

TIQUN

**THESES ON
THE TERRIBLE
COMMUNITY**



“There remains something to the poor brief childhood, something to that happiness, lost, never to be found again, but also something to today’s working life, to its incomprehensible playfulness, something we would not know how to stifle.”

—Franz Kafka

“...throw roses into the abyss and say: ‘here is my thanks to the monster who didn’t succeed in swallowing me alive.’”

—Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Posthumous Fragments*

I. GENESIS

OR HISTORY OF A HISTORY

1 “That which had been understood for a time, for a time has been forgotten, so that no one notices that history is without epoch anymore. In fact, nothing happens. There are no longer Events. There is only news. Look at those atop empires. Reverse Spinoza’s dictum. Nothing to understand, only laughter and tears.”

—Mario Tronti, *Politics at Dusk*

*BLOOM: 1. the final affect of a civilization that has closed in on itself and cannot be distracted from the fact of its own wreckage save by alternating between short phases of hysterical technophilia and long periods of contemplative abstinence; 2. a crepuscular way of being, despite the commonality of individuals in the world of authoritarian merchandise; 3. the feeling of being posthumous; 4. the act of death, in classical politics; 5. the act of birth, in static politics; 6. the assumption that led to the formation of various Invisible Committee foci; anonymous plot that, from sabotage to popular uprisings, led to the liquidation of the mercantile domain in the first quarter of the 21st century... (“Spectators set up when the train passes.”)

1 BIS The time of heroes is over. Disappeared, the epic space for stories that we loved to recite and that we loved to hear. The stories that talked to us about what we would like to be and were not.

The irreparable is henceforth our being-*thus*, our being-*no-one*. Our being-Bloom.*

So the irreparable must be our starting point now that the most ferocious nihilism punishes even the most dominant.

We have to leave because ‘no one’ is Ulysses’ other name. Reaching Ithaca should no longer be important to anyone, any more than getting shipwrecked.

2 No longer is there time to *dream* about what we will be, or what we are going to do. Now that we can be *all*, and can do *everything*, our force is spent along with the certainty that our forgotten joy will bring back the power we once had.

Here is where we must detach ourselves, or let ourselves die. Man must indeed go beyond himself, but to do so, he must first be listened to in that place where he is most vulnerable and most exposed so the *essential* part isn’t lost somewhere along the way. Bloom, the derisory residue of a world that doesn’t cease to betray and exile him, asks to leave ready for combat: he asks for *exodus*.

But most often those who leave do not find their own and their exodus once again becomes exile.

2^{BIS} Out of the depths of this exile come all voices, and in this exile, all voices are lost. The Other does not welcome us; it sends us back to the Other within us. We abandon this world in ruins with no regrets and no anguish, hurried by some vague sense of haste. We abandon it like rats abandoning ship, without knowing if it is still docked on the quay. Nothing noble in this flight, nothing grand that might link us together. Finally, we remain alone within ourselves, since we did not decide to struggle but to preserve ourselves. And that is not yet an action, only a *reaction*.

3 A crowd of fleeing men is a crowd of men alone.

4 Not to meet one another is impossible; our fates come together like random atoms.⁷ Even at death's door, even in our own absence, others ceaselessly hurtle into us at the first field of flight.

Ourselves and others; we are separated by disgust, but we cannot come together by choice. And yet we find ourselves united. United and beyond love, open and without mutual protection. This is the way we were before the flight, this is the way we have always been.

5 We did not merely want to flee, even if we really left this world because it seemed intolerable. No cowardice here: we leave armed for combat. What we wanted was not to struggle *against* but *with* someone. And now that we are no longer alone, we will silence this voice within; we will be companions of someone, we will no longer be *the undesirables*.

We will have to force ourselves, to silence ourselves, because until now we were unwanted—now things have changed. To no longer ask questions, but to learn silence, to learn to learn. *Because freedom is a form of discipline*.

6 The Word advances, prudently, filling the spaces between singular solitudes, it swells human numbers in groups, pushing them together against the prevailing wind—effort unites them. This is almost an exodus. Almost. But no pact holds them together, except the spontaneity of smiles, inevitable cruelty, and accidents of passion.

*“Sometimes,” wrote Lutetium, “In uncertain times and places, the eternal and universal movement of atoms is disturbed by a slight deviation—the clinamen. The resulting vortex gives birth to the world and all things natural.”

7 This passage, similar to that of migrating birds, with murmurs of shifting pain, little by little gives form to the terrible communities.

II. EFFECTIVENESS

WHY SCHIZOPHRENIA IS MORE THAN AN ILLNESS

AND HOW, WHILE DREAMING OF ECSTASY, WE END UP POLICING EACH OTHER.

1 “We are told: even so, hasn’t schizophrenia a father and a mother? We regret to say no, that’s not the way it is. It only has a desert and some tribes that live there, a full body and the multiplicities that cling on to it.”

—Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

1^{BIS} The terrible community is the only form of community compatible with the world, with Bloom. All other communities are imaginary, not *really* impossible, but possible only in moments, and in any case, never to be fully realized. They emerge in struggles, thus they are heterotopias, opaque unmapped zones perpetually urging constitution and perpetually becoming extinct.

2 The terrible community is not only possible: it is *already real*, it is always-already *in action*. It is the community of *those who remain*. It is never *in power* nor has it a becoming or a future. Neither does it have true external goals beyond itself nor a desire to become another; just to *persist*. It is a community of betrayal, because it goes against its own becoming; it betrays itself without transforming itself or transforming the world around it.

2^{BIS} The terrible community is the community of Blooms because at his core, getting away from the subjective is unwanted. On

the other hand, in order to get there he would first have had to put himself into parentheses.

*EK-SIST: "Being itself is the relation to the extent that It, as the location of the truth of Being amid beings, gathers to itself and embraces ek-sistence in its existential, that is, ecstatic, essence."
—Martin Heidegger

3 The terrible community does not *ek-sist*,⁶ other than in the dissensions that periodically pass through it. As for the rest of the time the terrible community *is*, eternally.

4 Despite that, the terrible community is the only one we find, because the world—as a physical place which we share and have in common—has disappeared, leaving only an imperially-sectioned space to be cut across. The lie of “mankind” itself no longer finds enough liars to affirm him.

The non-men, the no-longer-men, the Blooms, no longer manage to *think* as in times gone by because thought was a movement within time which has now changed its consistence. Moreover, the Blooms gave up dreaming and live in developed dystopias, places without place, dimensionless crevices in the commodity utopia. They are flat and one-dimensional because, not recognizing one another anywhere, neither within themselves or in others, they recognize neither their past nor their future. Day after day their resignation erases the present. The no-longer-men populate the crisis of presence.

5 The time of the terrible community is spiraloid and of a viscous consistency. It is an impenetrable time where the project-form and the habit-form weigh on lives and leave them without depth. It can be defined as a time of naïve liberty, where everyone does what they want because it is a time that does not allow wanting anything other than what is already there.

It can be said to be the time of clinical depression, or rather the time of exile and prison. It is an endless wait, a uniform expanse of orderless discontinuities.

