to recuperate the possible, inasmuch as the existing state of affairs has eliminated the possibility of another form of existence.

The possible in what does not exist can never be anything but possible, for if the act of transgression were to recuperate this possible as a new form of existence, it would have to transgress it in turn. The possible as such would thus have been eliminated and would have to be recuperated all over again. What the act of transgression recuperates from the possible in what does not exist is its very own possibility of transgressing what

exists. As perverse behaviour, one suggested by a particular phantasm, the act of transgressing existing norms in the name of an as yet non-existent possibility is a task eminently suited to the nature of currency, namely the freedom to pick and choose from what exists. By means of this very possibility of free choice, money questions the value of what exists in favour of what does not exist. What does not exist according to norms, hence those abnormalities negatively stated in language as the absence of norms, is in turn positively stated by the *money not spent on what exists, and thus by the amount saved*.

In the closed world of perversion, being the world of the incommunicable, money sanctions *the very incommunicability of beings*: it is the only intelligible way that the world of abnormalities can respond positively to the world of norms. Integral monstrosity, in order to make itself understood in the institutional world, borrows its monetary sign – which is simply just another version of the Sadian hypothesis that only one form of universal communication exists: that is to say, *the exchange of bodies by the secret language of body signs*. Sade's argument is more or less the following: institutions claim to preserve individual liberty by substituting for the exchange of bodies an exchange of goods by means of currency, a neutral and thus equivocal sign. And yet currency, as the pretext for the circulation of wealth, only ensures the secret exchange of bodies in the name and for the benefit of institutions. The *return* on the repudiation of integral monstrosity by *institutions* is in fact *material and moral prostitution*. The very purpose of those secret societies imagined by Sade is to draw attention to this dilemma: *either there is communication by the exchange of bodies, or there is prostitution under the sign of money*. This dilemma was also obvious to Fourier, but his solution was to trace it back to its source; whereas Sade took the excesses of the established order to their logical conclusion, by making money an instrument of integral monstrosity.

With respect to the outside world, candidates for integral monstrosity can only assert themselves morally by means of logical language, and materially by means of currency. On the moral plane, they look for accomplices among the normal population; on the material plane, they recruit their experimental victims by exchanging fortunes in competition for those to whom institutions only accord a subsistence far below the 'normal'.

*As soon as the fundamentally incalculable* (namely ungraspable, useless, and arbitrary) *phantasm is related to physical attraction, it becomes a rarity* in the closed world of integral monstrosity. Here we witness the birth of the modern commercialization of voluptuous emotion, with the exception that, with industrial exploitation, standardization drives down the price of suggestiveness, thus making the living object of this emotion very costly;

whereas in Sade's period, still one of manufacture, *the suggestion and its living object were one and the same*. In the exclusive circle of Sadian monstrosity, the living simulacrum of the phantasm is highly prized. At one point, when Sade was writing down the rules pertaining to the Society of the Friends of Crime, he casually remarks that membership is 'barred to those unable to indicate a minimum yearly income of 25,000 francs, annual dues being 10,000 francs per person'. Apart from this one stipulation, no discrimination on the basis of either rank or origin will be tolerated. In return:

twenty artists and men of letters are to be admitted upon remittance of a modest fee of one thousand francs per annum. This special condition is part of the Society's policy of patronizing the arts; it regrets that its means do not allow it to admit at this insignificant price a larger number of these gifted persons whom it will always hold in high esteem.

Writing these words at the height of the Directorate, Sade was probably being ironic about his own precarious situation: a fallen aristocrat, stripped of his assets, he was forced to eke out a meagre existence as a man of letters.

And yet of all the questions raised by Sade, the value of the *incommunicable* with respect to its *equivalent* is surely one of the most important. Here we are dealing with the product of art, namely the book or instrument, whose employment – *as the equivalent of the incommunicable phantasm*, and hence its *simulacrum* – is itself subject to speculation: in other words, something paid for *at the level of exchange*, not only because it is an article of consumption, but because from the outset *the suggestive act, for whoever commits it, is already the result of a bartering between phantasms and the person tormented by them*. On the whole, phantasms are unendurable unless they can be discarded. And just as the individual must pay with his own substance to free himself from the constraint of a particular phantasm, by means of its equivalent or simulacrum, so in turn must he make others, if he is to benefit from the simulacrum thus created, bear the *cost of his having to discard this phantasm*.

But the irony goes further. After all, it is Sade, a man of letters, who furnishes the material for his imagined society. In his conception of it, the Society of the Friends of Crime is, first and foremost, his own readers, and thus a "meeting of the minds." The secret society is only justified at a purely intellectual level; but as this involves the production of simulacra, their producer is always dependent on the demand for customers. Thus the presence of artists or writers in the Society of the Friends of Crime underscores the relation of the creator to society at large, a relation that is

closely tied to the problem of the production of goods and their value in the economic sphere, and in particular to the production of objects best suited to the peculiarly unsurpassable character of psychic life: the more their customers are subjected to the constraint of a particular phantasm, the more costly its corresponding simulacrum will become for them. According to Sade, the Society of the Friends of Crime shamelessly exploits the producers of simulacra and glories in its own inventions, but declares itself incapable of adequately remunerating them. A similar incongruity is inscribed at the very heart of this enterprise: the more the phantasm demands a simulacrum, the better will the simulacrum take hold and adapt itself to this phantasm, and so the higher its price will be. As a consequence, it acquires all the 'seriousness' of anything incurring a 'necessary' expense.

In the order of Sadian phantasms, the spectacle of venality further increases the value of the phantasm: not because poverty compels people to sell themselves, but on the contrary because their own inherent 'wealth' coerces them into it. At one point we discover Juliette, the quintessential Sadian character, *counting up* her numerous charms, even though she is in no way a professional courtesan, but a respectable woman of means, a (premeditated) widow of the Comte de Lorsange, hence a kind of adventuress educated in the ways of moral corruption. All this only adds to the subtlety of the phantasm, which Juliette devotes herself to realizing. Yet the fortune thus accumulated, in a sense, by Juliette only propels her into a constantly renewed expropriation of her own body: she is always in the throes of one phantasm or another, and her only satisfaction comes from never having spent a pittance on the relief of the poor. *This is because Juliette is essentially poverty herself.* How do you put a monetary value on the incalculable worth of the phantasm? And on what would this figure possibly be based if not the privation and hardship it simultaneously represents?

For Sade, this is the summit of evaluation: the equivalent of the phantasm (or the sum paid) not only represents the voluptuous emotion as such, but, once again, the exclusion of thousands of human lives. This scandal, in purely gregarious terms, only increases the value of the phantasm.

This is what money signifies: total debauchery = famine = devastation = the supreme value of the phantasm. To put it another way: the more this money represents thousands of mouths, the more it confirms the value of the expropriated body, and so the more this same body will be worth thousands of human lives: i.e., a phantasm = a whole population. If misappropriation didn't exist, if money wasn't a burden on all and the cause of endless strife, then its value would vanish in a puff of smoke.

Hence it follows that money has a positive sense insofar as it represents the equivalent of countless human lives, and a negative sense in that it offers arbitrary compensation for the inexpressibility of a phantasm. On the whole, the use of money for this purpose is arbitrary because the value of money is already arbitrary: in itself, money is nothing more than a record of the trafficking in phantasms.

It should now be quite evident why the artist or man of letters, ergo the producer of simulacra, occupies such a precious position in the Society of the Friends of Crime: here the producers of simulacra have no other role than that of mediating between two very different value systems. On the one hand, they embody the intrinsic worth of simulacra produced according to institutional norms, which are those of sublimation; on the other, they are merely servants, brought in to implement the phantasm according to the obsessive constraints of perversion. Either way, the producers of simulacra are honored for their 'intellectual detachment', even though they are treated as ordinary contract laborers. Such is the sorry state of affairs that Sade found himself in shortly after the Revolution. One cannot serve two masters. But Sade wanted to demonstrate that no matter which master you choose, it always ends up being the same, whether hidden under the cover of institutions, or showing its true face in the Society of the Friends of Crime. Once again, this master is integral monstrosity; while *money*, as the shameful sign of personal currency or wealth, becomes the sign of its glorification in the Society of the Friends of Crime. In Sade's imagined clandestine society, it is precisely by means of this *expenditure on phantasms* that the world of institutional sublimations is *held hostage*. Abolish money, and then the universal communication between beings becomes possible. By throwing down this challenge, Sade draws attention to the fact that individual value or worth lies at the very core of the voluptuous emotion, and that nothing is more contrary to sexual enjoyment than giving it away for free.

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The dispute between Fourier and Sade is best characterized by what the former called 'Celadony': a purely spiritual form of love, which he tried to resurrect as the highest expression of voluptuous imagination, by way of offering compensation for the sins of the flesh.

But even in this final dispute, he still allowed Sade a certain achievement in the analysis of voluptuous emotion, which had formerly made their respective points of view appear irreconcilable. Fourier understood perfectly what the deliberate act of selling oneself means for the voluptuous

imagination. Yet how was he able to incorporate the simulacrum of this gesture in his 'Harmonian' economy when he considered it one of the abominations of 'Civilization'?

By demonstrating, in a strangely theatrical and yet perverse bargain with the spirit of competition, that chaste love and animal lust are closely interrelated. Yet this demonstration is only possible if the rarity of chaste love is redeemed by the tribute paid to the carnal demands of the multitude. In *The New Amorous World*, one example of this demonstration is the mission of the so-called 'Angelicate': a male and female couple who, despite their uncommon beauty, are chaste in respect of each other. What we find here is a kind of priesthood, where the ultimate price of serenity is the prostitution of these sweethearts. Indeed, both of them feel intense bliss when independently surrendering to the desires of their innumerable suitors. Thus, for Fourier, the more these angelic lovers (precisely because they are angels) meet the carnal 'demands' of the multitude, the greater is their spiritual value: a prestige that derives from the negation – or, rather, from the simulacrum of a negation – of animal gratification for its own sake. It is by sacrificing themselves to the animal passions that the angels are able to find redemption, while these passions drive up the price of so-called angelic 'purity.' Far from scorning the carnal act, they are its ultimate incarnation.

