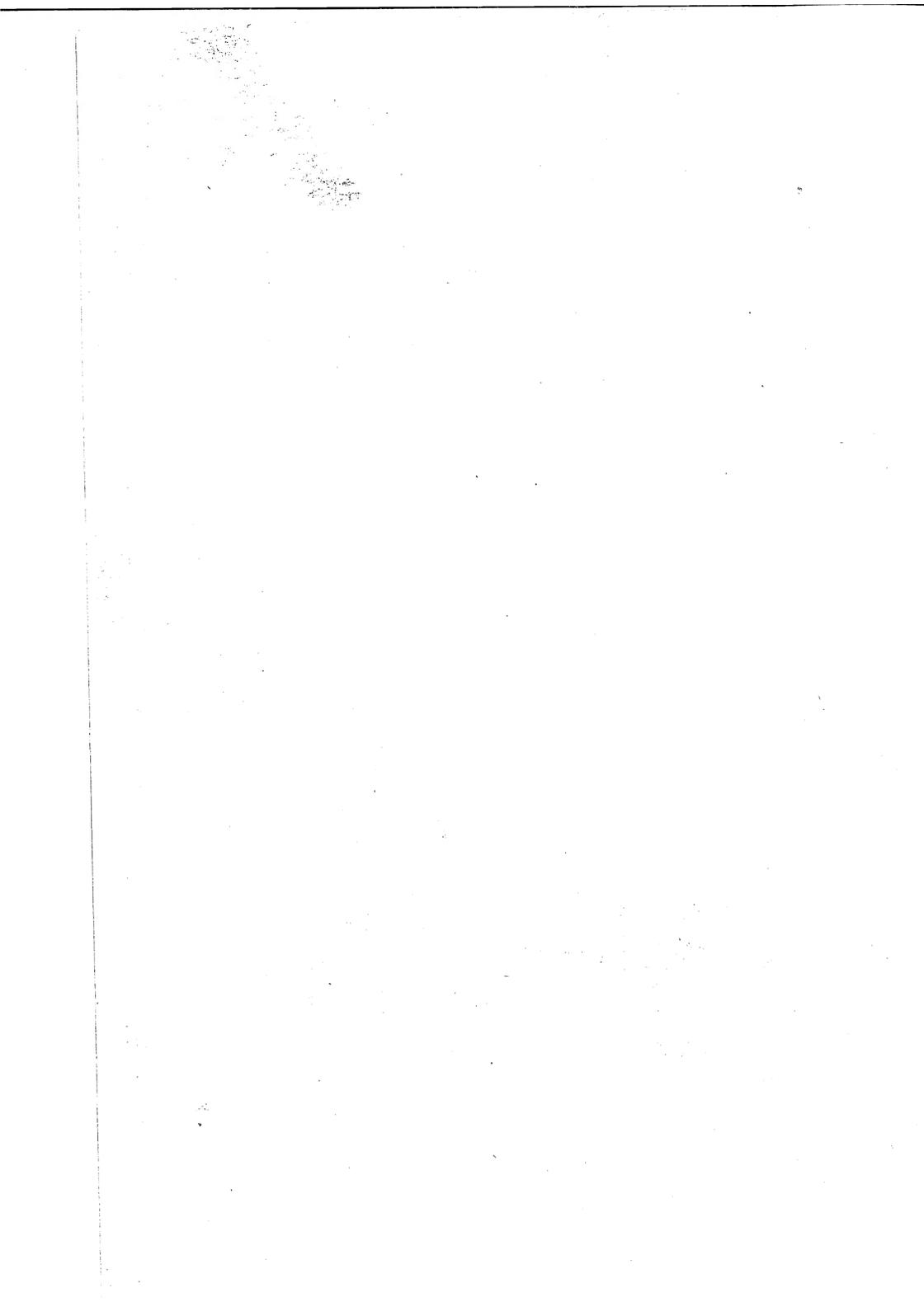


**the totality
for kids**

vaneigem

internationale situationniste



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The Introduction was originally printed at the beginning of the second part as a synopsis of the first. Since England is as yet unfamiliar with situationist ideas, and since the argument is very closely developed, this synopsis has been used as a general introduction.

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The harmony based initially on the "GIFT of oneself" contains a relationship which was to develop, become autonomous and destroy it. This relationship is based on partial EXCHANGE (merchandise, money, product, labour force . . .) the exchange of a part of oneself on which the bourgeois conception of liberty is based. It arises as commerce and technology become preponderant within agrarian-type economies.