6 In the terrible community the concept of order was abolished in favor of a more effective balance of power. The concept of form in the practice of formalization did not control, but allowed content over its applications, and was eternally reversible. Around false rituals, false deadlines (demonstrations, vacations, missions accomplished’s, various assemblies, meetings, more or less festive) the community coagulates and

formalizes itself without ever *taking form*. Because form, being sensitive and corruptible, exposes itself to becoming.

6^{BIS} Informality at the core of the terrible community is the medium most appropriate to the unavowed construction of pitiless hierarchies.

7 Reversibility is the sign under which all events *take place* in the terrible community. But it is this reversibility itself, with its solemn procession of fears and dissatisfaction, that is irreversible.

8 The time of infinite reversibility is an illegible, inhuman time. It's the time of things, of the moon, of animals, of tides; not of men, and even less of the no-longer-men since they no longer think of themselves while the others still do.

The time of reversibility is but the time that is unknowable to itself.

9 Why do men not abandon the terrible community? you could ask. One might answer that it is because the world-no-longer-world is even more uninhabitable than theirs. But you would fall into a trap of appearances, in a superficial truth, because there is between them a hidden continuity which, for the world's inhabitants and for those of the terrible community, remains undecipherable.

10 What must rather be noticed is that the world extracts its minimal existence from the *negative* existence of the terrible community and not, as you might think, the other way around. However marginal that community may be, it allows us to decipher the world's substantial inexistence.

11 The negative existence of the terrible community is at last resort a counter-revolutionary existence since, faced with the residual subsistence of the world, it contents itself by maintaining a greater fullness.

12 The terrible community is terrible because it limits itself; all the while replacing no form because it knows no ecstasy. It reasons with the same moral categories as the world-no-longer-world and refuses to codify them due to the lack of coherence in the world it contests. It critiques the violation of a *law*, sheds light on it, and brings attention to

it. But who established (and violated) this law? The world in which it refuses to belong. And to whom is the discourse destined? It is destined to the world it denies. What then does the terrible community desire? *The improvement of the existing state of things.* And what does the world desire? *The same thing.*

13 Democracy is the cultural milieu of any terrible community. The world-no-longer-world is a place where ordinary litigation and foundational politics are erased to the advantage of a managerial vision of life and living: biopolitics. In this way the terrible community is a biopolitical community because it too bases its massive and quasi-military unanimity on a repression of the litigational foundation of politics; litigation between forms-of-life. The terrible community cannot allow within itself the existence of a *bios*, a non-conforming life, freely lived; it can only tolerate survival *in* its ranks. In the same way a hidden continuity between the biopolitical tissue of democracy and the terrible communities stands because litigation in them is abolished by the imposition of a unanimity at once unequally shared and violently enclosed within a collectivity which is supposed to make freedom possible. It happens, then, paradoxically, that the ranks of biopolitical democracy are more comfortable than those of the terrible community; the space of play, the freedom of subjects, and the constraints imposed by the political-form find themselves to be inversely proportional in a biopolitical regime/system of truth.

14 The more a veritable biopolitical regime maintains its claim to be open to freedom, the more police-like it becomes, and more, by delegating to the police the task of putting down insubordinations, it will leave its subjects in a state of relative unconsciousness, of quasi-infancy. On the other hand, in a veritable biopolitical regime where THE PEOPLE believe they are *creating* freedom and, at the same time, not discussing the form it takes, THE PEOPLE require of those participating that they interject the police in their *bios* on the powerful pretext that *there is no other choice.*

Choosing the individual pseudo-liberty granted by biopolitical democracies—whether by necessity, on a gamble, or a thirst for pleasure—is equivalent, for a member of the terrible community, to a *real* ethical degradation. Because the freedom of biopolitical democracies is never anything but the freedom to buy or to sell oneself.

15 In the same way, from the point of view of biopolitical democracies unified in Empire, those on the side of the terrible communities switch from regimes of merchandise exchange (of management) to military political regimes (of repression). By agitating the specter of police violence, biopolitical democracies succeed in militarizing the terrible communities, making discipline within them even harsher than elsewhere. This is in order to produce a spiraling crescendo designed to make commodities preferable to struggle. The freedom of movement so warmly recommended by the police and by mercantile propaganda—“get moving, there’s nothing to see here!”—is substituted for the freedom to see *something else*: rioting, for example.

For those who accept swapping off the highest liberty—the freedom of struggle—for the most reified—that of the buyer—political democracies have for the last twenty years created comfortable places for biopolitical entrepreneurs necessarily quite “with it.” Where would these democracies be, do you think, without their networks? Until *fight clubs* universally proliferate, start ups, advertising houses, hip bars, and police cars will not stop proliferating exponentially. And the terrible communities will be the model for this new turn in the evolution of the commodity.

16 Terrible communities and biopolitical democracies can coexist vampirically because the two live like worlds-no-longer-worlds or like worlds with no exterior. Their being-without-exterior is not a terrorist conviction brandished to guarantee the fidelity of the subjects, who participate freely in biopolitical democracy or in the terrible community. But their coexistence is a reality since they are two human formations that overlap *almost entirely*.

There is no conscious participation in biopolitical democracy without unconscious participation in the terrible community and vice-versa. Because the terrible community is not only the community of social or political protest, the militant community, it is also that tendentious aspiration of every ‘community’ within biopolitical democracy (company, family, association, group of friends, adolescent gang, etc.). And that, in-so-far-as all sharing *without end*—with its twin meanings—is an *effective* menace for the biopolitical democracy. It founds itself on a separation such that its subjects are no longer individuals but ‘dividuals’ who share two necessary but contradictory participations; between their terrible community

and the biopolitical democracy. Just as well, one of the two participations must inevitably be lived as clandestine, shameful, and incoherent.

Civil war, expelled from publicity, has taken refuge within individuals. The front line, which no longer passes through the absolute center of society, passes through the absolute center of Bloom. Capitalism *requires* schizophrenia.

17 The Imaginary Party is the form this schizophrenia takes when it becomes offensive. One is in the Imaginary Party not when one is neither in the terrible community nor in the biopolitical community, but when one acts for the destruction of both.

18 What crumbles away will crumble, but cannot be destroyed. However, life among the ruins is not only possible, but effectively present. The superior intelligence of the world *is* in the terrible community. The world's salvation as world, a world persistent in its relative decomposition, resides in its adversary who has sworn to destroy it. But this adversary, how could it destroy the world if not at the price of its own disappearance as adversary. It could, we are told, constitute itself positively, found itself, and make itself laws of its own. But the terrible community does not have an *autonomous* life and nowhere finds the way to *becoming*. To survive a little longer, this is just the last ruse of a world falling apart.

III. AFFECTIVITY

OF WHY WE OFTEN
DESIRE SOMETHING THAT
MAKES US UNHAPPY (SO
MUCH SO THAT WE BEGIN TO
MISS THE 'BELLE EPOQUE' OF
ARRANGED MARRIAGES)

AND OF WHY WOMEN DO NOT
SAY WHAT THEY THINK.

WE SPEAK HERE ALSO OF THE
INSUFFICIENCY OF GOOD
INTENTIONS.

Watch out! A dangerous chapter to read because everybody is challenged.