## Notes

- 1 Simone Debout points out that Fourier fails to take into account the libido of children. Be that as it may, Fourier's suggestion that playfulness should be encouraged in people from childhood onwards largely compensates for this loss of acumen.
- 2 Here we should note that Fourier understood communal life above all in psychic terms, and that this 'expropriation' is a moral one, implying neither a levelling nor misuse of resources, which would be contrary to his principle of playful competition. In a 'phalanstery', people are first divided into groups according to *whether* they have any possessions or not, and *what* these happen to be. But in practice this system of association only admits the materially wealthy because they will be of service to those who, lacking any visible means of support, are no less rich in passionate imagination. If, as Fourier argued, all of society should be grouped into various 'series' or 'phalanxes' and encouraged to take part in competitions according to the principle of the free play

of the passions, and if this results, in keeping with such competitive events or contests, in a strict hierarchy of passions (thus giving rise, always according to the rules of the game, to a 'new nobility', new 'commonalty' or new 'priesthood' wherein everyone, based on their individual psychic behaviour, may either rise to a 'higher' level of the game or fall to a 'lower rank', without any irreversible lowering of status and excluding all contingencies except those pertaining to the free play of the passions), then in all likelihood this project was intended, in the context of Fourier's times, as an ironic fable, whose lesson is at once ingenious and profound: that is to say, *if the expropriation of the psychic self favours polymorphous impulses, then the material expropriation of individual wealth would benefit universal psychic exchange*, at least in the sense that Fourier intended by his curious institution of the 'Angelicate'.

- 3 But secretly guiding them where? On the whole, back to the struggle between the initial stage of sterile, anti-gregarious voluptuousness and the specific instinct to procreate, thus beyond their own individual 'unity' or self-identity to a random swirl of attractions and repulsions, all of which *seems so intensely alive* (to Sadian protagonists) that everyone is driven to seek in the corporeal and moral presence of others only the momentary actualization of their own phantasms: that is to say, a mutual expropriation of bodies enabling the inhabited person to experience himself in the same way as his or her 'possessor' does.

Yet how could these phantasms by which primordial voluptuousness (in its non-differentiation between the sexes and their unseemly connection) holds the instinct to propagate in check be communicated, when this instinct precisely forms the basis of all intelligible communicability? The need to communicate is essentially the need to reproduce or perpetuate oneself. Even when perverse monstrosity is consensual, it constitutes an absolutely mute act; whereas, generally speaking, the only kind of exchange between individual identities that can be achieved by rational discourse (or the Logos) is *the simulation of what lies at the very depths of one's being*, which nobody would ever want to share with someone else. Sade never claimed that his descriptions of 'deviant' liaisons and couplings could account for what is experienced between partners, nor did his analysis of libidinal processes attempt to explain, after the event, the transitory law that governs them. Only those *reflexes* of the 'horror', 'revulsion' or 'erotic pleasure' observable in others, from whose primarily imaginary spectacle the pervert procures his ecstasy, emerge in any palpable or describable way from the mute and incommunicable depths of his being. All the more so as the intensity

of the phantasm stems from the absence of the principle of reciprocity, which is indispensable to Fourier's project.

- 4 This problem seemed to shift in Sade's eyes once he started taking revolutionary ideas into account and temporarily participated in the new institutions. While writing the pamphlet 'Yet Another Effort, Frenchmen, If You Would Become Republicans', contained in his *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, he momentarily considered entrusting the implementation of his perverse ideas to the State, and even imagined the *collectivization* of everything that he had proposed in *Juliette* (which was composed at the same time as *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, during the Directorate), even though his scheme for the collectivization of integral monstrosity was utterly refuted by the atheism of those aristocratic characters in *Juliette* who act as his mouthpieces. Yet even in this scheme, one that best approximates Fourier's 'phalansterian' ideas and sometimes almost anticipates them, his belief in the incommunicability of beings was so strong that he began to fantasize about the new institutions adopting his integral atheism to guarantee their effectiveness. The expropriation of one person by another, whether by agreement or force, follows on from Sade's so-called 'right to compel enjoyment', which is based on the proposition that those who are the source of this troubling emotion, who cause another person to become aroused by them, is, by the same token, compelled to submit to them. Here stimulation is considered an *injury* and hence an *injustice*, which the coveted one is obliged to rectify. And even though a certain reciprocity exists in this state of affairs, it remains understood that the 'culprit's' aversion only increases the value of the phantasm for whoever exercises this right.

# SADE AND FOURIER AND KLOSSOWSKI AND BENJAMIN

PAUL FOSS-HEIMLICH

*Often what is thought is less important than who thinks it.*

C. G. JUNG<sup>1</sup>

Pierre Klossowski's late writings on Sade and Fourier are among his most *autofictive* works. In the first place, they are often considered his final statement before taking up drawing full time.<sup>2</sup> Published in 1970, *Sade et Fourier* and *La Monnaie vivante* mark the culmination of a line of reasoning that launched his career with the postwar release of *Sade mon prochain*. On the other hand, the moral imperative behind this play of doubles brings to light a little-known chapter in the philosopher's life.<sup>3</sup> Last of all, the operative scene of a disavowal through splitting and idealization permits us to see in this work, as Nietzsche notes in *Beyond Good and Evil*, 'the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious memoir'.<sup>4</sup>

Even accepting the 'authorial fallacy', there is much here that lends itself to biographical speculation.<sup>5</sup> *Sade et Fourier* and *La Monnaie vivante* were, in all likelihood, composed simultaneously; the first was published in an academic journal and the other by Éric Losfeld, the controversial publisher of *Emmanuelle*, the *Barbarella* comic book, and other *Guides*

*Roses*. Furthermore, both essays function as ‘parallel narratives’, in that they cover similar ground and sometimes even repeat the same material. On the other hand, this stuttering, almost diversionary publication tactic, aided and abetted by the belief that nothing of comparable substance seems to have subsequently emerged from his pen, continues to foster the illusion of their being Klossowski’s philosophical swan song.

Let us take stock of the elements held in suspense here. Only a few months separate their publication, with *Sade et Fourier* first appearing in the Freudian journal *Topique* and then *La Monnaie vivante* in a book containing ‘erotic’ photography by Pierre Zucca. Next, in 1974, a slightly redacted version of the *Topique* article appeared in Klossowski’s *Les Derniers travaux de Gulliver suivi de Sade et Fourier*, an inclusion that probably signals an attempt to rescue it from relative obscurity.<sup>6</sup> However, as far as we can tell, these evil twins seem to have had a protracted gestation period, going back to the early 1930s, when the author first encountered Sade and probably the work of Fourier as well. This pedigree may even shed light on why the well of inspiration effectively dried up not long after their publication, and why the author chose this precise moment to carry out his plan – just when, as Roland Barthes once remarked, the ‘battle to crack open the West’s symbolic order [had] begun.’<sup>7</sup> Even so, the concinnity of *Sade et Fourier* and *La Monnaie vivante* with the period stretching from the prewar years up to the countercultural era is one possibility to consider.

This thesis is further strengthened by what can be deduced from a number of related documents, ranging from ‘The Commercialization of Erotic Phantasms According to Institutional Norms’ (a conference paper that was delivered by Klossowski at the Institut français de Florence in April 1970) to the 1969 newspaper article, ‘Between Marx and Fourier’, and his letter to Adrienne Monnier of 1952. We also know from several eyewitness accounts and other secondary reports that Klossowski was actively engaged, from the 1930s onwards, in combatting the politics of fascism, in particular the opposition between transgression and its forfeiture in a ‘universal prostitution of beings’. On this head, it is worth comparing the ideas represented in *La Monnaie vivante* and *Sade et Fourier* with the work then being carried out by some of his contemporaries, notably André Breton and Georges Bataille (both of whom were long-time admirers of these utopian figures) and, as we shall see, Walter Benjamin.

In the general literature, much has been made of the fact that Klossowski’s alleged exodus from the field of philosophy occurred about the same time that he started using coloured pencils rather than graphite in his drawings (apparently a much more finicky and time-consuming process), leaving him no option but to opt for the visual medium. But there are a number

of problems with this theory. Leaving aside the improbability of ever disentangling the intimately entwined threads of drawing and writing, and of making such a judgement on the basis of hearsay alone, there is no evidence that his drawings were ever ancillary to his literary work. Quite the contrary: for him, vision always took precedence over verbalization. Moreover, art making was the family trait or trade, not just for Pierre and his brother Balthus, but for both their parents as well. So it's hard to imagine that drawing would have suddenly put the brakes on his verbal acuity. Sooner or later, everything turns into the driveway of imagination.

As far as it goes, the occurrence of some kind of epiphany does seem to be the most likely explanation, but so too do other, less flattering reasons, such as writer's block (some commentators have argued that his writing grew evermore paratactic, or prone to self-parody, as the work progressed); publication phobia (not unlike that experienced by Edmund Husserl and Wittgenstein); jealousy over his brother's far greater renown as a painter and pop icon (this sibling rivalry is a matter of public record); or, most absurdly of all, that he simply ran out of ideas. But we don't really need to look any further than his novels and writings on Nietzsche to view this possibility as the psychic equivalent of what the 'mad' philosopher called *Sich-in-Szene-Setzen* (playing to the gallery) – namely, that it was purely a theatrical gesture intended to expose the futility of basing metaphysical or evidential inferences on personal 'inspiration' and the 'drive to knowledge'. But whether Klossowski's mostly clandestine agenda went deeper than that, even so far as to suggest a renunciation of his ideas, or perhaps an underhanded retreat from the intellectual climate as a whole, is a matter for conjecture.