When the bourgeoisie seized power they destroyed its unity. Sacred privative appropriation became laicised in capitalistic mechanisms. The totality was freed from its seizure by power and became concrete and immediate once more. The era of fragmentation has been a succession of attempts to recapture an inaccessible unity, to shelter power behind a substitute for the sacred.

A revolutionary moment is when "all that reality presents" finds its immediate REPRESENTATION. For the rest of the time, hierarchical power, always more distant from its magical and mystical regalia, endeavours to make everyone forget that the totality (no more than reality!) exposes its imposture.

1

Bureaucratic capitalism has found its legitimate justification in Marx. We are not concerned here with assessing the role of orthodox marxism in reinforcing the structures of neocapitalism, whose present reorganisation testifies to the greatest respect for soviet totalitarianism. The point is to stress the extent to which Marx's most profound analyses of alienation have been vulgarised in the most commonplace facts, which, robbed of their magic and embodied in every gesture, have become the sole substance, day after day, of the lives of a growing number of people. Bureaucratic capitalism contains the self-evident truth of alienation; it has brought it home to everybody far more successfully than Marx could ever have hoped to do. It has become commonplace as the disappearance of material poverty has merely revealed the mediocrity of existence itself. The extent of our impoverishment may have been reduced in terms of mere material survival, but it has become more profound in terms of our way of life—at least one widespread feeling that dissociates Marx from all the interpretations imposed by a degenerate Bolshevism. The "theory" of peaceful coexistence has spelt it out to those who were still confused: gangsters can get on very well with one another, despite their spectacular divergences.

2

"Any act," writes Mircea Eliade, "can become a religious act. Human existence is realised simultaneously on two parallel planes, on that of temporality, of becoming, of illusion, and on that of eternity, of substance, of reality." During the nineteenth century the brutal divorce of the two planes proved that power would have been more effective if

environment, by more effective protection against its hazards, itself engendered its own negation outside the frontiers laid down by the clan and forced the group to moderate its customary activities by organising its relations with excluded and menacing tribes. From the moment it appeared, economic survival on a social basis engendered boundaries, restrictions and conflicting rights. It should never be forgotten that until now both our own nature and the nature of history have been produced by the development of privative appropriation: by a class, a group, a caste or an individual seizing control of a collective power of socio-economic survival, whose form is always complex, from the ownership of land, of territory, of a factory, of capital, to the "pure" exercise of power over men (hierarchy). Even beyond the struggle against regimes whose vision of paradise is the cybernetic welfare state, lies the necessity of a still vaster struggle against a fundamental and, initially, natural condition, in the development of which capitalism plays only an episodic role, and which will only disappear with the last traces of hierarchical power; or else, of course, the "marcassins de l'humanité".

5

To be a proprietor is to arrogate a good from whose enjoyment one excludes other people; at the same time it is to grant everyone the **potential** right of possession. By excluding them from the **de facto** right of ownership, the proprietor makes those he excludes themselves a part of his property (annexing the non-owners absolutely, annexing the other proprietors relatively): without whom, moreover, he is nothing. Those without property have no choice in the matter. The proprietor appropriates and alienates them as the producers of his own power, while the necessity of physical survival forces them, despite themselves, to collaborate in their own alienation, to produce it. They **survive** as those who cannot **live**. Excluded, they participate in possession through the mediation of the proprietor, a mystical participation, since originally all clan and social relationships evolved on a mystical basis, slowly replacing the principle of involuntary cohesion in terms of which each member functions as a part of the group as a whole ("organic interdependence"). Their activity within the structure of privative appropriation guarantees their survival. They consolidate a right to property from which they are excluded and, owing to this ambiguity, each of them sees himself as participating in property, as a living fragment of the right to possess, although the development of any such belief can only reveal his own exclusion and possession. (Chronic cases of this alienation: the faithful slave, the cop, the bodyguard, the centurion, who through a sort of union with their own death, confer on death a power equal to the forces of life, identifying in a destructive energy the negative and the positive poles of alienation, the absolutely obedient slave and the absolute master.) It is of vital importance to the exploiter that this appearance is maintained and made more sophisticated: not because he is especially machiavellian, but simply because he **wants to stay alive**. The organisation of

Erostratus; since power survives, the event remains ambiguous. Destruction—sublime moment when the complexity of the world becomes tangible, transparent, within everyone's grasp, revolts for which there can be no expiation—those of the slaves, of the **Jacques**, of the iconoclasts, of the **Enragés**, of the **Fédérés**, of Kronstadt, of Asturias, and—a promise of things to come—the hooligans of Stockholm and the wildcat strikes . . . Only the destruction of all hierarchical power will allow us to forget these. We intend to make sure that it does.