JOCASTE: What is exile? What does the exiled suffer from?

POLYNICE: The worst of all ills: not to have the right to *parrhesia*.

JOCASTE: It is the condition of the slave, of not saying what one thinks.

POLYNICE: And of having to comply with the stupidity of those in command...

JOCASTE: Oh yes, that's it: acting stupid with the stupids.

POLYNICE: In order to get along, we force our natures.

—Euripides, *The Phoenicians*

*PARRHESIA: from Greek “to say everything,” speaking Truth to the point of vulnerability.

1 Parrhesia^{*} is the *dangerous*, affective use of speech, the act of truth that puts into question the relationship of power, *here and now*, within friendships, in politics, in love. The parrhesiast is not the one who says the most painful truth in order to break the bonds which unify others based on a refusal to accept this truth as inevitable. The one who makes use of parrhesia first puts himself in danger by exposing the self *within* links of relationships. Parrhesia is the act of truth that *flees from an abstract, ‘overhanging’ point of view*.

Where parrhesia is not possible, beings are in exile, and they act like slaves. Even if the terrible community is for its inhabitants like a cathedral in the desert, it is within the community that one endures the bitterest exile. Because as a one-sided war machine which must maintain with the exterior a vital homeostatic equilibrium, the terrible community cannot tolerate within its ranks the circulation of any discourse that puts it in danger. To perpetuate itself, the terrible community needs to relegate the danger outwards: it will be the Foreigner, the Competition, the Enemy, the Cops. Thus the terrible community applies to itself, within its innermost ranks, the strictest policing of speech, becoming its own proper censor.

2 Here, where the silent word of repression makes its voice heard, no other word has the right of speech, so that it remains cut off from immediate effectiveness. The terrible community is a response to the aphasia[†] imposed by all biopolitical regimes. But it is an insufficient response, since it perpetuates itself by internal censorship, limiting itself even further facing the symbolic patriarchy. It is often thus just another form of police, another place to remain emotionally illiterate or in a state of infantile minority under the pretext of an external threat. Because the child is less one who does not speak than someone who is excluded from the play of truth.

†APHASIA: the impairment or abolition of the faculty of using and understanding written and spoken language, independently of any failure of the intellectual processes or any disease or paralysis of the vocal organs.

3 The world-no-longer-world, this *squared-off* world, lives in pathetic auto-celebration still called “Spectacle.” Spectacle nourishes itself in doubt and reduces conscience to anesthetized passivity. What biopolitical democracy asks of conscience is to be witness to destruction, not as effective destruction but as spectacle. But the terrible community asks to witness destruction *as destruction* and thus alternates, so that it may continue to exist, with brief periods of collective reconstruction.

3^{BIS} There is no discourse of truth, there are only *mechanisms* of truth. Spectacle is the mechanism of truth which manages to make profitable *all other* devices of truth. Spectacle and biopolitical democracy converge in their acceptance of whatever false discourse is offered, provided that it allows for the continuation of the armed peace that remains in force. The proliferation of insignificance aims to envelope all that exists.

4 The terrible community knows the world, but it does not know *itself*. Because it *is*, in its affirmative way, a being that is not reflexive but stagnant. On the other hand, in its negative aspect, it *exists* insofar as it denies the world, thus denying itself, being made in the world's image. There is no consciousness before existence, no self-consciousness before activity, but particularly, there is no consciousness in the activity of unconscious self-destruction. From the moment the terrible community perpetuates itself under the hostile view of others, interjecting this view and constituting itself as object and not subject of the hostility, the terrible community can only love and hate *in reaction*.

5 The terrible community is a human agglomerate but not a group of companions. Members of the terrible community meet and come together by accident more than by choice. *They do not go along together*, they do not know one another.

6 The terrible community is riddled by all sorts of complicities—how would it otherwise subsist?—but unlike the the precursors it claims, these complicities in no way determine its form. Rather, its form is that of SUSPICION. The members of the terrible community are suspicious of one another because none among them knows the community of which they are a part. It is a community without a possible narrative, thus impenetrable, which can only be experienced in the immediate. But this is an inorganic immediacy that reveals nothing. Its exposure is social and not political; down to the heroic solitude of the smashing demonstrator what is valued is the body in movement not the coherence between a body and its discourse. This is why the clandestine, the hooded-mask, the game of phony war fascinates and fools at the same time: the provoking cop is also a smasher...

6^{BIS} “We are dealing with an apparatus of total and circulating suspicion, because nothing is absolute. The perfection of surveillance; this is a sum of malevolents.”

—Foucault on the *Panopticon*

7 However, as complicities do exist, members of the terrible community suspect that a project exists as well but that it is kept from them. Thus their suspicion. The suspicion which members of the terrible community hold for one another is even greater than that which they maintain for citizens of the rest of the world. The latter, in fact, do not hide that they have much to hide. They know the image they are *supposed* to have and give to the world of which they are part.

8 If, despite its internal panopticism, the terrible community does not know itself, this is because it is unknowable and, to this extent, as dangerous for the world as for itself. It is the community of anxiety; but it is also the first victim of this anxiety.

8^{BIS} The terrible community is a sum of solitudes that, without protecting itself, keeps itself under surveillance.

9 Love between the members of the terrible community is an inexhaustible tension, nourished by what the other hides and does not hide: their banality. The invisibility of the terrible community to itself allows it to love itself *blindly*.

10 The terrible community’s exterior—its public image—interests it least because they know it to be deliberately false. Equally depository is its self-image, an image created internally that the community disseminates for itself, but which fools no one.

What holds the terrible community together is precisely what lies *beyond* the image—something the members barely get a glimpse of, something that can only be guessed at from the outside. The community is informed *by the banality of its private existence, by the emptiness of its secret, and by the secret of its emptiness*; to perpetuate itself, it will produce and excude the public community.

10^{BIS} The banality of the private in the terrible communities is hidden because this banality is the banality of evil.

11 The terrible community is not based on itself but on the desire brought to it from the outside, and which inevitably takes the form of misunderstanding.

12 The terrible community, as all human formation in advanced capitalist society, functions on an economy of sado-masochistic pleasure. The terrible community, unlike all that it is not, does not confess its fundamental masochism and the desires in which it participates play out on organize themselves on the basis of this misunderstanding.

The “feral” indeed arouses desire, but the desire is a desire of domestication and thus of obliteration, in the same way as an ordinary creature, comfortably established in a day-to-day routine, is erotic only to the extent that one would like to make some atrocious stain or mark upon it. The fact that this emotive metabolism remains hidden is a source of endless suffering for members of the terrible community, who become incapable of evaluating the consequence of the affective gestures (consequences which systematically contradict their predictions). Members of the terrible communities progressively unlearn to love.

13 Sentimental education within the terrible community is based on systematic humiliation, on the pulverization of the self-esteem of its members. *No one must believe themselves* capable of a form of affectivity which would have the right to exist within the community. The hegemonic type of affectivity within the terrible community corresponds paradoxically to the most backward form to be conceived on the outside. Tribe, village, clan, gang, army, family are the human formations universally recognized as the most cruel and least gratifying, but they remain *despite it all* within the terrible communities. Women must assume a form of virility that even males henceforth decline in biopolitical democracies; while at the same time perceiving themselves as women with a declining femininity in relation to the dominant masculine fantasy within the terrible community itself; which is that of the plastic, “sexy” woman (in the image of this pure carnal envelope that is the *Jeune-Fille*) ready for use and consummation of genital sexually.