On the other hand, throwing in the towel is a time-honoured literary conceit. In the 1920s Duchamp publicly announced his retirement from art, so he said, to play an 'interminable game of chess'; and Rimbaud, as everybody knows, gave up poetry at the tender age of 21 before setting out to explore three continents, dabbling in arms trafficking and other colonial skullduggery along the way. One can find many such disappearing acts in the annals of literature and art, and yet in most instances what we are left with are only the ghosts of a relation born of the simulacrum of some real event, rather than evidence from the scene of the crime.

On reflection, however, Klossowski's chess move is not unlike Martin Heidegger's *Kehre* (reversal or about-face) on his formulation of *Dasein* in the 1947 'Letter on Humanism', relative to his earlier, more existentialist stand in *Being and Time* (1927), except that in the Frenchman's case, the 'turn' in question was deeply buried, or, rather, remained a taboo subject outside of photo-ops and other promotional activities.<sup>8</sup> Regardless, it bears

all the hallmarks of a fairy story. In Alain Fleischer's documentary, *A Writer in Pictures* (1996), the author is variously described as 'an ogre condemned to paint what he can't eat' or as 'taking his pencil from a different pot'.<sup>9</sup>

Plainly something must have occurred to make Klossowski turn away from the trajectory of his former intellectual work, or to embrace the myth of rebirth and renewal, and yet it also cannot be denied that this retirement was a very long time coming. Barring the important theoretical essay contained in *La Ressemblance* (1984), almost everything published after 1972 was devoted to interviews, the discussion of his drawings, and the release of other occasional pieces and reprints: in sum, a considerable body of work.<sup>10</sup> All the while he continued to encipher his intensely experienced 'visions', only now in a more counterintuitive, predominantly visual – though nonetheless discursive – medium.

Even so, if the perennial mystery of Klossowski's 'disappearing act' is, to some extent, the product of a retrospective reframing of his *corpus scriptorum*, he never stopped discussing it, on camera and in interviews, in precisely these terms. Most of the time, when pressed, he deferred to the supremacy of film, photography, and pencil on paper over the verbal stereotype; or, rather, he employed the aura of these mediums to question the powdery and irreducible nature of 'la description, l'argumentation, le récit'.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps this is because, as we can identify from the frequent use of multiple personality 'disorders' in his novels, drawings and philosophical projects, he was haunted all his life by a kind of nominalist scepticism regarding *haecceitas*, or the uniquely singular self – a subject that German Romantics like Goethe and Herder had earlier questioned by means of the Latin apothegm, 'Individuum est ineffabile' (the indivisible is beyond utterance). All reference to the superiority of *écriture* over the plastic mark would simply never have occurred to him, constrained as he was to outsourcing his intractable phantasms by any means necessary.

For the most part, Klossowski cast a spell of disenchantment over the whole questionable business of self-disclosure. Take, for example, the plot and character development of his first novel, *La Vocation suspendue* (1950), which testifies to an identity crisis on multiple fronts.<sup>12</sup> Set during the war, this 'autobiographical faux novel' is an exercise in pure *autodérision*. Presented as an imitation or copy of itself, the narrative mirrors a series of enigmas concerning the identification of its many protagonists. In addition, it bears a striking resemblance to André Gide's *Les faux-monnayeurs* (1926). This, too, operates as a disguised 'conversation piece' composed *en abîme*, as a novel within a novel, rather like the fake coin slipped between pockets in Baudelaire's short prose poem, 'Counterfeit Money' (posthumously published in the anthology *Le Spleen de Paris*

in 1869). Of course, it helps to know that Klossowski was Gide's acting secretary while *The Counterfeiters* was being written.

Apart from including scenes from his own life, *La Vocation suspendue* also doubles as a detection-*noir* parody in the mould of films like *The Third Man* (1949), Graham Greene's Catholic-schooled literary *ergoterie*, and G. K. Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908), which Klossowski especially admired. But this mock spy thriller also looks back to *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, where the theological detective work concerns as much the undercover machinations of a true-to-life novice as what we find depicted in the stories of Sade. As we read in *La Vocation suspendue*, there must always exist between 'the person whom we believe to be the author and the person whom the author has made into his character' what Klossowski calls a 'relation of *resentment*', one aimed at mutual erasure or 'de-individuation'.<sup>13</sup>

In the preface appended to a 1966 French translation of *The Man Who Was Thursday*, Klossowski places the simulacrum at the heart of Chesterton's novel. Here, the true identities and objectives of the terrorist agents and detectives grow evermore indiscernible, leading to ultimate betrayal and deception on all sides. Indeed, this image of a veritable matryoshka doll of *agents provocateurs* perfectly describes how Klossowski envisaged 'his' simulacrum. For French literary scholar Scott Durham, the concept has two basic meanings: the Platonic, 'negative or privative' notion of semblance, namely an 'ungrounded copy that, in the absence of an original, stands in relation only to other copies,' like the birds fooled by Zeuxis's grapes or Tertullian's objections to the 'pollutions of idolatry'; and the more 'daemonic,' Nietzschean formula first adumbrated by Klossowski and Maurice Blanchot (whose *Lautréamont and Sade* was published in 1949) and then adopted in the 1960s by Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, who emphasized the transformative, creative and even *counter-active* 'powers of the false' – that is, those powers 'drawing from the image which it at once repeats and falsifies a potential for metamorphosis already immanent within it'. For Deleuze (the dedicatee of Klossowski's 1969 Nietzsche book), the simulacrum or '*appearance* no longer means negation of the real in this world but [a] kind of selection, correction, redoubling, and affirmation'.<sup>14</sup> So it not surprising to find in *La Vocation suspendue* both the positive and negative uses of this evocative term.

Still, as Klossowski scholar Ian James suggests, a third signification is possible: namely, that given its wealth of false and real mirrored images, *La Vocation suspendue* does not so much distort the reflection of something that actually occurred in the life of the author as cast (or forecast) a distorted reflection of this life in the same infinitely regressive terms that

Nietzsche applied to himself during *his* final year as a 'productive' philosopher: 'Are you genuine? Or only an actor? A representative? Or that itself which is represented?'<sup>15</sup>

As it happens, Klossowski was no stranger to the mirror of Cagliostro. Theatre flowed in his family's veins. His father Erich (who, apart from being a painter, was a renowned set designer and art critic) once tried (unsuccessfully) to solicit the help of Gide and Rainer Maria Rilke (the inconstant lover of Baladine Klossowska) to enrol his two sons in the prestigious École Dramatique at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier. But it was only much later that Klossowski finally got the chance to act in, co-author and become the documentary subject of several 'art films', such as Raül Ruiz's *The Suspended Vocation* (1978) and *Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting* (1979), Pierre Zucca's *Roberte* (1979), as well as other 'novel treatments' and the 'biopics' of Pierre Coulibeuf and Alain Fleischer, among others. But the real feather in his cap was when his work on Sade was quoted in Pasolini's *Salò* (1975).

In 1966, Klossowski landed a plum role in Robert Bresson's *Au hazard Balthazar* as one of the *auteur's* 'non-actors'. In the film, he plays – rather affectively, as it turns out – a miserly grain merchant, old lecher and sadistic tormenter, who starves and whips the donkey mercilessly. When poor lost Marie, whose moral corruption his character is largely responsible for, inquires if it's true that he hides gold coins in his shoes, the merchant grimly replies: 'I love money. I hate death.' For reasons that we can only guess at, this and certain other lines delivered in the film function as both a wicked send-up of his own 'laws of hospitality' (the title of his 'Roberte' trilogy published the year before) and an uncanny foreshadowing of his late Sade and Fourier project. In his final monologue, after the girl pleads for assistance and understanding, the merchant admonishes her with these chilling words: 'Life's nothing but a fairground, a marketplace where even your word is unnecessary. A bank note will do.' Although these are undoubtedly Bresson's words, who's to say that they weren't expressly made to order?<sup>16</sup>

But, if we are to grasp the true significance of this prophetic scene, we need to look much further back in time, to the trail that Klossowski blazed in the decade leading up to the Second World War. In 1930 he translated, along with novelist and poet Pierre Jean Jouve, Hölderlin's 'madness' poems and, with Pierre Leyris (one of France's foremost English translators), Kafka's iconic short story 'The Judgment'. Quite fortuitously, Klossowski's translation, published in 1933, of Otto Flake's 1930 study of Sade came out at the precise moment that Maurice Heine's transcriptions of *Cent vingt journées de Sodome* started to appear in print. *Le sens de la souffrance*, the translation of a work by the German proto-phenomenologist Max

Scheler, appeared in 1936. And in 1938 Klossowski issued a translation of Kierkegaard's fragmentary *Antigone*, concerning 'The Tragic in Ancient Drama Reflected in the Tragic in Modern Drama' (the piece was also presented at the Collège de Sociologie, with 'interventions' by Georges Bataille, Jean Wahl and Denis de Rougemont<sup>17</sup>). Aside from these and other translations, Klossowski also published critical essays on such diverse topics as Sade, 'integral monstrosity', Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and the French epigrammatist Nicolas Chamfort.<sup>18</sup>

When he was not busy doing translation work<sup>19</sup> and writing essays, Klossowski divided his time between attending meetings of 'para-Surrealist' groups like Acéphale and the Collège de Sociologie, as well as becoming a fellow traveller with the militant wing of Catholicism, a uniquely French rapprochement between the religious calling and the revolutionary habit that had been mobilized during the 1930s in response to the resurgence of arch-conservative forces after the Great War.