The deterioration of mythic structures and their slowness to regenerate themselves have not only made possible the **prise de conscience** and the critical penetration of insurrection. They are also responsible for the fact that once the "excesses" of revolution are past the struggle against alienation is grasped on a theoretical plane, as an extension of the demystification preceding revolt. It is then that revolt in its purest and most authentic features is re-examined and disavowed by the "we didn't really mean to do that" of theoreticians whose job it is to explain an insurrection to those who created it, to those who intend to demystify by acts, not just by words.

All acts opposing power today call for analysis and tactical development. Much can be expected of:

(a) The new proletariat, discovering its penury amidst abundant consumer goods (viz. the development of the working-class struggles beginning in England; equally, the attitudes of rebel youth in all the highly industrialised countries).

(b) Countries that have had enough of their partial and tricked-up revolutions and are consigning past and present theoreticians to the museum (viz. the role of the intelligentsia in the East).

(c) The underdeveloped nations, whose mistrust of technical myths has been kept alive by the cops and mercenaries of colonisation, the last and over-zealous militants of a transcendence against which they are the best possible vaccination.

(d) The vigour of the S.I. ("Our ideas are in everyone's mind") capable of forestalling remote-controlled revolts, "crystal nights", and sheepish resistance.

8

Privative appropriation is bound to the dialectic of particular and general. In the realm of the mystic, where the contradictions of slave and feudal systems dissolve, the dispossessed excluded in particular from the right of possession endeavours to assure his survival through his labour: the more he identifies with the interests of the master the more successful he will be. He only knows the other dispossessed through their common predicament: the compulsory surrender of labour force (Christianity recommended voluntary surrender: once a slave offered his labour "of his own accord" he was no longer a slave), the search for the optimum conditions of survival and mystical identification. Struggle, though born

example, of God and his people). With an additional gesture, with an act whose gratuity bathes him in an other worldly radiance, he gives renunciation its pure form of mythic reality: renouncing common life, he is the poor man amidst illusory wealth, he who sacrifices himself for everyone while other people only sacrifice themselves for their own sake, for the sake of their survival. He turns his predicament into glory. The more powerful he is, the more spectacular his sacrifice. He becomes the living reference point of the whole of illusory life, the highest point which can be reached in the scale of mythic values. Withdrawn "voluntarily" from more common mortals he is drawn towards the world of the gods, and, on the level of appearances (the only general level of reference) it is faith in his participation in the divinity which consecrates his position in the hierarchy of the other proprietors. In the organisation of transcendence, the feudal — and, through osmosis, the proprietors of power or of material of production, in varying degrees — is led to play the principal role, the role he really does play in the economic organisation of the survival of the group. So the existence of the group is bound on every level to the existence of the proprietors as such, to those who, owning everything since they own everybody, also force everyone to renounce their lives on the pretext of their own renunciation, absolute and divine. (From the god Prometheus punished by the gods to the god Christ punished by men, the sacrifice of the proprietor becomes vulgarised, loses its sacred aura, is humanised). Myth unites proprietor and dispossessed. It envelops them in a common form where the necessity of survival, as an animal or as a privileged being, forces them to live on the level of appearances and under the inverted sign of real life, which is that of everyday praxis. We are still there, waiting to live before or after a mystique against which our every gesture protests in its very submission.

9

Myth, the unitary absolute in which the contradictions of the world find an illusory resolution, the harmonious-constantly-harmonised vision that reflects and strengthens order — this is the sphere of the sacred, the extra-human zone where, among so many other wonderful revelations, the revelation of privative appropriation is not to be found. Nietzsche was very much to the point when he wrote: "All becoming is a criminal emancipation from eternal being, and its price is death." The bourgeoisie claimed to replace the pure Being of feudalism with Becoming, while in fact all it did was to deconsecrate being and to reconsecrate Becoming to its own advantage; it elevated its own becoming to the status of Being, no longer that of absolute property, but that of relative appropriation: a petty democratic and mechanical becoming, with its notion of progress, of merit and of causal succession. The life of the proprietor hides him from himself; bound to myth by a pact of life or death, he can only become conscious of his own positive and exclusive enjoyment of any good through the lived appearance of his own exclusion — and isn't

signs giving the lie to the phraseological organisation of appearances? The best texts still await their justification. Only when a poem by Mallarmé becomes the sole reason for an act of revolt will the relationship between poetry and revolution lose its ambiguity. To await and prepare for this moment is not to manipulate information as the last shock-wave whose significance escapes everyone, but as the first repercussion of an act still to come.