14 In terrible communities, women, unable to be *the* men become *like* men, while at the same time remaining furiously heterosexual and prisoners of the most backward stereotypes. If in the terrible

community no one has the right to tell the truth about human relationships, for women this is doubly true: the woman who makes use of parhnesia within the terrible community will immediately be catalogued as hysterical.

14^{BIS} Within every terrible community, one experiences the astonishing *silence of women*. The pathophobia of the terrible community in fact often shows itself as indirect repression of the feminine word, strange and unsettling because it is word *of flesh*. It is not that women are made silent; simply the space-limit with madness, where their word of truth could be expressed is discreetly erased, day by day.

15 “It is not that women would have had difficulty taking action: they were even more courageous, more capable and more convinced than men. They were only given less autonomy at the level of initiatives: it was as if a difference instinctively surfaced in the preparation and in collective discussions about work, and their voice counted less.

“The problem was in the group: there was a trivializing behavior, an un-said, indeed even a ‘shut up’ thrown right into the middle of discussion. [...] This type of discrimination was not due to an a priori decision, but was rather something brought in from the exterior, in part unconsciously, something that was short of willful belief. Something that cannot be resolved in an ideological declaration or by a rational choice.”

—Ida Faré & Franca Spirito, *Mara and the Others: Women and the Armed Struggle*

15^{BIS} Since the terrible community is based on unspoken relations, it finishes inevitably by falling into the most residual and most “primitive” relations. Women are meant to manage concrete things, everyday affairs. Men are meant to be violent and lead. In this overwhelming reproduction of obsolete sexual clichés, *the only rapport possible between man and woman is the rapport of seduction*. But as generalized seduction would lead the terrible community to explosion, it is strictly held back by the heterosexual monogamous couple-form that dominates.

16 “It is true that groups are undermined by very different forces which institute in them conjugal, familial interior centers. These make them adapt completely different forms of sociability, replacing the af-

fects of the pack with family sentiments or State intelligibility. The center or internal black holes take the principal role. It is there that evolutionism can be seen to progress in this adventure which also occurs to human bands when they reconstitute themselves into family by group, or even an authoritarianism, a fascism of the pack.”

—Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

16^{BIS} Friendships, too, within the terrible community fit into a stylized rickety make-believe that suits all monogamous heterosexual society. Since interpersonal relationships must never be discussed and are supposed to “go without saying,” the question of man-woman relationships is not to be brought up and is systematically resolved the “old-fashioned way,” that is, either in the proto-bourgeois or barbaro-proletarian manner. Friendships thus remain rigorously monosexual, men and women fraternize in an irreducible strangeness which will allow them, when the moment eventually comes, to form...a couple.

17 Familialism in no way implies the existence of real families; on the contrary its massive generalization comes at the very time when the family as a closed entity is exploding, contaminating in return relationships which previously escaped it. “Familialism,” says Guattari, “consists of magically denying social reality to avoid all connections with real flows.” (*The Molecular Revolution*) When, to reassure us, the terrible community tells us that essentially it is “one big family,” everything arbitrary, claustrophobic and moralizing that accompanies the familial institution in the course of its historical existence is brought back to us: except that now, with the pretext of of saving us, all of it is imposed *minus the institution*, in other words, *without our being able to denounce it*.

17^{BIS} Men’s share of humiliation and degradation consists of the obligation to exhibit their capacities as a form of virility or virility performance. The *countertype* has no place in the affective economy of the terrible community, where at last resort only the stereotype prevails. Only the Leader, in fact, is *objectively* desirable. Any other position is untenable without an implicit confession of a basic incapacity to exist singularly: but these departures in relation to the stereotype are ceaselessly fed by the unputying affective metabolism of the terrible community. When the countertype, for example, tries to be distanced from itself he is violently pushed back into the prison cell of his “insufficiency.”

The countertype-scapegoat acts as everyone's distorting mirror, reassuring while disturbing.

By default, we stay in the terrible community to be neither the Leader nor the coutertype, while the latter two remain because they have no choice.

18 Each terrible community has its Leader, and vice versa.

18^{BIS} *Wherever relationships are not questioned old forms rise to the surface in their non-discursive brutality: the strong have the upper hand over the weak, man over woman, adult over child and so on.*

19 The Leader does not have to assert himself, he can even play the countertype or be ironic about his virility. His charisma need not be brought into action because it is attested to by the biometric parameters of desire of the terrible community and by the *effective* submission of the other men and women. The terrible community is the community of cuckolds.

20 The fundamental sentiment that ties the terrible community to its Leader is not submission but *availability*, that is, a sophisticated variant of obedience. The time of the terrible community members must constantly be examined as availability: potential sexual availability for the Leader, physical availability for the most varied tasks, affective availability to submit to whatever wound due to the inevitable distraction of the others. In the terrible community availability is the artistic interjection of discipline.

21 The desire of the leader—as much as the *desire to be* Leader—is doomed to inevitable failure. Because the Leader's wife (no one is unaware) is the only one not to be made victim of his seductive masquerade in so far as she verifies the emptiness on a daily basis. The private life of the rulers is always the most miserable. In fact the Leader is desirable within the terrible community as is the sophisticated haughty lady in biopolitical democracy. The sexual desire that men and women have for the Leader, which surrounds him with an aura so intense that all looks are on him, is nothing other than a desire for humiliation. We want the Leader stripped, to see the Leader without dignity truly satisfies an endless list of longings that he arouses as he prevails. Everybody hates the

Leader, as men hated women over the centuries. Basically, everyone wants to *tame* the Leader because everyone abhors the loyalty accorded to him.

EVERYONE DETESTS HIS LOVE FOR THE LEADER.

22 The personal, in the terrible community, *is not* political.

23 The Leader is most often a man, since he acts in the name of the Father.

24 He who *sacrifices himself* acts in the name of the father. The Leader is, in fact, he who perpetuates the sacrificial form of the terrible community with his own sacrifice, and weighs upon others with his demands that they too make sacrifices. But since the Leader is not a Tyrant—while all the same being, in every respect, highly tyrannical—*he does not openly tell* others what to do; the Leader does not impose his will, he lets it impose itself by secretly guiding the desire of others, which in the final analysis is always simply the desire to please him. To the question “what should I do,” the Leader will respond “whatever you want,” since he knows that his existence within the terrible community in fact *prevents* the possibility of wanting something other than what he wants.

25 He who acts in the name of the Father cannot be questioned. Where force sets itself up as an argument, discourse withdraws into small talk and idle chatter, or into making excuses. As long as there is a Leader—and his terrible community—there will be no parrhesia, and men, women, and the Leader himself will remain in exile. The Leader’s authority cannot enter into the discussion as long as the *facts* prove that people love him while at the same time detesting their own love for him. It may happen that the Leader will put himself in question, and that’s when another will take his place, or when the terrible community, now left *headless*, dies of a heartrending hemorrhage.

