UNTIMELY

for Worlds Without Measure (being my thoughts on the project Killing King Abacus)

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What was *Killing King Abacus*? There are some who would answer this question with one or another banality. One such banality would be that it was a "product of its time." But for rebels against a world without measure, this is a meaningless phrase. It says nothing more than that in a *measured* world—the world that three friends (among others) wanted to destroy—the physical expression of a creative process these three friends shared in took place coincidentally with certain other events. This is a fact of no significance except to those who, due to a religious belief, give history a purpose—christians, muslims, marxists, "post-marxists", etc.—and so have to assume that every activity or event must reflect that purpose regardless of the intentions of the individuals who created it. This is the thinking of god-lovers. Regardless of what names they give their gods or any pretenses they might have of being "atheists" (there are myriads of pious "atheists" in the world I despise), this remains a statement of faith. I hate all gods, all faiths, all believers, and I refuse to recognize any claims they lay on anything I have done.

No, *Killing King Abacus* was not a product of its or any other time (*time*, being merely a concept, produces nothing). It was the passionate creation of three individuals. We were close friends at the time, who shared many intense moments, and who, each of us in her or his own way, rebelliously refused the measured world that had been imposed on us. As such, all three of us were *untimely* people, and anything we did was bound to be untimely.

Fiercely rebellious individuals do have to contend with the times in which they live, but they do so as *enemies*. For this reason, there is something in them and in what they do that remains beyond their time. This is why, for instance, Sade, Stirner, Nietzsche, Novatore, among others continue to provide fine, strong wines of dionysian inspiration to those of us today who rebel against having our lives measured out for us, who rebel against measuring our lives and our worlds at all.

Does *Killing King Abacus* provide such a wine? Certainly not every word in it. There are articles dealing with specific events going on in the world of that time. But there was also a certain tone that ran through the two issues of the publication that certainly goes beyond its time, a playful ferocity and creativity that called up other worlds. This is why, among our unwitting accomplices you could find the likes of Julio Cortázar. This is why the second issue was spiced with little tidbits of playful utopian dreaming—some borrowed, some created by the three of us.

Such *worlds without measure* as the Land of Cockaigne or the Big Rock Candy Mountain sparked our imaginations, and such visions seem to be timeless.

Because *Killing King Abacus* was an expression of the rebellion, the anarchy, the personal insurrections of three individuals, it couldn't avoid being untimely. So long as authoritarian structures exist, so long as *time* is used as a system of measurement, a system of *rule*, and not merely as way individuals play with each other and with their worlds, rebellion will remain untimely, anarchy will remain untimely, and the rising up of individuals against all that would define and enclose them in social, psychological, historical, conceptual and cultural limits will remain untimely. And for me, *Killing King Abacus*, like every other project I've taken up, was an expression of just such a personal insurrection.

This brings me to another of the banalities you may hear about this project: that *Killing King Abacus* was an insurrectionary anarchist publication. This is true in that the three of us who created it considered ourselves anarchists. In addition, I think that each of us felt that insurrection in one sense or another was essential to the anarchist visions we pursued. But at that point, nothing that could be called Insurrectionary™ Anarchism™ yet existed, and I don't think any of us had a desire to create such a thing. But those who have a need to belong—to be owned by something greater than themselves—prefer words as labels to conform to rather than as adjectives that describe one aspect of a self that will always be greater than any of these aspects. I am an anarchist not because I adhere to Anarchism™ or even Anarchy™, but because I refuse to accept being ruled and, to the best of my ability, fight against whatever strives to rule me, to dominate me, to exploit me. This refusal and this battle involve *rising up* for myself and against the impositions of the ruling order. And this daily rising up is my personal insurrection. Sadly, Insurrection™ seems to limit this word to just a few aspects of insurrection … those involving collective action and violence. To be sure, I would love to see a weaving together of individual *anti-authoritarian* insurrections into a large-scale, "collective" (but only in the sense of an association of individual willful self-creators) insurrection against all authoritarian structures, and I assume that violence would be a necessary tool in any such insurrection, but the defining quality of insurrection as I have always used the term is that of individuals raising themselves up against the structures, the authorities, the ruling orders that would define and confine them. And the beginning of this insurrection is not throwing a rock or a brick, it is not rioting, it is not even blowing up a cop shop (as fine as all of these may be); it is *desertion*. Something, perhaps, far more difficult in a social world that seems so totalizing. But rising up, not for a cause, not to vie for a place in this world, but *for oneself against this world*, is always, first and foremost, a profound and uncompromising "No!" But I know from personal experience that expressing this "No!" on a daily basis often takes the form of finding the ways to sneak around the impositions of authority in order to accomplish one's desires … There is a sense in which every individual who rises up is an escapee on the lam who needs to cultivate the skills that allow her to remain as free as possible. In this world, freedom always exists only in battle against the ruling powers, but it is far more a battle of wits—of creativity, imagination and playfulness—than of arms.