11

Born of man's will to survive the uncontrollable forces of nature, myth is a policy of public welfare which has outlived its necessity. It has consolidated itself in its tyrannical strength, reducing life to the sole dimension of survival, denying it as movement and totality.

Attacked, myth will unify all that attacks it. It will engulf and assimilate it, sooner or later. Nothing can withstand it, no image, no concept, that attempts to destroy the dominant spiritual structures. It reigns over the expression of facts and lived experience, on which it imposes its interpretative structure (dramatisation). Private consciousness is the consciousness of lived experience which finds its expression on the level of organised appearances.

Myth is sustained by rewarded sacrifice. As every individual life is based on its own renunciation, lived experience must be defined as sacrifice and recompense. As a reward for his asceticism, the initiate (the promoted worker, the specialist, the manager — new martyrs canonised democratically) receives a niche carved in the organisation of appearances. He is made to feel at home in alienation. But collective shelters disappeared with unitary societies, and all that's left today is their concrete translation as a public service: temples, churches, palaces . . . memories of a universal protection. Shelters are private nowadays, and even if their protection is far from certain, there can be no mistaking their price.

12

"Private" life is defined primarily in a formal context. Obviously it is created by the social relationships based on privative appropriation, but its essential form is created by the expression of these relationships. Universal, beyond opposition but always opposed, this form makes appropriation a right acknowledged universally from which everyone is excluded, a **right to which renunciation is the only access**. If it fails to break free of the context imprisoning it (a secession which is called revolution) the most authentic experience can only become conscious, can only be expressed and communicated by a movement of inverting the sign by which its fundamental contradiction is dissimulated. In other words, if any positive project fails to revitalise the praxis of radical overthrow of the conditions of life — conditions which, in their entirety, are those of privative appropriation — then it will not stand the slightest

nails; it is up to him to authenticate sacrifice, to appear to renounce his right of exclusive enjoyment and no longer to expropriate with a purely **human** violence (violence without mediation). The grandeur of the gesture obscures its initial violence, the nobility of sacrifice absolves the warrior, the brutality of the conqueror shines in the light of a transcendence whose reign is immanent, the gods are the intransigent guardians of law, the cantankerous shepherds of the meek and law abiding flock of "Being and Wanting-to-be-Proprietor".

The gamble on transcendence and the sacrifice entailed are the masters' greatest achievement, their most accomplished submission to the necessity of conquest. Anyone, be he brigand or tyrant, who intrigues for a power unpurified by renunciation will sooner or later be tracked down and killed like a mad dog, or even worse, like someone who pursues no other ends than his own, and whose conception of "work" has been formed without giving a damn what anyone else may think. Tropmann, Landru, Petiot, balancing their budget without taking into account the defence of the Free World, of the State or of human "dignity" never stood a sporting chance. Freebooters, gangsters, outlaws, refusing to play by the rules of the game, disturb those whose conscience is at peace (whose consciousness is a reflection of myth) but the masters when they kill the criminal, or enrol him as a cop, re-establish the omnipotence of "eternal truth": those who don't sell themselves lose their right to survive, and those who do sell themselves lose their right to live. The sacrifice of the master is the matrix of humanism, and let it be understood once and for all that this makes humanism the grotesque negation of all that is human. Humanism is the master taken seriously at his own game, acclaimed by those who see his apparent sacrifice as a reason to hope for salvation, and not just the caricatural reflection of their own real sacrifice. Justice, dignity, honour, liberty . . . these words that yap or squeal, are they any more than household pets whose masters have calmly awaited their homecoming since the time when heroic domestics fought for the right to walk them on the street? To use them is to forget that they are the ballast which allows power to rise, to rise out of reach. A future regime might well decide against promoting sacrifice in such universal forms, and begin to track these words down and to wipe them out; if so, one could well foresee the left wing engaged in one more plaintive battle of words, whose every phrase extols the "sacrifice" of a previous master and calls for the equally mythical sacrifice of a new one (a left wing master, a power mowing down workers in the name of the proletariat). Bound to the notion of sacrifice, humanism is born of the fear of both masters and slaves: it is the solidarity of a shitscared humanity. But those who have rejected all hierarchical power can use any word as a weapon to beat out the rhythm of their action. Lautréamont and the illegal anarchists were well aware of it; so were the dadaists.