26 The Leader *really* is the best of his group. He doesn’t usurp anyone’s place, and everyone knows it. He doesn’t have to fight to win consensus, since it’s him who sacrifices the most, or is the most sacrificed.

27 The Leader is never alone, since everyone is *behind* him, but at the same time he is the pure picture of solitude itself, the most

tragic and duped figure in the terrible community. It is only by virtue of the fact that he is *already* at the mercy of the cynicism and cruelty of others (those who are not in his shoes) that the Leader is at times truly loved and cherished.

IV. FORM

SOME REASONS FOR THE
EXISTENCE OF THE INFAMOUS
AND HOW TODAY'S BROTHERS
BECOME TOMORROW'S ENEMIES.
OF THE DISCREET CHARM OF
ILLEGALITY
AND OF ITS HIDDEN TRAPS

1 The terrible community is a post-authoritarian power apparatus. It apparently does not have a bureaucracy nor some constraining form. But to produce so much verticality within the informal, it must resort to archaic configurations, roles handed down that still survive in crowded caves of the collective unconscious. Thus the family is not the organizational model but its direct antecedent in the production of informal constraint and the indissoluble living bond of hatred and love.

2 As post-authoritarian formations, "new economy" enterprises fully constitute the title of "terrible communities." Let there be no contradiction in the closing gap between avant-garde capitalism and avant-garde protest. Both are prisoners of the same economic principle, the same concern for efficiency and organization even if they are on different playing fields. *They use the same modality to circulate power and here, their politics coalesce.*

3 Similar, in that, to biopolitical democracy, the terrible community is a device which governs the passage from potential to action for individuals and groups. Within this mechanism, only the ends and means to attain them appear. But the *means without end* which presides in the

process, while being too shameful to mention, is none other than the ECONOMY. It is on the basis of *economic* criteria that roles, rights, possibilities and impossibilities are distributed.

4 So long as the terrible community gives itself the use of the economic performance of its enemy as an alibi to justify its own, it will not break out of its dead ends.

The dada “strategy” of the terrible communities only betrays the incestuous proximity between critic and object, proximity which more often than not ends up becoming familiarity—indeed, a relationship so close that the two are difficult to separate.

The targeted demand, so long as it does not consider destroying the context which brought about its birth, or the exposure of the mechanisms of power which does not consider their demolition, sooner or later leads to the path without poetry of management, leading back to the root of every terrible community.

5 Informality in the terrible community is always controlled by a very rigid implicit distribution of responsibilities. Only on the basis of an *explicit modification of responsibilities and their priorities* can the circulation of power be modified.

6 The terrible community is the continuation of classic politics by other means. I call “classic politics” politics which place at its center a closed subject, full and self-sufficient in its right-wing variation and an incomplete subject—its contingent due to circumstances that will transform it to join the monadic sufficiency—in its left-wing variation.

7 The terrible community, all things considered, can *exclude* no one because it has neither law nor explicit form. It can only include.

To renew itself, it must then gradually destroy those who are part of it, or else reach total stagnation. It lives off sacrifice since sacrifice is condition of belonging to it. This alone sustains the ephemeral and reciprocal confidence of its members. Without that would there be so great a need for action? Would there be such fervor to renew itself by the most frenetic agitation?

7^{BIS} The less a community feels the sensation of its existence, the more it is compelled to externally actualize its own enactment, in activism, in compulsive gathering and finally in the constant metastatic questioning of itself. The never ending collective self-criticism that the management of avant-garde groups more and more visibly engages in, as well as the informal groups of neo-militants, rather demonstrates the decisive weakness in their sentiment that they exist.

**Metastasis:* (Greek, displacement) 1. a pathological state, the transmission of pathogenic microorganisms or cancerous cells from an original site to one or more sites elsewhere in the body; 2. rhetoric transference, transformation or change from one point to another; 3. a cancer on the body politic.

8 Certain fighting terrible communities were founded by survivors of a shipwreck, a war, some sort of devastation on a grand scale. The survivors memory is not, then, the memory of the vanquished, but of those *excluded from combat*.

8^{BIS} For this reason the terrible community is born as exiled in exile, memory within loss of memory, intransmissible tradition. The survivor is never the one who was at the center of the disaster, but the one who stood on the sidelines, living on the edge. In the same way, in the time of the terrible community, the edge became center and the concept of center lost all validity.

9 The terrible community is without foundation, because it is without conscience of its beginning and end, it registers only from moment to moment, as if something already has happened, so only through the vision of others, of repetition, of anecdote: “do you remember the time that...?”

10 The terrible community is a passing present, not going beyond itself. For this reason it has no future. It has crossed the thin line that separates resistance from persistence, the ‘dèjà-vu’ from amnesia.

11 The terrible community only has a sense of its existence in illegality. Moreover, all sado-masochistic human exchanges *outside commodity relations* are destined to fall into illegality. This is a violent metaphor for the unspeakable misery of the times. It is only in illegality that the terrible community perceives itself to *ek-sist*, negatively certainly, as outside the sphere of legality and as a creation liberating itself from itself. All the while not recognizing legality as legitimate, the terrible community has nevertheless been able to make its own negation the space of its existence.

11^{BIS} It is on the basis of masochism that the terrible community forms fleeting alliances with the oppressed, although it may mean quickly finding itself placed in the unassumable role of sadist. Thus it accompanies the excluded along the road to integration and watches as they distance themselves, full of ingratitude, and become what the community hoped to defeat.

12 Deprived of the secret, of repentance—infamy. The strength and the fragility of the terrible community is its way of inhabiting risk. Indeed, it lives intensely only when it finds itself in danger. This danger results from the repentance of its members. Repentance—*from the point of view of the infamous*—is far from illegitimate: someone who repents is someone who has had an “epiphany”—in the gaze of the inquisitor’s eye who suspects him, he suddenly recognizes himself as a member of a suspected project. He confesses to a truth he has never lived, and which he never even imagined before the inquisition required it of him.

12^{BIS} Every repentant is essentially a mythomaniac (in the same way as those who have seen the Virgin Mary). He actualizes under the authority of his own schizophrenia. Thus doing, he becomes an *individual* but without assuming his dividuality: he believes—or rather would like to believe—himself to finally be in the right, in coherence. He exchanges his past real complicities for an non-existent complicity with his traditional enemy; he takes himself to be the enemy; which, it may be said in passing, becomes effective as soon as he repents. But the infamous only barter an unconscious and moderately destructive sado-masochism for another sado-masochism, conscious and ethically shameful this time. He sacrifices the duplicity of schizophrenia to fall into the duplicity of the traitor.

13 *“Women were treated like sex objects, but when they participated in actions: they were then treated like men. It was the only relationship of equality. They often did more than the men, they really had more courage. [...] It was there that, for the first time, the problem of traitors came up: because of the insensitivity of the group. [...] Hela and Anne-Katrine said nothing about me, I was the only group member not to be locked up. I had a different relationship with them. It was the great love they both had for me...”*

—Baumi Baumann, *How Everything Began*

13^{BIS} Once the truth of the terrible community is revealed by the repentant, the community is doomed, since it lives off the ignorance of its secret, protected by its shadow rather than protecting it. The shameful secrets of the terrible communities end up in the indifferent mouths of men of Law and the ambient hypocrisy that maintained them, for once, pretends to ignore them. Yesterday's accomplice is deeply shocked, committing his infamous-becoming in a variant of the informer or the dissociated.