The 1930s were characterized in France, as elsewhere in Europe and further afield, by increasing proletarian struggles. After the attempted pro-fascist coup of 6 February 1934, the country was riven by internal strife. This finally precipitated the election victory of the Popular Front, a left-wing coalition of communists, workers and other reformist groups, in May 1936. Almost immediately afterwards, however, a series of massive workers' strikes targeted key armaments and transport industries, accompanied by spontaneous factory occupations, but it only led to short-term benefits. This creeping erosion of hard-won workers' rights (along with other destabilizing factors, including the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the German reoccupation of the Rhineland and the first Moscow Show Trial) not only resulted in the rapid collapse of the Popular Front, but also drove a wedge between the official policies of the French Communist Party and of those on the far left, setting the scene for the Faustian pact that trade unions and other populist movements in France are still living with today. But it was the ripple effect of these 1934 and 1936 riots, combined with a storm surge of anti-war sentiment in response to France's postwar military operations in Indochina and North Africa, that eventually spilled over into May '68, which cultural historian Kristin Ross has called 'the largest mass movement in French history, the biggest strike in the history of the French workers' movement, and the only "general" insurrection the overdeveloped world has known since World War II.'<sup>20</sup>

Like many of his peers during the 1930s, Klossowski's social conscience, his 'being-in-the-worldliness', continued to seesaw between looking to the Roman past and left of field until, around 1943, he seriously considered entering a monastery. At this time, according to Fleischer's film, he began

to hold meetings with priests, including 'Fathers Bromberger, Fessard, and Serrand, and for a few years he wavered between the Jesuits and the Dominicans. He read Thomas Aquinas and the Patristics.' After briefly attending 'seminaries in Lyon and Grenoble, flirting with the Franciscans, and a brief conversion to Lutherism before recanting', this spiritual journey somehow got channelled into writing his first real book, *Sade My Neighbor*, which initially appeared in 1947 – although its alleged theological subtext was repudiated in the later, now definitive edition of 1967. Thus was born the Klossowski we now know, resurrected from the residue of his wartime soul-searching (or was it a breakthrough?).

After the Allied 'victory', Klossowski's byline started appearing in high-end publications like *Esprit*, *Les Temps modernes*, *Le Mercure de France* and *Tel Quel*. Meanwhile, *Sade My Neighbor*, *La Vocation suspendue* and *Roberte ce soir* were critical (if not financial) successes. In due course, these works were succeeded by *Diana's Bath* in 1956, *The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* in 1959 and *Le Souffleur ou le Théâtre de société* in 1960 (*The Revocation*, *Roberte* and *Le Souffleur* were republished in that order in *Les Lois de l'hospitalité* in 1965, with accompanying, brand-new essays). These were soon followed by his 'late period' works: *Le Baphomet* (1965), *Origines culturelles et mythiques d'un certain comportement des Dames romaines* (1968), *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (1969) and *La Monnaie vivante* (1970).

But it was his early championing of Sade – whose novels, short stories and plays were still largely unknown in France, despite Maurice Heine's best efforts to raise them from the dead – that truly set the seal on Klossowski's growing reputation as a *maudit* (or 'infernal creator') during a time when France, in a burst of sadomasochistic fervour, was being torn apart internally by the Algerian War of Independence (1954–62).

The timing of his arrival on the scene couldn't have been more fortuitous, or ominous. By the early 1960s, a seemingly endless string of bloody imperialist wars had destabilized the country to the point where the slightest provocation drove angry mobs out into the streets. One of the most disastrous events occurred on 17 October 1961, when the police went on a rampage during an anti-war demonstration, during which perhaps upwards of two hundred French-Algerian citizens were slaughtered and their bodies thrown into the Seine. (The real body count has never been officially acknowledged.) This massacre is now recognized in France as one of the prime movers of May '68.<sup>21</sup>

Even though Klossowski's work on Sade was by no means his only or perhaps most important contribution to postwar thought, it was principally responsible for the creation of his cultural persona. In essence, just

as *Sade My Neighbor* (which was almost certainly sketched out, like much of *Roberte ce soir* as well, during the war) helped to establish the edgy and somewhat scandalized reception of his books in the public domain, so in turn does this seminal work (and its subsequent 'recantation') transport us back today to his somewhat troubling and sadistic flirtation with the sacrament of holy orders at the very outbreak of hostilities. Its publication immediately after the war is indeed suggestive, and almost demands us to throw open the doors of the confessional booth and its exculpation of some momentous affair.

For answers to this and other such questions, we need look no further than the following episode. In early 1936, Walter Benjamin commissioned Klossowski to translate a preliminary draft of 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit', now known in English as 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility'.

The two philosophers were probably always fated to meet. Benjamin, then in permanent exile and living hand-to-mouth in Paris, where he had ultimately settled in 1933–34, was more and more determined to find a wider audience for his work, which, naturally enough, meant publication in the French language. But it was actually Bataille, according to his biographer Michel Surya, 'who first welcomed Benjamin to Paris', along with several other recent German émigrés, such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer.<sup>22</sup> Bataille's archivist-paleographic job description at the Printed Books Department of the Bibliothèque nationale, as well as his knowledge of diverse languages (including Chinese, Tibetan and Russian), would have been particularly useful for Benjamin's research on his *Arcades* project. Without this contact he doubtless would never have been introduced to Klossowski in the first place. For, as it turned out, this *rencontre fortuite* had far-reaching consequences for both of their careers.

In Benjamin's eagerness to infiltrate avant-garde circles, he left no stone unturned: in January 1936 he evidently attended one of the last meetings of Contre-Attaque, a short-lived anti-fascist group founded the previous year, principally by Bataille in collaboration with his chief *bête noire*, Breton (with whom the former had temporarily reconciled to combat the rising tide of a homegrown version of nationalist socialism in France), and Roger Callois. But it was thanks to Klossowski that Benjamin, with whom he was already engaged in translating his essay, gained admittance to this group.<sup>23</sup>

According to Benjamin biographers Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, 'The Work of Art' was originally 'conceived and written as a contemporary pendant to the *Arcades*, its analysis of film culture complementing the examination of the visual arts around 1850 undertaken in the larger project.'<sup>24</sup> This companion essay is none other than the 1935 version

of 'Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century', which was written as a short 'exposé' of the *Arcades* project and intended for publication by the Institut für Sozialforschung, then located in New York City under the directorship (or was it dictatorship?) of the indefatigable Horkheimer. In one of the greatest upsets in modern critical literature, Adorno extensively and somewhat churlishly critiqued this *Arcades* exposé in a letter to its author, and consequently it remained unpublished during Benjamin's lifetime.<sup>25</sup>

Benjamin's analysis of Fourier's utopian vision is featured in 'Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century', where the Phalanstery is described as a *living mechanism* 'designed to restore human beings to relationships in which morality becomes superfluous.' In effect, this 'primitive contrivance', this 'primeval wish symbol' is, for Benjamin, a 'machinery made of men', whose 'highly complicated organization' facilitates a 'meshing of the passions', and as such becomes analogous to the modern 'city of arcades' – an 'analogy' that is treated at some length in 'Convolute W' of the *Arcades* project.<sup>26</sup> In return, Adorno argued that the connection between Fourier and the arcades in the first 'Paris' essay wasn't 'really clear', proposing instead a different arrangement of the 'urban and commodity materials'.<sup>27</sup>

With that codicil in mind, the ever-obliging Benjamin introduced (or retooled) the concept of 'exploitation' in a later draft of the 'Paris' essay, now known as the 1939 version. In Part II of the 'Fourier, or the Arcades' section of this version, Benjamin quotes Marx's (ironic?) defence of Fourier's 'colossal conception of man' as being comparable to Hegel's uncovering of 'the essential mediocrity of the petty-bourgeois'. In other words, if, as Benjamin argued, the technological 'exploitation of nature by man' (an idea, moreover, 'that became widespread in the following period') played no part in the Fourierist utopia, this is because 'in Fourier, technology appears as the spark that ignites the powder of nature.' After subtly tinkering with his 1935 'mechanistic' interpretation of the Phalanstery, Benjamin then attempted to underscore Fourier's 'naturist' conceptualization of it. At one point, Benjamin notes that Fourier even went so far as to conceive of the mostly theoretical Harmonian community as 'propagating itself "by explosion"', from which there would *naturally* unfold, thanks to the introduction of suitable competitions and games, all the concrete necessities of life, just as 'a leaf unfolds from itself all the riches of the empirical world of plants' ('Convolute N'). At no time did Fourier ever advocate, says Benjamin, 'the actual exploitation of man by the owners of the means of production'. So if the 'integration of the technological into social life failed' later on, then 'the fault lies in this exploitation', not in the utopian socialist ideals of Fourier.<sup>28</sup>

In all likelihood Benjamin discussed this research with Klossowski at some length over the two weeks that it took them to translate 'The Work of Art'. It is difficult to gauge the precise extent of Klossowski's reaction after being exposed to Benjamin's critical ideas, especially in regard to his treatment of Fourier's 'societary' themes, but that their brief 'collaboration' left a deep impression on the French philosopher is, going by his later testimony on this score, undeniable.

Remarkably, another 1935 fragment by Benjamin – one also associated with 'The Work of Art' and in which he notes that 'Sade and Fourier envision the direct realization of hedonistic life' – itself contains a rough outline of Klossowski's 1970 project.<sup>29</sup> In this fragment, Benjamin refers to what he calls 'two natures', thus alerting us to a 'different' kind of 'utopian will asserted in revolutions', to the extent that the 'more widely the development of humanity ramifies, the more openly utopias based on the first nature (and especially the human body) will give place to those relating to society and technology'. As far back as his 'Paris Diary', Benjamin had already observed that the inspiration for Sade's work was to be found in a 'revolutionary negation [...] of the ancient law of Genesis', so that 'what constitutes the crime of Adam and Eve is not that they provoked this law, but that they endured it'.<sup>30</sup> So even as far back as 1930, Benjamin plainly harboured a critique not dissimilar to the one that Klossowski would later come to propose.