Thus, the appropriator becomes a proprietor from the moment he puts the ownership of people and of things in the hands of God, or of a

aesthetes can keep their collections: one has only to pick at the scab of memory and the cries, words and gestures of the past make the whole body of power start to bleed freshly once more. The whole organisation of the survival of memories will not stop them being forgotten as soon as they come to life again and begin to dissolve in experience; the same applies to our survival in the construction of our everyday lives.

An inevitable process: as Marx showed, the appearance of exchange value and its symbolic substitution by money split open a radical crisis latent in the heart of the unitary world. Merchandise introduced a universal character into human relationships (a dollar bill represents all I can buy with this sum) and an egalitarian character (equal things are exchanged). This "egalitarian universality" partly escapes both the exploiter and the exploited, while both accept it as a common measure. They discover themselves face to face, no longer confronted in the mystery of divine birth and ascendance, as the nobility once was, but in an intelligible transcendence, that of the Logos, a body of laws that can be understood by everybody, even if any such understanding remains cloaked in mystery. A mystery with its initiates, first of all priests, struggling to maintain the Logos in the limbo of divinemysticism, soneyielding to philosophers, then to technicians, both their position and the dignity of their sacred mission. From Plato's republic to the cybernetic state.

Thus, under the pressure of exchange value and of technology (which could be called the "do-it-yourself-mediation-kit"), myth was gradually laicised. However, two facts are to be noted:

(a) As the Logos frees itself from mystic unity it affirms itself at once in and against it. Upon magical and analogical structures of behaviour are superimposed rational and logical structures which negate while conserving them (mathematics, poetics, economics, aesthetics, psychology, etc.).

(b) Each time the Logos or the "organisation of intelligible appearances" becomes more independent it tends to break away from the sacred and to become fragmented. As such it presents a double danger to unitary power. We have already seen that the sacred expresses the seizure of the totality by power, and that anyone wanting to accede to the totality must do so through the mediation of power: the interdict striking mystics, alchemists, gnostics is sufficient proof. This also explains why power today "protects" specialists, in whom it can sense — but without really trusting them — the missionaries of a reconsecrated Logos. There are historic signs that testify to the attempts made to found within mystic unitary power a rival power asserting its unity in the name of the Logos: amongst which, christian syncretism, the psychological explanation of God, the Renaissance, the Reformation and the **Aufklärung**.

The masters who tried to retain the unity of the Logos were well aware that only unity can stabilise power. Examined closely their efforts have not been as vain as the fragmentation of the Logos in the

principle of survival, or if even survival itself is not to become impossible (the hypothesis of humanity destroying itself). And with it, obviously, the whole experiment of constructing everyday life. The vital objectives of struggle for the construction of everyday life are the key-points of all hierarchical power. To construct one is to destroy the other. Caught in the vortex of deconsecration and reconsecration, essentially we stand for the negation of the following elements: the organisation of appearances as a **spectacle** where everyone denies themselves; the **separation** on which private life is based, since it is there that the objective separation between proprietors and dispossessed is lived and reflected on every level; and **sacrifice**. The three are obviously interdependent, just as their opposites: participation, communication, realisation. The same applies to their context: non-totality (a bankrupt world, a controlled totality) and totality.

16

The human relationships previously dissolved in divine transcendence (in the totality crowned by the sacred) decanted and became solid as soon as the sacred stopped acting as a catalyst. Their materiality was revealed and, as the capricious laws of economy succeeded those of Providence, the power of men began to appear behind the power of the gods. Today endless roles correspond to the mythical role everyone once played under the divine spotlights. Though their masks are human faces, they still force both actor and extra to deny their real life, to fulfil the dialectic of real and mythical sacrifice. The spectacle is nothing but deconsecrated and fragmented myth. It forms the carapace of a power (which could also be called essential mediation) that is exposed **to every blow** once it no longer succeeds in dissimulating, in the cacaphony where all cries drown one another out and become harmonious, the nature of privative appropriation. And just how much shit it heaps on everyone.

Roles have become impoverished in the context of a fragmentary power eaten away by deconsecration, just as the spectacle betrays its impoverishment in comparison with myth. They betray its mechanisms and its artifice so clumsily that power, to defend itself against popular denunciation of the spectacle, has no alternative but to denounce it first itself. Even more clumsily it changes actors and ministers, it organises pogroms of putative or prefabricated producers of the spectacle (agents of Moscow or Wall Street, of the judeocracy or **les deux cent families**). Which is to say that the whole cast has been forced to become hams, that style has been replaced by manner.