Thus pedophilia, conjugal rape, corruption, mafia blackmail; founding behaviors of the dominant ethos up till now, will be denounced as criminal behavior.

14 The need for justice *is a need for punishment*. Here the common sado-masochistic root dictates the terrible community's ethical conformity as it brushes up in its unconfessed link with the Empire.

15 (Deprived of danger: legalization—ideals, betrayed.) The deathly embrace which holds the debris of biopolitical democracies together, the biopower, resides in the possibility of withholding from the terrible communities at every moment the freedom to live at risk. This is done by a simultaneous dual movement subtraction-repression, either: by violence and legitimation-addition or by condescension. Through these two movements the biopower deprives the terrible community of a space to exist and condemns it to persistence. The biopower marks off the area it allows. Acting this way, it transforms utopia into atopia and heterotopia into dystopia. Localized and identified, the terrible community, which has done everything to avoid being mapped out, becomes *a space like any other*.

15^{BIS} It is by synchronizing the muddy and informal time of the terrible community to the temporality outside it that biopower deprives the terrible community of the space of risk and danger. It is enough for biopower to simply *recognize* the terrible community for it to lose the power to break the well-ordered course of the disaster with the eruption of its clandestinity. From the moment that the terrible community falls under the same head as so many other cracks in publicity, it is immediately located and territorialized within a place outside-of-legality which is immediately encompassed *as something outside*.

16 Once again it is the invisibility of the terrible community to itself that puts it at the mercy of being seen unilaterally and with which it cannot in any case, *not interact*.

16^{BIS} If the terrible community refuses the principle of representation, it nevertheless does not escape representation. The invisibility of the terrible community to itself makes it infinitely vulnerable to the view of others. Because it is well known that the terrible community only exists *in the eyes of others*.

V. THOSE WHO STAY

THOSE WHO LEAVE

PEOPLE WHO LIVE LIKE SLEEP-
WALKERS.

THE BROKEN-HEARTED AND THE
HEART-BREAKERS.

SOME MORE NOTES ON THE BAD
USE OF GOOD INTENTIONS.

(ILLUSTRATING THAT STRATEGY
ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH
AND HUMAN RELATIONS
ARE NOT 'QUESTIONS OF
PSYCHOANALYSIS.')

“Aber Freunde! Wir kommen zu spät.” (My friends! We come too late.)

—Hölderlin

1 One enters the terrible community because, in the desert, the searcher finds nothing else as he passes through this temporary, faltering, human architecture. At first, one falls in love and enters, feeling that the community was built on tears and suffering and that more is called for to continue its existence; but that matters little. The terrible community is foremost a place for devotion, and that is moving, that awakens the “caring reflex.”

2 But the relationships within terrible community are worn. They were no longer young, alas! when we arrived. Like stones in a riverbed where the water runs too fast, the looks, the gestures, the attention, are all used up. Something is tragically missing from the life of the terrible community because there is no more room for indulgence, and friendship, so many times betrayed, is extended with extreme parsimony.

Like it or not, those who pass through, and those who arrive, pay for the misdeeds of others. The people they would love are already too visibly damaged to pay any mind to their good intentions

“*With time, goes...*” The wariness of others must be overcome, more precisely one must learn to be as wary *as the others*, so that the terrible community can open its emaciated arms again. It is the capacity to be *hard* with new arrivals, finally that will demonstrate solidarity with the terrible community.

2 BIS “*This cruelty, it was in their smile, in what gave them pleasure, in the way they communicated with one another, in the way they lived and died. The misfortune of others was their greatest source of joy and I asked myself if, in their mind, this reduced or increased the possibility of seeing misfortune strike themselves. Personal misfortune, in fact, was not a probability but a certainty. Cruelty was a part of them, of their humor, of their relationships, of their thoughts. And yet, so great was their isolation as individuals that I do not believe they thought this cruelty affected the others.*”

—Colin Turnbull, *The Iks*

2 TER In the terrible community one always arrives *too late*.

3 The force of the terrible community comes from its violence. Violence is its real reason and its real challenge. But it does not benefit

from the consequences. Instead of using it to charm, it repels those on the outside, and tears apart those within. The extreme accuracy of its violence is blunted by the community's refusal to question its origins. Though many think so, hatred of the enemy is not the source.

4 The terrible community is a hemorrhaging community. Its *temporality* is hemorrhaging because the time for heroes is experienced as a time of decay, a missed opportunity, déjà-vu. People do not make events happen but wait for them as spectators. In this waiting period their lives bleed away in activism that is supposed to occupy and legitimate the present—until they are exhausted.

More than passivity, one would have to talk here about agitated inertia. With the decomposition of the social body, synonymous with biopolitical democracy, no position appears to present itself. A maximum of inertia and a maximum of mobility are also possible. But a “structure of movement,” to allow mobility, must construct an architecture that people can pass through. This happens in the terrible community through individuals who accept inertia making the community possible and radically impossible at the same time. The Leader alone has the ungrateful task of *managing* and ordering the equilibrium between the inert and the agitated.

4^{BIS} In the very measure that the terrible community is based on sharing between its static and mobile members it has lost its bet in advance. It has failed as a community.

5 The face of the inert is the most painful memory for someone who has been to the terrible community. Meant to teach something they themselves have not been able to acquire, the inert stand watch, like sad policeman at the edge of desert territories.

Certainly they inhabit a space that belongs to them, but because it is structurally public, they are always there, by the same right as *everyone else*. They cannot claim to have a space of their own within this space because it was the prior renunciation itself of this right that gave them access. The inert inhabit the community like the homeless inhabit the train station. But each step passes through them as they are the station themselves and its construction is congruent with the construction of their life.

The inerts are scatterbrained desperate angels who have found no hiding place in the world, so they inhabit a passageway. For an indeterminate time they can submerge themselves in the community: their solitude is infinitely impermeable.

6 Everyone knows the ones who are always there. They are appreciated and detested and stay there, while others live and pass through (the nurse, the mother, the elderly, the public park watchmen). They are freedom's fake mirror, the assiduous, the slaves of an unusual servitude that puts them in a splendid light: the combatants, the indomitable, those without privacy, without peace. They finally look for the rage to fight in their mutilated lives. They attribute their wounds to a noble and imaginary battle, when in fact they have wounded themselves while training to exhaustion. In truth they have never entered the field of battle: the enemy does not recognize them. They are seen as simple static and are pushed by the enemy's indifference—to madness, to ordinary insignificance, to a suicidal offensive. The alphabet of biopower has no letters to retain their names; for the enemy, they have already disappeared, but resist as unsatisfied ghosts. They are dead and survive in the transit of faces that pass through them. Those who stay flicker out, becoming tomorrow's inerts.