Nevertheless, the 'W11,2' sheaf of the *Arcades* clipboard offers the clearest sign of Benjamin's impact on the Frenchman.<sup>31</sup> Here we again find Sade and Fourier engaged in a great institutional experiment, which Benjamin and Klossowski were united in thinking played a crucial role in lubricating the wheels of the modern economic system, though their interpretations of this experiment were remarkably different. Even if the subtlety of Benjamin's thought prevents it from being pressed, like a butterfly, 'between Marx and Fourier', as Klossowski believed, there is little doubt that the Berlin critic, well schooled in German philosophy, occasionally conceived of this experiment (admittedly only in working drafts) as one in which, as Marx wrote in his *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, 'les extrêmes se touchent' (which loosely translates as 'extremes meet', or 'each extreme is its other extreme'). The use of this phrase by Benjamin is highly suggestive. Generally associated with the Heraclitan–Hegelian 'unity of opposites', it remains a central platform of both historical and dialectical materialism, specifically in reference to what Kant once described, concerning the substitution of the categorical imperative for the uncertainties of intuition, as the 'euthanasia of pure reason'.<sup>32</sup> But, for Klossowski, as a recent convert to nondialectivity, the negative in Fourier

is no more the polar opposite of the positive than it is in Sade (or in Hegel for that matter).

Broadly speaking, this sheaf demonstrates that Benjamin was already considering 'the constructive moment that is proper to all sadism', but in contradistinction to the occult tendencies projected by Fourier, especially his 'number-mysticisms'. These rituals, which bear some similarity to Sade's 'arithmomania', were introduced as a way of computing the ideal number of people necessary to establish Harmony in a model Phalanstery. By giving the proposed 'harmony something inaccessible and protected', however, this obsession with numbers 'surround[ed] the *harmoniens* as though with barbed wire. The happiness of the phalanstery is a *bonheur barbelé*. This prickly *Schadenfreude* encircles the Sadian tableau as well. 'The experiences of the sadists, as presented in his *120 journées de Sodome*, are, in their cruelty, exactly that extreme that is touched by the extreme idyllic of Fourier. *Les extrêmes se touchent*.' In other words, given all the rules and regulations necessary for the procurement of pleasure in perversion, the sadist 'could be standing in the midst of one of those harmonies sought after by the Fourierist utopia', with its own set of imposed contests and quotas.

Klossowski's own experience of recent political events was no match for what Benjamin had himself endured in Germany. On the whole, comparing notes was never going to be a fair fight. But having just lived through a succession of crises and reforms in France, Klossowski was evermore convinced that impulsive forces were the decisive factor in human history, and not the material requirements of life or social relations.

However, as transformative as this experience had been for him, it was the Surrealists' momentary flirtation with the French Communist Party (and *passim* local fascist elements) that really drove the point home.<sup>33</sup> It all came to a head when a temporary alliance between parties on both the right and the left attempted to bridge the comprehension gap in their opposition to a common enemy. In next to no time, his ruminations on utopian societies and rituals reached a tipping point. While Breton was penning his wartime *Ode to Charles Fourier* (not published until 1948), Klossowski could now see that a grand synthesis was still being fêted by opposing sides.<sup>34</sup>

As Hervé Castanet explains in his recent study of Klossowski, this coalition of odd bedfellows was not to his liking. Such a scene as this only 'portrays a retrograde, obsolete or nostalgic view – a veritable pastoral for liberated affects'. According to Castanet's interpretation of *Sade et Fourier*, the author 'is not out to liberate suppressed emotions. He is not a utopian announcing future happiness, nor is he the hero of positivity [...]

Commodification does not lie beyond affects – it constitutes their center.<sup>35</sup> Even so, whether Benjamin's critical apparatus was the principal target of this essay, or whether it was the ghost who came to dinner thirty years later and wouldn't leave, we will never know.

But it is clear that Benjamin made a calculated move when he first approached Klossowski about translating 'The Work of Art'. As Benjamin remarked in a letter to Adorno at the time, he 'not only possesses all the necessary linguistic skills for this, but also brings important theoretical prerequisites to the task'.<sup>36</sup> The prospect of working with the German scholar also must have appealed to Klossowski, since Benjamin was himself an accomplished translator, principally of Baudelaire and Proust. Significantly, in 1939 Benjamin wrote the second draft of his 'Paris' exposé in French; and before the German army invaded Paris, he left a French version of his important 1936 essay 'Der Erzähler' (The Storyteller) with Adrienne Monnier, the owner of La Maison des Amis des Livres bookstore on the rue de l'Odéon, who had earlier arranged for his release from an internment camp at Nevers.<sup>37</sup>

'L'oeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée' was scheduled to appear in the *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, the official organ of the Institute of Social Research, in early 1936.<sup>38</sup> Horkheimer, Benjamin's New York 'boss', had also 'stipulated that the essay appear in French translation'. But soon the task of the translator turned into a one-way street. Even after Benjamin had finished toning down what he politely described as the translation's 'doctrinaire quality', and Raymond Aron, then a professor of sociology at the École normale supérieure, had thoroughly revised it, Hans Brill in the Institute's Paris office, and even Horkheimer himself, made further revisions and cuts, so it was 'significantly abbreviated' by the time it appeared in print. (As a minor codicil to Benjaminian studies, it is worth noting that Aron was later among the 300,000 supporters who filled the Champs-Élysées on 30 May 1968 in response to de Gaulle's infamous call to order, which was the beginning of the end as far as the insurrection was concerned.)

But this freelance assignment was by no means Klossowski's only professional engagement with the Frankfurt School. He also translated a selection of Horkheimer's essays from the Institute's *Zeitschrift*, tentatively called *Essais de philosophie matérialiste*, which Gallimard had intended to publish until negotiations eventually broke down.<sup>39</sup> Even more fittingly, Adorno reveals in a letter to Benjamin (dated 2 July 1937) that Klossowski had apparently 'promised us some time back' an essay to be called 'De Sade à Fourier', although nothing of the sort was ever published in the *Zeitschrift*.<sup>40</sup> But Benjamin's review of a recent anthology of Fourier's writings did appear in the journal that same year.<sup>41</sup>

One of several extant versions of 'The Work of Art', Klossowski's 'translation' was nonetheless the first to appear in print, even though it offers an abridged version of the German text, which Benjamin was still tinkering with up until September and October of 1936, when he produced what is known today as the 'first version'. Still not satisfied with it, and urged on by Adorno, Benjamin took up the manuscript again in December and produced the so-called 'second version' (or 'Urtext'), which is the one most often studied today. But it was not until 1955 that Benjamin's 'third version' of this text, on which he had continued to work up until March or April of 1939, finally became available to German readers.

In later years, Klossowski had cause to recall his impressions of Benjamin on several occasions. The first arose in 1952 when he responded to a letter he had received from Adrienne Monnier, who wanted to publish the French manuscript of 'The Storyteller' which Benjamin had entrusted to her for safekeeping, along with certain other documents, before fleeing Paris on or around 14 June 1940, on one of the last trains carrying refugees out of the city. When replying to Monnier, Klossowski tried to clarify what he felt to be certain misconceptions about his relationship with the German critic. After disclaiming authorship of the work in question, Klossowski stated that he had only managed to translate 'The Work of Art', and that even here, 'estimating my version to be too loose', Benjamin 'had begun to retranslate it with me. The result of this was a perfectly unreadable text due to the fact that it copied exactly certain poor German expressions for which Benjamin accepted no transposition. French syntax literally gave cramps to this unwavering logician.'<sup>42</sup>

This is a revealing observation, and not just because Klossowski decided to publish his reply to Monnier in *Le Mercure de France* as well. What makes this letter compulsive reading today is where he goes on to describe in some detail Benjamin's 'extreme criticist' work, thus giving us a glimpse into his views on Sade and Fourier many years before he wrote them down and closed the books on his own 'work-in-progress'.

Here he is at some pains to draw attention to the position he had held earlier in regard to Benjamin's alleged 'consternation' over those very 'Breton-Bataille agglutinations' with which Klossowski himself had been associated 'shortly before joining Bataille in *Acéphale* [in 1936]', when the two became collaborators. In the letter, he describes Benjamin as a 'Marxist-leaning [...] visionary' who, because of his prodigious 'artisanal esotericism', was 'torn between the problems that only historical necessity would solve, and images of an occult world that often imposed itself as the only solution' – even though occultism, according to Klossowski, was also what Benjamin 'deemed to be the most dangerous temptation'. Yet, despite

his 'profoundly poetic nature', because 'he was even more profoundly moral', Klossowski maintains that Benjamin had inadvertently 'deferred [this occult tendency] rather than rejecting it' outright, and thus appears to have purportedly 'waited for the total liberation with the coming of universalized play in the sense of Fourier, for whom he had boundless admiration'.

First and foremost, Klossowski's epistolary comments seem to contain a retrospective critique of Benjamin's monadological or 'physiognomic' view of the phantasmagoria of psychic life, even if in some respect both were engaged in pursuing, as Benjamin puts it, 'the thread of expression [of] the economy in its culture', rather than 'the economic origins of culture' in general.<sup>43</sup> According to *Passagen-Werk* editor Rolf Tiedemann, Benjamin 'had already enlisted Goethe's primal phenomena (*Urphänomen*) to explicate his concept of truth in *Origin of the German Trauerspiel* [1928]', an idea that was carried over into the *Arcades* project and its treatment of the cultural expression of economic norms in the 'unfolding' of concrete historical archetypes, precisely in order 'to grasp an economic process as perceptible *Ur*-phenomenon, from out of which proceed all manifestations of life in the arcades (and, accordingly, in the nineteenth century)'.

But this is precisely where Klossowski and Benjamin part company: the Kantian principle of identity by means of exclusion, and its 'true and positive' dialectical counterpart, namely Hegel's 'coexistence of opposed elements' (*Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*). In Tiedemann's account, the 'superstructure', for Benjamin, no longer has a reciprocal relationship to the 'infrastructure', but is, rather, its 'expression', by which Benjamin supposedly means that the exterior world, like a monad, is everywhere inferable from the interior world, since in a circuitous and pre-established way the former is programmed or 'occasioned' by the latter, in accordance with the dialectical principle of *coincidentia oppositorum*.