Myth, as an immobile totality, encompassed all movement (the pilgrimage, for example, as fulfilment and adventure within immobility). On the one hand, the spectacle can only conceive the totality by reducing it to a fragment inserted in a series of fragments (psychological,

person, that is to say, an idiot. Someone who gets fed up and chucks it in the gutter has more sense. Sooner or later it will have to be understood that the words and phrases we use are still outdated by reality. The distortion and clumsiness of the way we express ourselves (that someone with taste called, not inaccurately, "a somewhat irritating kind of hermetic terrorism") comes from our central position on the illdefined and shifting frontier where language sequestered by power (conditioning) and free language (poetry) fight out their complex war. To those who can't keep up with us we prefer those who reject us impatiently because our language isn't yet authentic poetry, that is, isn't yet the free construction of everyday life.

Everything related to thought is related to the spectacle. Almost everyone lives in a state of terror at the possibility they might awake to themselves, and their fear is carefully kept alive by power. Conditioning, the poetry of power, has subjected so much to its control (all material equipment belongs to it: the press, television, stereotypes, magic, tradition, economy, technics — what we call sequestered language) that it has almost succeeded in dissolving what Marx called the non-dominated sector of nature, to replace it by another (viz. our identikit picture of "the survivor"). Lived experience, however, cannot be reduced to a series of empty configurations with such facility. Resistance to the exterior organisation of life, to the organisation of life as survival, contains more poetry than any volume of verse or prose, and the poet, in the literary sense of the word, is the person who has sensed or understood that this is so. But the life of any such poetry hangs on a thread. Certainly, as the situationists understand it, it is irreducible and cannot be recuperated by power (as soon as an act is recuperated it becomes a stereotype, conditioning, the language of power). However, it is encircled by power. It is by isolation that power encircles the irreducible and pins it down; yet complete isolation is not feasible. The pincer movement has two claws: first, the threat of disintegration (insanity, illness, destitution, suicide) and, secondly, remote-controlled therapeutics; the first granting death, the second no more than survival (empty communication, the cohesion of friends or families, psychoanalysis prostituted to alienation, medicare, ergotherapy). Sooner or later the S.I. must define itself as a therapeutic: we are ready to defend the poetry created by everyone against the false poetry manipulated solely by power (conditioning). Doctors and psychoanalysts had better get it straight too, unless they are prepared, one fine day, to take the consequences for what they have done, along with architects and other apostles of survival.

All antagonisms that have not been resolved, integrated and superceded are losing their significance. These antagonisms can only evolve while they remain imprisoned in previous forms which have not

according to his work" in a world where work is the blackmail of survival; to say nothing of the formula "to everyone according to his needs" in a world where needs are determined by power. Any construction attempting to define itself in an autonomous, and therefore partial, way can be relegated to reformism. It is unaware of its real definition by the negativity in which everything is suspended. It tries to build on quicksand as though it were rock. Contempt and misunderstanding of the context fixed by hierarchical power can only end by strengthening this context. On the other hand, the spontaneous acts we can see forming everywhere against power and its spectacle must be warned of all the obstacles in their path, and must find tactics corresponding to the strength of the enemy and to its means of recuperation. These tactics, which we are about to popularise, are those of **deflection (détournement)**.

20

Sacrifice must be rewarded. In exchange for their real sacrifice the workers receive the instruments of their liberation (comfort, gadgets) which, however, are a purely fictitious liberation since power controls the ways in which all material equipment can be used, since power utilises to its own ends both the instruments and those who use them. The christian and bourgeois revolutions democratised mythical sacrifice or the "sacrifice of the master." Today, there are countless initiates who receive the crumbs of power for having put to public service the totality of their partial knowledge. They are no longer called "initiates" and not yet "priests of the Logos": they are just known as specialists.

On the level of the spectacle their power is incontestable: the candidate on "Double Your Money" or the G.P.O. clerk, itemising the mechanical subtleties of their Anglia, both identify with the specialist, and we know how production managers can use these identifications to bring skilled labourers to heel. Essentially, the true mission of the technocrats would be to unify the Logos, if only, through one of the contradictions of fragmentary power, they weren't all so pathetically isolated. Alienated as they are by their interference with one another, they know the whole of a fragment and all realisation escapes them. What real control can the atomic technician, the strategist or the political specialist exercise over nuclear weapons? What absolute control can power hope to impose on all the gestures forming against it? The stage is so crowded that only chaos reigns as master. "Order reigns and doesn't govern" (Editorial Notes, **Internationale Situationniste**, 6).