6 ^{BIS} *"In groups many women have had the experience of employees or secretaries. They bring all their professionalism to the groups when they have left work. Nothing has changed for them in this way except that they take up armed struggle. [...] Meetings were the vital and 'significant' center of the houses. As for the rest, there were no problems, the material conditions of daily life dealt with the external struggle. We did huge shopping runs at the supermarket and when we had taken care of the meals and what we needed to sleep, there were no longer any internal problems."*

—Ida Faré and Franca Spirito, *Mara and the Others:
Women and the Armed Struggle*

7 The most dead and the most implacable of the inerts are those who were abandoned. Those whose friend or lover left, stay, because all that remains of those who have disappeared lives on in the terrible community and in the eyes of those who saw them. The inert who lost a loved one has nothing to lose and he gives this nothing to the terrible community.

7^{BIS} “[...] war against the external enemy pacifies, more or less by forced necessity, those who lead the fight. Belonging to a group unified by an absolute revolt leaves no room for differences, for infighting. Fraternity becomes the daily and indispensable bread in moments when the widest contradictions risk explosion. Internal pacification is a cleansing moment projected on the giant screen of the fight ‘against.’”

—Ida Faré and Franca Spirito, *Mara and the Others:
Women and the Armed Struggle*

8 The horizon is the line towards which the militants must always march. Because it is over there, somewhere, that all those lost are to be found.

O. NOTES FOR OVERCOMING

A FEW INDICATIONS FOR GETTING BEYOND THE PRESENT MISERY, NON-EXHAUSTIVE AND UNPROGRAMMED

“Oh my brothers, my children, my companions, I loved you with all my anger but I did not know how to tell you. I was not able to reach you, to touch your chilly souls, your empty hearts! I was not able to find the words of courage, lively words to fill your chests with laughter! I lost the meanness of wanting you to stand up, the rage of staring at you with my eyes wide open. I lost the words to convey my refusal to see us grow old before we lived, to let down our arms without raising them first, to step down before we thought about going up. I was not strong enough to chase sleep away, to keep it from throwing you outside the world and time. I was not strong enough to chase it far away from you because, in my turn, season after season, I weakened, I felt the parts of my body soften, my thoughts dissipate, my anger disappear, and your non-existence finally win me over.”

J. Lefebvre, *The Society of Consolation*

1 The terrible community, whatever it is, is *like* all the others, because it is *in* all the others.

2 Biopolitical democracy and the terrible community—one as axiomatic of the distribution of power relationships, the other as the effective substrata of immediate relationships—constitute the two polarities of the present domination. It has reached a point at which power relationships that regulate biopolitical democracies could not exist, properly speaking, without the terrible communities. They form the ethical substrata of the other. More exactly, the terrible community is the *passionate*

form of this axiomatic structure. It is the only one to allow the other to function on the ground.

In the end, it is only by means of the terrible community that Empire succeeds at semioticizing the most heterogenous social groups in the biopolitical democratic *form*. In the absence of terrible communities biopolitical democracy would have no *body* in which to function. Archaic systems—neo-slavery, worldwide prostitution, neo-feudal enterprise, all types of human trafficking—are intricately connected to imperial hyper-sophistication and cannot be understood without the terrible community's mediation.

This does not mean there is any subversive value to attempts aiming to destroy the terrible community. As a regime which mediates, the terrible community has no vitality of its own. Nothing within it allows for a transformation into something different that might profoundly upset the current state of things; so there is *nothing to save*. And it is a fact that the present is so saturated with terrible communities that any individual attempt at partial rupture is immediately negated with astonishing speed.

If it is an absurdity to ask what to do with the terrible communities, the ones that are always-*already done* and always-*already in dissolution*, communities in which internal insubordination is reduced to silence (parrhesia and the rest)—on the other hand it is vitally important to fully understand the concrete conditions in which biopolitical democracies and terrible communities can be ruined. For that it is necessary to exercise a certain view, 'the thief's look,' the one who sees the real possibility of escape from within the mechanism. Sharing that look are those most alive who will bring about what the terrible community, even against its will, sees as writing against the wall: its own dissolution.

Because the terrible communities are never really fooled by their own lies, they are merely connected by nearsightedness, which allows them to survive.

2^{BIS} We have given the name of *terrible community* to all milieus that are constituted on the basis of the sharing of the same ignorances—and *also* the ignorance, it so happens, of the evil that produced them. Vitalist criteria, which would consider the malaise felt inside a human formation as the touchstone for seeing a terrible community in it, are quite often inoperable. The most "successful" of terrible communities

teach their members to love their own failings and to make them likeable. In this sense, the terrible community is not the place where one suffers the most, but just the place where one is the least free.

3 The terrible community is a presence in absence because it is incapable of existing by itself. It exists only in relationship to something else, something exterior to it. So it is not by unmasking the compromises or failings of the terrible community but by showing its shameful relationships that we abandon the false notion of it as an alternative to the dominant social model. Only by turning inside out its *vile* schizophrenia—“you’re only with us, you’re not pure enough”—into a *contaminating* schizophrenia—“everybody is *also* with us and that is what undermines the current order”—can members of the terrible community escape the *double bind* that walls them in.

4 One cannot be freed of the terrible community by overthrowing a particular leader. The vacant place will soon be taken by another since the Leader only personifies the desire by all to be led. Whatever one may say, the Leader is more of a participant in the terrible community than one who leads. He is its secretion and its tragedy, its model and its nightmare. It only requires the personal education of each member to subjectify and desubjectify the Leader differently than he might do so for himself. Desire and power are never independent but always intimately connected. All that becomes necessary is to force them apart—to break up the dance.

Often a certain skeptical look is enough to definitively demolish the Leader *as such*, and his place in so doing.

5 All the weakness of the terrible community comes from its isolation, from its incapacity to get beyond itself. Not being a whole Being but an unsound construction, it is as unable to acquire an inner life as it is to nourish one with joy. And so the error is paid of having confused happiness with transgression. Because only through the latter are the most implacable rules of the terrible community being re-written.

6 So the terrible community’s fear of ‘recuperation’ can be explained: therein lies the best justification for its self-enclosure and morality. With the pretext “we won’t be bought,” understanding that we have already been bought is made impossible. And we have been bought *to stay where we are*. Resistance here becomes retention: the old temptation to

bind beauty and its sister death, which drives Orientals* to fill their cages with beautiful birds that never see the sky, jealous fathers to shut in their most beautiful daughters, and the stingy to fill their cupboards with gold ingots. This sense overcomes the terrible community. So much beauty incarcerated withers.

*[We reflexively cringe at the use of this word, but choose not to edit it for the sake of textual integrity. —eds.]

And even princesses enclosed in their towers know that the arrival of prince charming is only a prelude to conjugal segregation. Both prisons and liberators must be abolished at the same time. What we need is not programs for liberation but practices of freedom.

No escape from the terrible community is possible without the creation of an insurrectional situation, and vice-versa. But far from preparing insurrectional conditions, the definition of self as an illusory difference, as being *substantially other* is simply the conscious residue determined by the absence of these conditions. The requirement of a coherent group identity for everyone is the equivalent of general castration, of a diffuse self-surveillance.