This occasionalist argument is heir to a very ancient school of thought. In the Western hemisphere, it begins with Aristotle's hylomorphic distinction between matter and form and his potentiality/actuality dichotomy, only to resurface in the medieval division of substantial and accidental forms. From there, the notion was revived in Leibnizian monodology, the biological concept of entelechy, and certain late-Cartesian modifications and redactions, before finally being subjected to death and resurrection in the *Kritiken* of Kant and Hegel (and beyond). But Klossowski's thinking on the question of *prima materia* lay outside this tradition, committed as he was to an affirmative, anti-Kantian use of the disjunctive syllogism. Consequently, as he writes in *Sade My Neighbor*, 'this outside comes to be commented on as something produced within thought' itself – meaning

that its place is assigned in relation to the two, not in regard to their mutual inclusion or exclusion, to plenitude or negation, but by the mark of emptiness, that is to say, by the play of substitutions and accretion, i.e., the logic of the supplement (rather like *Il n'y a pas de hors-texte*, Derrida's much misunderstood poststructuralist aphorism written about the same time: it means something like 'there is nothing outside context').

On the whole, when viewed from the perspective of Sade's *Philosophy in the Bedroom*, 'This outside is not at all the interior of the "bedroom" where one would philosophize; it is the inwardness of thought which *nothing* separates from the "bedroom"'.<sup>44</sup> According to Castanet, what made Sade's work seem so 'disturbingly original' to Klossowski is that here, 'The outside is shown to be internal to thought; the outside is thought's internal limit, its excluded part delineated. This outside is not the outer world, but what thought, in its roundabout way, defines as its own impossible – its specified real that proceeds from what it develops through reason'.<sup>45</sup>

In other words, every attempt to tease apart the interior and exterior of psychic life dialectically, namely as discrete and yet somehow complementary realms in their own right, was, for Klossowski, *literally* unthinkable, thus revealing an affinity for the 'multiple internal ontology' theorized by the phenomenologists (and later metamorphosed by Heidegger). If these extremes were not separate instances seeking completeness through a systematic, hierarchical connection of individual cognitions, then indeed everything would necessarily 'lead to a single discourse, namely, to fluctuations of intensity that correspond to the thought of everyone and no one'.<sup>46</sup>

Alternatively, Benjamin's 'physiognomic thought', which consciously 'infers the interior from the exterior', 'the whole from the detail', 'the general in the particular', essentially entails what Tiedemann calls 'a mimetic-intuitive corrective' imposed on the deciphering of universals in 'the image of the world in itself': according to the editor, this 'Nominalistic [process] proceeds from the tangible object; inductively it commences in the realm of the intuitive'. It is precisely the same cognitive identification that Benjamin would later encapsulate in his famous 'Now of Recognizability', thanks to which abstract cultural values can be perceived 'as ruins even before they have crumbled'.<sup>47</sup> However, for Klossowski, Benjamin's project was doomed from the start. He felt that it was still dominated by the Frankfurt School's notion of 'commodity fetishism', which proposed the operation of some indwelling or externally actionable causal relationship between the 'deceptive images' (*Blendwerke*) of ideological consciousness and the abstraction of value under capitalist production, even though Benjamin's views on this matter were never that straightforward. After all, as he once

protested to Adorno, he had merely wanted to 'correct' Marxist aesthetic theory, not fundamentally critique it.

Yet whether these cultural phantasmagorias or *Wunschbilder*, the residues of a dream world, ultimately overcame and transfigured the exchange value of commodities, as Benjamin thought (or was perhaps obliged to think if he were ever to get his work published in the *Zeitschrift*), or whether they signified the fetishization of the social relations of labour under capitalist conditions, which Marx interpreted as a 'necessarily false' consciousness of bourgeois economy, it was all magical thinking to Klossowski. For him, *phantasmagoria is nothing more than the incomprehensibility of the phantasm itself*; that is to say, the fortuitous result of the attraction and repulsion of psychic impulses, and thus fundamentally incalculable and incommunicable. Phantasmagoria is not some 'misrecognized' *Vorstellungsrepräsentanz* at the beck and call of capitalist institutions; nor would it be the Benjaminian 'illumination' of the ruinous now-ness of these same ideational representatives.<sup>48</sup>

This dialectical materialist argument is precisely what Klossowski set out to challenge in his Sade and Fourier project. Even as he was writing to Monnier, he was clearly already caught up in carrying Benjamin's 'boundless admiration' for Fourier to its ultimate conclusion, in a polemical gesture that just as clearly looks back to 1936 as it looks forward to May '68 and its shambolic collapse. At least, it places Klossowski's earliest reflections on Sade and Fourier squarely in the period of *Acéphale* and the *Collège de Sociologie*, a thesis also supported by the publication of the quarrelsome 'Between Marx and Fourier' seventeen years later.<sup>49</sup>

Appearing in *Le Monde* in 1969, this article shows the drift of Klossowski's thinking heading into his Sade and Fourier project. It also summarizes what he wrote in 'De Contre-Attaque à *Acéphale*', published in the journal *Change* the following year. But now the story unfolds as a morality play, where Benjamin, whose time had at last come, is introduced to interested readers as an 'assiduous auditor at the *Collège de Sociologie*', notionally described as 'an "exoteric" emanation of the closed and secret group *Acéphale*, which crystallized around Bataille soon after his break with Breton'.

Klossowski is writing at a time when clandestine societies were once more on the rise in Western countries, be they revolutionary cells, *comités d'action*, or 'groupuscules', though many of them were still utopian in outlook. So it's hard to believe that someone like Benjamin could have been, as Klossowski says, 'disconcerted by the ambiguity of the "Acéphalian" atheology', unless Klossowski were in fact referring to his own misbegotten deeds.

A real sense of this missed or misfired *Mitsein* is preserved in the first issue of *Acéphale* the magazine, in which Bataille, Klossowski and Georges Ambrosino openly proclaimed their allegiance to ritual self-sacrifice: 'We are fiercely religious and yet, to the extent that our existence is a condemnation of everything surrounding us today, an inner conviction also demands that we stand our ground. What we declare is nothing less than war.'<sup>50</sup>

Furthermore, one wonders if the figure of Benjamin is employed in 'Between Marx and Fourier' as a substitute for – or living simulacrum of – the dilemma now confronting Klossowski in 1969, by way of coming to terms with his own political past in the context of the present 'revolutionary' moment.

By the early 1970s, France seemed poised to descend into civil war. When *La Monnaie vivante* was first published in December 1970, the streets of Paris's Latin Quarter were lined with security coaches containing police dressed in riot control gear. On 28 May, after interior minister Raymond Marcellin had closed down the Maoist-leaning Gauche prolétarienne and imprisoned the editors of its newspaper *La Cause du peuple*, Alain Geismar, one of the heroes of May '68, was arrested for inciting violence. Following a night of rioting by thousands of protestors, an 'anti-wreckers' bill was adopted the next day by the Gaullist government, severely limiting freedom of association in France. As Foucault remarked at a 1971 meeting of the GIP (Prison Information Group): 'Police control over our day-to-day lives is becoming tighter: in the streets and on the roads; over foreigners and young people; it is once more an offense to express an opinion; anti-drug measures are leading to increasingly arbitrary arrests. We are living under the sign of *la garde à vue*.'<sup>51</sup>

Given Klossowski's subtextual penchant for role-playing and mistaken identities, the existence of a parallel between 'then' and 'now' in this article cannot be ruled out, even if it was only intended to be a satire. Be that as it may, it falls to Benjamin to witness *sub voce* the sacrificial gestures that the 'high priests' of Contre-Attaque and *Acéphale* had reportedly made to ward off the eventuality of war, including burning sulphur at the foot of a tree struck by lightning, eating minced horsemeat, (mythically) sacrificing a female gibbon, commemorating the execution of Louis XVI in the Place de la Concorde, and, in the extreme case of Bataille, playing Russian roulette.<sup>52</sup>

Though precise details of these escapades have only come to light recently, they sound remarkably like some of the 'religious hymns' to the Little Hordes portrayed in Fourier's *Le Nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire* (1848), who, assigned to clean the filthiest of cesspits, descend

on the Phalanxes at mealtime ‘in an uproar of bells, chimes, drums and trumpets, a howling of dogs and a bellowing of bulls.’<sup>53</sup> The sacrifices must have worked in Klossowski’s case, since months before Benjamin’s final ‘exit plan’ of September 1940, he was in Bordeaux, where he took up an administrative post.<sup>54</sup>

By all rights, ‘Between Marx and Fourier’ equally belongs in a future convolute along with all the other fragments associated with Klossowski’s 1970 project (including *The Recuperation of Surplus Value I*, his graphite drawing of ‘Roberte’ being assaulted from behind by an unseen monster, produced around the same time). According to this article, Benjamin opposed the Collège’s ambiguous neo-theologizing with ‘conclusions he had drawn from his analysis of the German bourgeois-intellectual evolution – namely, that in Germany “the metaphysical and poetic upward valuation of the incommunicable” (a function of the antinomies of industrial capitalist society) had prepared the psychical terrain favourable to the expansion of Nazism’. In fact, Klossowski dismisses the existence of any historical parallel (in 1936) between the cultural conditions in France, where the socialist Popular Front had recently been elected to power, and the openly repressive regime of Nazi Germany. Benjamin, now cast as an Old Testament archangel, is described as having ‘wanted to hold us back from a similar downfall’, which could be prevented if only the Collège ‘agglutinations’ would recant their “pre-fascist aestheticism”.

For Klossowski, with an eye fixed on posterity, ‘no agreement was possible on this point of his analysis’. Since, as Klossowski rather chauvinistically declares, the ‘presuppositions [of Benjamin] did not coincide in any respect with the given conditions and antecedents of the groups formed successively by Breton and Bataille’, the *collègiens* then set about to interrogate ‘what we sensed to be [Benjamin’s] most authentic basis – his personal version of a “phalansterian” renaissance’. As a ‘confirmed Marxist’, in Klossowski’s view, ‘he was intent on safeguarding, in his vast erudition (conforming to a thoroughly lyrical sensibility), what in the past had constituted for him the “shadow of the goods to come”. Among these goods to come figured the vision of a society blossoming in the *free play of the passions*’. In other words, his ‘nostalgia aspired to reconcile Marx and Fourier’.