Insofar as the specialist takes part in the construction of the instruments that condition and transform the world he initiates the **revolt of the privileged**. Previously any such revolt has been called fascism. It is essentially an operatic revolt — didn't Nietzsche see Wagner as a precursor? — when actors who for a long time have been pushed to the side suddenly demand to hold the leading roles. Clinically

affected on everyday life, that is, every attempt to construct it — an illegal activity since the destruction of feudal power, where it was restricted and reserved for a minority — becomes concrete today through its critique of alienating work and its refusal to submit to forced labour. So much so that the new proletariat tends to be defined negatively as a "Front Against Forced Labour" bringing together all those who resist their annexation by power. This is our field of action. It is here that we gamble on the ruse of history against the ruse of power, it is here that we back the worker, be he steelworker or artist, who — consciously or not — rejects organised work and life, against the worker who — consciously or not — accepts to work at the orders of power. In this perspective, it is not unreasonable to foresee a transitional period during which automation and the will of the new proletariat leave work solely to specialists, reducing managers and bureaucrats to the rank of temporary slaves. In the context of complete automation, the "workers," instead of supervising machines, would be free to humour cybernetic specialists whose sole task was to increase production — a production which had been radically transformed, a production serving life and not survival.

22

Unitary power endeavoured to dissolve individual existence in a collective consciousness, so that each social unity defined itself subjectively as a particle with a clearly determined weight suspended as though in oil. Everyone had to feel blinded by the evidence that the hand of God, shaking the recipient, used everything for designs of his own which transcended the understanding of each particular human being, and appeared as the emanations of a supreme will bestowing sense on the slightest change. (In any case, all perturbation was an ascending or descending movement towards harmony: the Four Reigns, the Wheel of Fortune, the trials sent by the gods). One can speak of a collective consciousness in the sense that it was simultaneously for each individual and for everyone: consciousness of myth and consciousness of a particular-existence-within-myth. The power of the illusion is such that authentic life draws its significance from what it is not; from this stems the clerical condemnation of life, reduced to pure contingency, to squalid materiality, to vain appearances and to the lowest level of a transcendence becoming increasingly debased in the measure that it escapes mythic organisation.

God was the guarantor of space and time, whose co-ordinates defined unitary society. He was the common reference-point for all men; space and time came together in him, as in him all beings became one with their destiny. In the era of fragmentation, man is torn apart between a space and a time that no transcendence can unify through the mediation of a centralised power. We live in a space and time that are out of joint,

a suffering made even more intolerable because we all find ourselves alone to face the collapse of the sacred totality, and of all the Houses of Usher.

24

The totality is objective reality in the movement of which subjectivity can only participate as realisation. Anything apart from the realisation of everyday life belongs to the spectacle where survival is frozen (hibernation) and served out in slices. There can be no authentic realisation except in objective reality, in the totality. All the rest is caricature. The objective realisation that functions in the mechanism of the spectacle is nothing but the success of power-manipulated objects (the "objective realisation in subjectivity" of famous artists, of film-stars, of the celebrities of Who's Who). On the level of the organisation of appearances, every success — and even every failure — is inflated until it becomes a stereotype, and is broadcast by the information media as though it were the only possible success or failure. So far power has been the only judge, though pressure has been brought to bear on its judgement. Its criteria alone are valid for those who accept the spectacle and are satisfied with playing a role within it. And there are no more artists on that scene, there are only extras.

25

The space and time of private life were harmonised in the space and time of myth. The universal harmony of Fourier answers this perverted harmony. As soon as myth no longer encompasses the individual and the partial in a totality dominated by the sacred, each fragment erects itself as a totality. The fragment erected as a totality is, in fact, the **totalitarian**. In the dissociated space and time that makes private life, time, made absolute in the form of abstract liberty, which is that of the spectacle, consolidates by its very dissociation the spatial absolute of everyday life, its isolation, its constriction. The mechanism of the alienating spectacle exerts such strength that private life reaches the point of being defined as something that is deprived of spectacle. The fact that it escapes spectacular roles and categories is experienced as an additional privation, as a sense of sickness which power uses as a pretext to reduce everyday life to insignificant gestures (to smoke a joint, to read a book, to make a cup of tea).