6^{BIS} The end of the terrible community coincides with an opening to events: around these events, the singularities group, learn to cooperate and to reach out to one another. But the terrible community, animated by an inexhaustible desire for self-preservation, sees all possibilities through the filter of their existential compatibility, reacting, rather than organizing around events as they arise.

That is why every terrible community maintains a posture of defensive conspiracy in reacting to events. It conceives the relation to the possible in terms of production or exclusion and is always tempted most by the management option, always secretly attracted there by its totalitarian latency.

7 *“Man’s worth is not to be evaluated by the useful work he furnishes but according to the contagious force he disposes of to lead others in the free release of their energy, their joy and their life: a human being is not only a stomach to fill but overflowing energy to be poured out.”*

—Bataille

We know from experience that in the passionate life—in life itself—nothing is to be paid for. The winner is always the one who gives the most and knows how best to enjoy life.

To organize the circulation of other forms of pleasure is a way of giving strength to combat the logic of oppression. It is true, then, that *to avoid taking power you must first have a lot of it.*

In opposing the complex mechanism of power, another register of *play* does not mean to be written off as ‘not serious.’ Rather, it means being bearers of another economy of spending and recognition. The margin of *jouissance* existing within the game of *power* is fed by sacrifices and mutually-exchanged humiliations; the pleasure of commanding is a pleasure to be paid for. In that, the model of biopolitical domination is quite compatible with all religions that flay the flesh with an ethic of work and a penitentiary system. Very much in the same way as the commercial and hedonistic logic connects with an absence of desire, which it saps.

In truth, the terrible community never succeeds in stemming the power of becoming inherent in every form-of-life. It is exactly that which allows it to unhinge the internal relationships of force, to question power through to its post-authoritarian forms.

8 Every human aggregate that faces the external world with an exclusively offensive or opaque perspective *is* a terrible community.

To end the terrible community first it is necessary to give up *self-definition* as the façade we create as our exterior—“society,” “competition,” “the Blooms,” or something else. The true elsewhere that remains for us to create cannot be sedentary; it is a new coherence between beings and things, a violent dance giving back life its own rhythm, replacing the macabre cadences of industrial civilization and re-inventing the interaction between remarkable natures—a new art of distances.

9 Evasion is like the opening of a blocked door: initially it gives an impression of not seeing as far: we stop looking at the horizon and begin putting into place the details for getting out.

But evasion is only a simple escape: it leaves the prison intact. We must have *desertion*, a flight that at the same time obliterates the whole prison.

Properly speaking, there is no individual desertion. Each deserter takes with him a little of the group’s fighting spirit. By simply existing he is an active challenge to the official order: and all the relationships he enters are contaminated by the radicality of his situation.

For the deserter, the relations he engages in are a question of life or death that avoid neither his solitude, his boundaries or his exposure.

10 The basic presupposition of a human aggregate removed from the domination of the terrible community is a new union of three coordinates fundamental to *physical* existence: solitude, boundary, and exposure. In the terrible community these coordinates are combined by fear and follow the necessities of survival. In the shadow of these imperatives, fear is what gives necessary consistence to all the ghosts that accompany existence—first and foremost is the ghost of penury so often introjected as *a priori* and supra-historical to the “human condition.”

In his *Presentation of Sacher-Masoch*, Deleuze shows that, beyond the psychiatric fixation of masochism as perversion and the caricature of the masochist as counter-type to the sadist, Masoch’s novels present the systematic denigration of the symbolic order of the Father. This presentation implies—in other words presupposes at the same time it puts into action—a group of ailments that go beyond the sharing of bodies between men and women. All the elements which constitute the masochistic complex converge in the desired effect: a practical ridiculisation of the symbolic order of the Father and the deactivation of its essential attributes—indefinite suspension of penalty and the systematic rarification of the desired object.

All the mechanisms aimed at producing in us a personal identification with the practices of domination are equally, if not exclusively, bound to produce in us a sense of shame. Shame of being oneself and a person, a resentment aiming at our own identification with the domination. It is this sense of shame and resentment that provides the vital space needed to replicate and continue the order and action of the Leader.

Here we find confirmation of the existence of an inextricable *nexus* between fear and superstition seen at the dawn of all revolutions, between the crisis of presence and the indefinite suspension of penalty, between *economy of need* and *absence of desire*. That is said in passing, and only as a reminder of how deeply stratified the process of subjugation is which supports the current existence of the terrible community.

In what way can “Masoch’s construct” be generalized to evolve into a *human strike* revoking the alternative between domination and submission? In what manner can playing out the *nexus* of domination produce a way

to get beyond the production stage and free the way to an expression of practicable forms-of-life?

And to return to our starting question, how can such forms-of-life combine toward a new solitude, boundary, and exposure?

This question is one of a new emotional education that instills supreme contempt for all positions of power, undermines the command to desire power and lets us be free to be *responsible* for our own being whatever it may be in its solitude, boundary and exposure.

No one is responsible for the place he occupies but only in identifying with ones own role.

The power of every terrible community is thus a power to exist *within* its subjects in its absence.

To free us from it, we have to learn to inhabit the space that separates us and ourselves which, if left empty, becomes the space of the terrible community.

Then to shed our identifications, to become unfaithful and to *desert* ourselves.

Trying to become the place of desertion for one another,

Finding in each encounter the occasion for a decisive reduction of our own existential space.

Measuring that only an infinitesimal fraction of our vitality was taken away by the terrible community despite the enormity of means employed,

Feeling within ourselves the foreign being which has always-already deserted and which sets up every possibility to live solitude as a condition of encounter, boundary as a condition of unimaginable pleasure, exposure as the condition for a new geometry of passions,

Offering something like the space of infinite flight,

Masters of a new art of distances.

“Aber das Irtsaal hilft.”
(But wandering helps.)

–Hölderlin

POST-SCRIPTUM

Everyone knows the terrible communities, having spent time in them or being within them still because they are always stronger than the others. And because of that one always stays, in part—and parts at the same time. Family, school, work, and prison are the classic faces of this form of contemporary hell. But they are less interesting as they belong to an old form of market evolution and only presently survive. On the contrary, there are the terrible communities which struggle against the existing state of things that are at one and the same time attractive and better than “this world.” And at the same time their way of being closer to the truth—and therefore to joy—moves them away from freedom more than anything else.

The question we must answer in a final manner is of a more ethical than political nature because the classic political forms and their categories fit us like our childhood clothing. The question is to know if we prefer the possibility of an unknown danger to the certainty of a present misery. That is to say if we want to continue to live and speak in agreement (dissident perhaps, but always in agreement) with what has been done so far—and thus with the terrible communities—or, if we want to question that small portion of our desire that the culture has not already infested in its mess, to try—in the name of an original happiness—a different path.

This text was conceived as a contribution to that other voyage.

translation: mr. silver[wo]man || cover: flesheater || terrible community: all of us

LES PÉTROLEUSES WERE THE SEX WORKERS, WITCHES, AND LADY-PROLES OF
THE PARIS COMMUNE WHOSE 'LOVE OF RIOT' BURNT PARIS TO THE GROUND.

holla: petroleusepress.tumblr.com or petroleusepress@gmail.com

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