In the *Le Monde* article, the responsibility for this suspect aestheticism would seem to fall squarely on the shoulders of everybody involved, but presumably not on himself, since he only appears among the assembled company as a phantom *deus ex machina*. According to this retroactive and demonically conceived retelling of ancient history, Benjamin is said to have concluded that it is only through ‘the common ownership of the means

of production' that the necessary conditions can be created in which 'the abolished social classes could be substituted by a redistribution of society into *affective classes*'.

Here, Klossowski maps out in reverse the central issue of his own Sade and Fourier project: 'Instead of enslaving affectivity, a free industrial production would expand its forms and organize their exchange; in this sense, work would become the accomplice of desires and cease to be their punitive compensation.' Yet as we already know from his letter to Monnier, 'only historical necessity would solve' the problem of how to adapt these utopian endeavours to actual circumstances: in Klossowski's mind, the Marxian desire to reconcile work with the pursuit of happiness is no more workable than Fourier's own postulate concerning the 'integral soul'; that is to say, the serial combination and reassignment of diverse affections so as to allow the flowering of the 'passional' potential and thus 'industrial well-being of one and all.

In every other respect, Fourier and Marx had opposing worldviews. Marx may also have wanted work to be attractive, but he chose to emphasize its more Protestant, effort-laden character under a system of industrial production, not pleasure or harmony per se. He was systematically opposed to all forms of utopian nostalgia and the return to a predominantly agricultural system of social organization, where the accent falls on ritualized sharing rather than on consumption and exchange: as he once admitted to Engels, 'Work cannot become a game, as Fourier wished.'<sup>55</sup>

But Klossowski, who was more in tune with Bataille's notion of a 'general economy', interposed a radical isomorphism between the diurnal customs of work and play, of use versus exchange value, of reproduction over the production of goods, and so forth. For him, these kinds of historical *a priori* were simply convergent manifestations of the same underlying principle: the unproductive, non-procreative outpouring of brute psychic energy, whose reserves are bottomless. As Surya interprets Bataille's superabundance, 'expenditure is of more significance than production, where a sacrifice, the construction of a church and the gift of jewels are of more significance than the price of wheat.'<sup>56</sup> So in his agreement with Bataille, Blanchot and company, Klossowski was only following in the footsteps of Nietzsche, for whom all 'fluctuations in intensity' were the direct descendant of the 'energies of Chaos: unbound and free, they assemble according to the will of chance and transitory unities.'<sup>57</sup>

As Klossowski no doubt realized, many parallels exist between borderline Enlightenment-era figures like Sade, Fourier, Kant, Hegel, Hamann, and so forth, even down to the first and second parts of *Faust* – not only conceptually and in their respective couplings and 'instructive contradictions', but

also through the particular historic events that underwrote their individual work. For instance, in the two, radically opposed sections of Goethe's tragedy, which were sketched out between 1772 and 1831, one can still hear the distant pastoral sounds of late-eighteenth-century manufacture on the one hand, and the frenetic wheeling and dealing of mid-nineteenth-century industrialization on the other. Important aspects of this same technological transition and its repercussions also menace the landscapes of *Sade et Fourier* and *La Monnaie vivante*. But this transition predominantly figures in the latter work, whose investment in 'savings' and the libidization of personal capital, namely Bataille's 'accursed share', correspond to the scene in *Faust II* where Mephisto introduces paper money instead of gold to encourage spending, all in the name of saving the imperial finances.

On the whole, the Swiftian satire embedded in *La Monnaie vivante* can easily be adapted to fit any number of contemporary scenarios, such as the like-for-like algorithms of online dating sites and the hot-or-not snap judgements of social media platforms. But these were not the material or moral circumstances in which Klossowski wrote his two essays. Far from succumbing to some emerging pay-for-play similitude, Klossowski's own 'modest proposal' remained romantically linked to Nietzsche's concept of *amor fati*, which preaches a fatally recurring but eternally renewable sense of the now.

For us today, Klossowski's choice doubtless assumes the dimensions of something like Hent de Vries's 'turn to religion.' That is to say, since 'we do not possess a God's eye point of view, we must content ourselves with a less spectacular vision. We require a sign or, more precisely, a sign of history (*Geschichtszeichen*) that "reflects" or "mirrors" *at once* the present, the past, and the future, without therefore constituting a living present, a retention and a protention of sorts.'<sup>58</sup> So if in the end 'looking away', as Nietzsche said, referring ironically to himself, was Klossowski's 'only negation', he would certainly not be alone.<sup>59</sup> *O tempora, o mores!*

## NOTES

- 1 From Jung's letter to Arnold Künzli dated 28 February 1943.
- 2 The translation of *Sade et Fourier* included in this volume first appeared in *Art & Text* (No. 18, July 1985, 22–34; trans. Paul Foss and Paul Patton). As the author deemed it necessary, in Klossowski's own words, to 'make up for the lacunae of our previous interpretation and rectify its perspective', he must therefore bear sole responsibility for the version

presented here. At least there is some consolation in the fact that both versions are now available for comparison.

- 3 See Hervé Castanet's analysis of these two essays in *Pierre Klossowski: The Pantomime of the Spirits*, trans. A. R. Price and Pamela King (Peter Lang, 2014), 69–75, 142–59.
- 4 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), trans. Walter Kaufmann (Vintage 1966), 12–15.
- 5 For the 'standard' biographies of Klossowski, see Alain Arnaud, *Pierre Klossowski* (Éditions de Seuil, 1990); Jean Decottignies, *Klossowski, notre prochain* (Éditions Henri Veyrier, 1985) and *Pierre Klossowski: Biographie d'un monomane* (Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 1997); and Jean-Maurice Monnoyer, *Le Peintre et le démon: entretiens avec Pierre Klossowski* (Flammarion, 1985). Useful English accounts can also be found in Ian James, *Pierre Klossowski: The Persistence of a Name* (Legenda, 2000); Denis Hollier, *The College of Sociology 1937–39*, trans. Betsy Wing (University of Minnesota Press, 1988); and Castanet, *op. cit.* Regarding Klossowski's 'epistemological rupture' of 1972, see Castanet, 3–6, 249. Finally, a survey of his graphite and coloured-crayon drawings and late polychrome acrylic sculptures can be found in the exhibition catalogue, *Anima: Pierre Klossowski* (Musée d'art et d'histoire, Genève, 1995).
- 6 The following discussion does not address the minor differences that exist between the first version of *Sade et Fourier*, which appeared in *Topique* (Nos 4–5, 1970, 79–98), and the second version contained in *Les Derniers travaux de Gulliver suivi de Sade et Fourier* (Fata Morgana, 1974). Aside from restoring the opening two paragraphs of the *Topique* edition omitted from its reprise in *Gulliver*, this last is the one translated here.
- 7 Barthes's comment, specifically directed at May '68, was made during a 1970 interview: it is cited in Andy Stafford, *Roland Barthes* (Reaktion Books, 2015), 94.
- 8 For a discussion of Heidegger's 'Kehre', see Rüdiger Safranski, *Martin Heidegger: Between Good and Evil*, trans. Ewald Osers (Harvard University Press, 1998), 367–8.
- 9 Fleischer's film, available with subtitles on YouTube, offers invaluable insight into the cinematic 'construction' of Klossowski's biography. All unattributed citations past this point derive from this source.
- 10 See the general bibliography in *Anthologie des écrits de Pierre Klossowski* (L'État des Lieux, La Différence/Centre National des Arts Plastiques, 1990), which lists films and exhibitions as well. Note that this source is only inclusive up to the year of its publication.

- 11 The title of a catalogue essay that Klossowski wrote for an exhibition at Galerie Le Bateau-Lavoir in 1975.
- 12 For a related account of ‘the transgressive complex elaborated by the trilogy’ that comprises *Les Lois de l’hospitalité*, see Jeffrey Mehlman, ‘Literature and Hospitality: Klossowski’s Hamann,’ *Studies in Romanticism* 22 (Summer 1983), 329–47.
- 13 James, *op. cit.*, 111.
- 14 Scott Durham’s commentary on Deleuze’s *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962/1983) is to be found in *Phantom Communities: The Simulacrum and the Limits of Postmodernism* (Stanford University Press, 1998), 8.
- 15 From Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* (1888); cited in James, 98.
- 16 The broad cultural significance of *Au hazard Balthazar* is discussed in Tony Pipolo, *Robert Bresson: A Passion for Film* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 182–208. Klossowski’s money-grubbing persona in the film may in fact have had some basis in reality: for many years after his 1947 marriage to Denise Roberte Morin, she was the sole breadwinner in the family, earning money as a translator and proofreader. It was not until the 1980s that their circumstances marginally improved. See Nicholas Fox Weber, *Balthus: A Biography* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 243–5.
- 17 Hollier, *op. cit.*, 167.
- 18 After the war he continued to write about Nietzsche and Sade, as well as Rilke, J.-G. Hamann, Jouve, Kafka, Blanchot, Bataille, the correspondence between Claudel and Gide, Brice Parain, the Roman empress Messalina, Barbey d’Aureville, cinema and literature, G. K. Chesterton, and so much more. Some of these essays are included in *Un si funeste désir* (1963).
- 19 Apart from his translation of the 1887–88 posthumous fragments of Nietzsche in 1976, Klossowski essentially discontinued this line of work after 1971. His postwar translations included: sections of Kafka’s *Diary* and other autobiographical writings (1945); J.-G. Harman’s *Metacritique on the Purism of Reason*, letters, as well as essays on religious language and Hegel (1946 and 1948); the books of Tertullian on sleep, dreams and death (1948); Nietzsche’s *Gay Science* and 1880–82 posthumous fragments (1954); *The Twelve Caesars* of Suetonius (1959); Paul Klee’s *Journal* (1959); Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1961); Li Yu’s *Carnal Prayer Mat* (1962, based on a German text by Franz Kuhn); Virgil’s *Aeneid* (1964); ‘The Trial Documents of Gilles de Rais,’ included in Bataille’s *The Trial of Gilles de Rais* (1959); the correspondence between Rainer Maria Rilke and Lou Andreas-Salomé (1967); and Heidegger’s *Nietzsche* (1971).