I would like to see this desertion generalize, precisely because in its generalization it would be able to come out more into the open, each one of us would be able to come out more into the open and more readily find our accomplices, and the interweaving of creativity, imagination and play this could bring about and increase the force of these tools. But in this world where power operates more and more through the horizontal control of networks, the technological *communization* that capitalism has imposed, desertion and refusal has specific connotations, particular

among them, that of *breaking ranks*, of refusing the networks, the technologically-imposed global community that insinuates itself everywhere and imposes its methods even on the most adamant rebellion. Who among us does not have a cell phone and an email address? Simply not having a Facebook page is enough to rouse the suspicions of certain upholders of the ruling order. To desert, to refuse, to rise up, is inevitably to be an anachronism, to be untimely. If certain of the current upholders of Insurrection™ (I am thinking of those who over the past ten years have claimed the term for a post-marxist, neo-blanquist ideological product, who occasionally use the word "anarchy", but have no love for anarchists) would rather enlist people into their little army of well-disciplined "communist" grocers, municipal council members, and media opinion-makers, *Killing King Abacus*, precisely because it was an explicitly anti-authoritarian project, was a call for *desertion*. And desertion is an *individual* act, and would remain so even were it to generalize.

I know that I still find *Killing King Abacus* stimulating, thought-provoking, a goad to my own efforts in creating my life on my own terms. There are others who tell me the same. And I am convinced that what is stimulating in *Killing King Abacus* is its emphasis on creativity, imagination and playfulness as essential tools of insurrection, anarchy and rebellion, and on individual freedom as central to anarchy. But I have changed somewhat over the past fifteen years. At the time we did *Killing King Abacus*, I was convinced that it was possible to reconcile individual freedom and communism. I no longer think this can be done. I made the mistake of equating certain negative critiques that the most interesting and extreme communists made—the critiques of work, mercantile exchange and economic property—for communism. But communism is not essentially a *negation*. It is a positive concept, specifically the promotion of the idea of *community*, that is of *becoming one with each other*. Communist writers have spoken of this in such terms as "species being" ("*Gattungswesen*," aka "species essence," if one wants to stick more closely to how hegelian terms tend to get translated into English) and "human community." Basically, a global linking together of the human species into single unity greater than any of the individuals involved. Marx argued that the development of the productive forces under capitalism would bring about this unity in the realm of production. If he was wrong in locating where it would happen, I would argue that the ruling order has succeeded in creating this "human community", this "species being", not through the technology of production (or not primarily so), but through developments in the technology of communication. The internet, cell phone technology and all that goes along with them is connecting more and more of the global population in a community based precisely on the suppression of all that is unique in each individual, all that is most intimate and personal. It is communism in the only way communism can exist, through the reduction of each individual to a mere atom in the global machine. That the ruling system of the state and capitalism has accomplished this should come as no surprise, since this suppression of every individual into a mere electron flowing through the networks of its machine has always been the aim of ruling systems. Some would argue that it is now too late to fight this. Even most so-called rebels prefer to carry out their rebellion in the terms that this system sets, preferring to be in line with "historical forces," preferring to be timely, and so willingly participating in what they rebel against. I see a dearth of imagination, of creativity, of a fierce playfulness capable of a utopian journey that refuses all authoritarian destinations behind this surrender disguised as rebellion. In light of such a world, the spirit of refusal and desertion that infused *Killing King Abacus* seems more necessary than ever, because it is only outside that there is any possibility for imagination, creativity and play to flourish. And this *outside*, for now, may have to be in those most intimate, hidden realms where poetry, passion and dreams can still breathe, realms that are

getting reduced more and more, drowned under a glut of information available to everyone, useful to no one but those who rule us. Against this, only you and I as self-creating individuals can rise up, and that insurgence will need to be a desertion, a break with the networked world of authority.