26

The spectacle that imposes its norms on lived experience itself stems from lived experience. The time of the spectacle, lived in the form of successive roles, makes the space of authentic experience the area of objective impotence, while, at the same time, objective impotence, that

duction of variety into the roles merely emphasises the monotony of the reflex of identification. The liberty of "the survivor" will be to assume the abstract constituent to which he has "chosen" to reduce himself. Once there is no question of true realisation, only a psychosociological dramaturgy is left, in which subjectivity functions as an overflow to get rid of the effects one has worn for the daily exhibition. Survival becomes the final stage of life organised as the mechanical reproduction of memory.

28

Until now the approach to the totality has been falsified. Power has been inserted parasitically as an indispensable mediation between men and nature. But the relationship between men and nature is founded only by praxis. It is praxis that is always breaking the veneer of lies that myth and its substitutes try to substantiate. It is praxis, even alienated praxis, that maintains contact with the totality. By revealing its fragmentary character, praxis reveals at the same time the real totality (reality): it is the totality being realised through its opposite, the fragment.

In the perspective of praxis, every fragment is the totality. In the perspective of power, which alienates praxis, every fragment is totalitarian. This should be enough to wreck the attempts cybernetic power will make to envelop praxis in a mystique, although the seriousness of these attempts should not be underestimated.

All praxis belongs to our project. It enters with its share of alienation, with the dross of power: however, we can purify it. We will clarify the manoeuvres of subjection and the strength and purity of the acts of refusal. We will use our strategy, not in a manichean vision, but as a means of developing this conflict in which, everywhere, at every moment, adversaries are seeking one another and only clashing accidentally, lost in an irremediable darkness and confusion.

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Everyday life has always been emptied to substantiate apparent life, but appearances, in their mythical cohesion, were powerful enough to ensure that no one ever became conscious of everyday life. The poverty and emptiness of the spectacle betrayed by every type of capitalism, by every type of bourgeoisie, has revealed the existence of everyday life (a shelter-life, but a shelter for what and from what?) and simultaneously the poverty of everyday life. As reification and bureaucratisation eat deeper and deeper into life, the exhaustion of the spectacle and of everyday life become increasingly evident to everyone. The conflict between the human and the inhuman has also been transferred to the plane of appearances. As soon as marxism became an ideology, Marx's struggle against ideology in the name of the richness of life was transformed into an ideological anti-ideology, a spectacle of the anti-

So many other banalities could be examined and reversed. The best things never come to an end. Before rereading the above — even the most mediocre intelligence will understand by the third attempt — it would be wise to concentrate very carefully on the following text, for these notes, as fragmentary as the preceding, must be discussed in detail. The central point is the question of the S.I. and revolutionary power.

The S.I., being aware of the crisis of both mass parties and of “elites,” must embody the supercession of both the bolshevik C.C. (supercession of the mass party) and of the Nietzschean project (supercession of the intelligentsia).

(a) Whenever any power has set itself up to direct revolutionary will, it has **a priori** undermined the power of the revolution. The bolshevik Central Committee was defined as at once concentration and representation. Concentration of a power antagonistic to bourgeois power and representation of the will of the masses. This double characteristic determined that it rapidly became no more than an empty power, a power of empty representation, and that it soon rejoined in a common form (bureaucracy) bourgeois power, forced to follow a similar evolution. The conditions of concentrated power and of mass representation exist potentially in the S.I. since it monopolises the qualitative and since its ideas are in everyone’s mind. Nevertheless, we refuse both concentrated power and the right of representation, conscious that we are taking the only **public attitude** (we cannot avoid being known to some extent in a spectacular manner) that we can give those who discover revolutionary power through our theoretical and practical positions, power without mediation, power entailing the direct action of everyone. Our guiding image could be Durrutti’s brigade moving from village to village, liquidating the bourgeois elements and leaving the workers to see to their own organisation.

(b) The intelligentsia is power’s hall of mirrors. Opposing power, it never offers more than cathartic identifications playing on the passivity of those whose every act reveals real dissidence. The radicalism — of gesture, obviously, not of theory — which could be glimpsed in the Committee of 100 and in the “Declaration of the 121” suggests, however, a number of different possibilities. We are capable of precipitating this crisis, but only by entering the intelligentsia as a power (against the intelligentsia). This phase — which must precede and be contained within the phase described in (a) — will put us in the perspective of the Nietzschean project. We will form a small, almost alchemical, experimental group within which the realisation of the total man can be started. Nietzsche could only conceive an undertaking of this nature within the framework of the hierarchical principle. It is, in fact, within this framework that we find ourselves. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that we present ourselves without the slightest ambiguity (on the level