- 20 See Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (University of Chicago Press, 2002), 3–4. For an ‘archeophilic’ account of how ‘68 can also be seen as having itself ‘pulled the brakes’ on ‘its own incursive potential’, see Avital Ronell, *Losers Sons: Politics and Authority* (University of Illinois Press, 2012), 103–4.
- 21 Ross, *ibid.*, 42–8.
- 22 Michel Surya, *Georges Bataille: An Intellectual Biography*, trans. Krzysztof Fijalkowski and Michael Richardson (Verso, 2002), 266. Note that Klossowski first met Bataille in 1933.
- 23 ‘Chronology, 1935–1938’, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol. 3, 1935–1938*, eds Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 426.
- 24 Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, *Walter Benjamin: A Critical Life* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), 511–22. Further citations from this book appear immediately below.
- 25 See ‘Exchange with Theodor W. Adorno on the Essay “Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century”’, in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol. 3, op. cit.*, 50–67.
- 26 ‘Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century’, *ibid.*, 34.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 57.
- 28 ‘Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century’ (1939), in *Walter Benjamin, The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 17. Regarding the *Arcades* quote, see Rolf Tiedemann, ‘Dialectics at a Standstill: Approaches to the *Passagen-Werk*’, *ibid.*, 940.
- 29 Benjamin, ‘A Different Utopian Will’ (1935), in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol. 3*, 134. The citations in the following sentence also come from this source.
- 30 These citations come from Emmanuel Berl, *La mort de la pensée bourgeoise* (1930), discussed in the 18 January section of Benjamin’s ‘Paris Diary’ (1930). See *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol. 2, 1927–1934*, eds Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland and Gary Smith, trans. Rodney Livingstone and others (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 342.
- 31 *The Arcades Project*, *op. cit.*, 638–9.
- 32 See Horkheimer and Adorno’s explication of Kant’s systematization of thought in ‘Excursus II: Juliette or Enlightenment and Morality’, *Dialectic*

- of *Enlightenment* (1944/1947), ed. Gunzelin Schmid Noerr, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Stanford University Press, 2002), 63–93.
- 33** For a detailed discussion of the shifting tides of Surrealism's political affiliations during the 1930s, see Mark Polizzotti, *Revolution of the Mind: The Life of André Breton* (Da Capo Press, 1997).
- 34** Though a lifelong fan of Fourier, it was only during his wartime sojourn in the USA that Breton read an old edition of Fourier's collected works, which he chanced upon in New York City (Polizzotti, *op. cit.*, 528–30). For an astounding example of the attempt to revive Breton's 'universal, unitary, or "uniteist"' endeavour in the context of May '68, see Kenneth White's introduction to his translation of Breton's poem (Jonathan Cape, 1969). However, the timing of Klossowski's discovery of Fourier is not so easy to establish. Even if the first publication, in 1967, of *Le Nouveau monde amoureux* was the 'efficient cause' of his 1970 essays, he may well have had access to Fourier's unpublished manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale and elsewhere much earlier, thanks to his close friendship with Bataille and Maurice Heine.
- 35** Castanet, 71.
- 36** See letter dated 7 February 1936, in *Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin: The Complete Correspondence, 1928–1940*, ed. Henri Lonitz, trans. Nicholas Walker (Harvard University Press, 1999), 124.
- 37** 'Chronology, 1935–1938', *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Vol. 3*, 426; and *Vol. 4*, 438. See also Walter Benjamin, *Écrits français*, ed. J.-M. Monnoyer (Gallimard, 1991).
- 38** 'Loeuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction mécanisée' appeared in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 5/1 (1936), 40–66. See *Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin*, 122. Klossowski's translation of *technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* as *réproduction mécanisée*, if indeed it was his, is now presumed to be the source of confusion regarding the essay's original English title, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.'
- 39** *Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin*, *op. cit.*, 125, 188.
- 40** *Ibid.*, 197, 199.
- 41** *Ibid.*, 202–3. Benjamin's review of Félix Armand and René Maublanc, *Fourier* (2 vols, 1937) appeared in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 6/3 (1937), 699f. The German text published in *Gesammelte Schriften III* (509–11) can be found at [www.textlog.de/benjamin-kritik-felix-armand-rene-maublanc-fourier.html](http://www.textlog.de/benjamin-kritik-felix-armand-rene-maublanc-fourier.html) (accessed 5 March 2016).
- 42** 'Letter on Walter Benjamin: Pierre Klossowski', trans. Christian Hite,

- Parrhesia* 19 (2014), 14–21. See [www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia19/parrhesia19\\_klossowski.pdf](http://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia19/parrhesia19_klossowski.pdf) (accessed 12 November 2015).
- 43 On Benjamin's alleged 'materialist physiognomics,' see Rolf Tiedemann, 'Dialectics at a Standstill: Approaches to the *Passagen-Werk*,' in *The Arcades Project*, 940–1.
- 44 Klossowski, *Sade My Neighbor* [1967 version], trans. Alphonso Lingis (Northwestern University Press, 1991), 42.
- 45 Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (1969); cited in Castanet, 108–9.
- 46 See Castanet, 117–18.
- 47 Tiedemann, 938–42.
- 48 See discussion of the phantasm in Castanet, 117–18.
- 49 Pierre Klossowski, 'Between Marx and Fourier,' in Hollier, 388–9; *On Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Recollection*, ed. Gary Smith, trans. Susan Z. Bernstein (MIT Press, 1988), 367–70 (the version cited here).
- 50 Facsimiles of the collected issues of this publication are presented in *Acéphale: Religion, Sociologie, Philosophie, 1936–1939* (Éditions Jean Michel Place, 1980, with introduction by Michel Camus). My translation.
- 51 That is, being held in police custody for 24 hours without being charged; see Macey, *The Lives of Michel Foucault: A Biography* (Pantheon Books, 1993), 258.
- 52 Surya, *op. cit.*, 58, 250–2.
- 53 Cited in *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love, and Passionate Attraction*, trans. Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu (Beacon Press, 1971), 320–1.
- 54 Eiland and Jennings, 662.
- 55 Engels to Marx, 17 March 1845; see M. C. Spencer, *Charles Fourier* (Twayne Publishers, 1981), 155.
- 56 Surya, 381. Bataille's *La Part maudite* was published in 1949.
- 57 Castanet, 108.
- 58 Hent de Vries, *Religion and Violence: Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 53–4.
- 59 Section 276 of Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (1882), trans. Walter Kaufmann (Vintage, 1974), 223.



FIGURE 1

# LETTER FROM PIERRE KLOSSOWSKI TO PAUL FOSS

Fragments of a letter from Pierre Klossowski to Paul Foss, 12 September 1985.

Pierre Klossowski  
69 rue de Valenciennes  
75013 Paris

Tel. 580 21 85  
à partir de  
25 Oct. 23h00  
1. 45. 80 21 85

à Jeudi 12 Septembre 1985  
à Mr. Paul Foss  
Art and Text  
South Yarra  
Australia

Cher Monsieur Foss,

Un grand plaisir au reçu de ce Cahier collectif J'Art and Text que vous avez tenu à me consacrer.

Dans votre lettre si chaleureuse, jointe à cet envoi (en deux exemplaires) vous me confiez de surcroît, qu'il s'agissait là pour vous-même de l'accomplissement d'un rêve, depuis que cinq années durant votre propre travail se ressentait de l'"influence (dominée) de mes écrits philosophiques". Voilà qui me touche infiniment!

Mais avec quelle jubilation, avec quel soin minutieux vous avez composé ce Cahier! de choix judicieux de littérature avec traductions de quelques-uns de mes essais et de mes extraits; puis les commentaires et notes qui vont au fond du problème. Quel fier hommage me serait rendu un jour par quelques brillants esprits sentants de l'"Intelligenza Anglo-Saxonne" j'étais loin, très loin de l'espérer.

Aujourd'hui - du fait de ma lamentable condition de l'anglais, mais avec l'aide de Denise (de très ancienne origine écossaise) -

(\* Je connaissais  
 déjà le texte  
 de Wellenborg,  
 quant à celui  
 de Claude Thomas  
 je m'en procurerai  
 l'original)

J'en suis encore à déchiffrer les commentaires d'Hélène  
 Arégois, d'Allen Weiss - votre postulat surtout dans  
 laquelle vous parlez de la difficulté de donner à vos lecteurs  
 en quelque sorte un portrait de ma physionomie, il est  
 vrai, déconcertante; et ainsi posez un nombre de  
 questions très graves; auxquelles je ne promets de  
 répondre de que je serai pratiquement en mesure de le faire.

Sans doute serez-vous quelque peu étonné  
 de mon inconcevable retard à vous écrire. Weiss  
 a peut-être eu l'occasion de vous parler de nos  
 constants soucis quant à la lente convalescence  
 de notre fils, à la suite d'un affreux accident,  
 survenu au début de l'année, - maintenant  
 encore en rééducation neurologique.

D'autre part: mon travail pictural: et  
 la préparation de trois expositions prévues pour  
 cet automne. Telle les circonstances qui ont  
 totalement perturbé d'un mois à l'autre, mes  
 obligations épistolaires.

Sachez que vos projets personnels de  
 traduire certains de mes ouvrages, - notamment  
 le Nietzsche, - s'ils se réalisaient, seraient  
 un grand bonheur pour moi - ce se sent  
 que la publication de ces livres, présenterai  
 dans votre version, dissiperait ma mal-  
 entendu, subsistant à mon égard - parti-  
 culièrement en Angleterre. En prévision  
 de vos aimables initiatives, j'aurais récem-  
 ment refusé une offre de traduction de



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