

The Writings of Hakim Bey

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Moorish Resources

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I have added an important essay by Henri Corbin: [Mundus Imaginalis](#)

There is also Moorish documents written by Hakim Bey:

- [The Black Thorn Manifesto](#)
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T. A. Z.

**The Temporary
Autonomous
Zone, Ontological
Anarchy, Poetic
Terrorism**

By Hakim Bey

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Autonomedia
POB 568
Williamsburgh
Station
Brooklyn, New York
11211-0568 USA

Garden of Delight
Publications
3 Castle Street
Dublin 2,
Ireland

Phone & Fax: 718-
963-2603
EMail:
semiotexte@aol.com

Phone:
01.475.0075
EMail:
Glendale@indigo.IE

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For and Against Interpretation

Angels are knocking at the
tavern door
--Hafez of Shiraz

... [to] the Lunatics of
Ireland...
--Dean Swift's Last Will &
Testament (formerly
inscribed on the £10 note)

Kildare is flat - so no matter
where you go you can see
the electric lines parading
across the landscape like
Hollywood Martians. Patrick
is staying at "Bishop's
Court" which despite the
name turns out to be a
dank, three-room cottage
and an old cowshed littered
with artworks by Hilarius
and others including several
pieces made out of rusty
farm implements and slabs
of peat cut from local bog.
After tea in the windswept
muddy farmyard, we set out
to find St. Patrick's Church
and Well, not far away in
another farmyard next to a
metal barn and surrounded
by cows and cowshit -

thirteenth century or earlier, Romanesque with a touch of Gothic (or Egyptian?) in the pointed arch of the windows - restored in the 1950s but forgotten and overgrown with ivy and cobwebs - the architecture enforces humility since one must stoop to enter as in Zen tea-houses. Our friends James and Sean have decided to spruce it up, construct an altar and hang a brass bell in the belfry, then see how long it takes for anyone to notice. We walk along the road occasionally cringing into the wildflowers, to dodge the fast cars of big farmers, then duck into the hedge of blackberry vines full of late flowers and early fruit. The Well doesn't appear to be listed in any national Register - perhaps no one visits it anymore. Like other springs I've seen in Ireland, it feels like a sapphire set in an emerald set in jade, set in a druid's hand - we circle it thrice sunwise then drink - cars are whizzing by not twenty paces away - Sean recently saw a spirit here and left a portrait of it like a life-mask in plaster next to the Well on a slab of stone.

According to the 13th century Andalusian Sufi Ibn Arabi there exist "delicate tenuities" that stretch between heaven and earth like Jacobs-ladders - and the "meanings" which descend along these tenuities are like angels. I believe he actually saw the tenuities as nearly-transparent ribbands of light, strands of aurora borealis pulsing with luminous nodes like stars falling through gauze curtains. There's no need to limit this perception either by theological or psychological explanations - for the naïve realist any experience has as much a prior claim to ontological authenticity as any other experience - a spirit is seen or a meaning descends in the same manner that a soft rain is seen and descends. But how naïve can we be? Never mind - the most advanced science or abstruse theology leads us in bewilderment back to the same crude existentialist proposal: since it appears, it might as well be real. So - if the meaning that appears in the tenuity is real, it can be traced back to its source which is real - or real

enough for our present purposes - and this tracing-back is called (by the Ismaili gnostics) *ta'wil*, or "Interpretation." The psychologist would say the knowledge that arises in this operation comes from inside - the theologian would say it comes from outside - but for us both explanations have lost power to beguile. As an alchemical process, interpretation transpires in a space both inside/outside and neither simultaneously; as "hermeneutic exegesis" (in Henry Corbin's phrase) it belongs to an in-between or isthmus called *Mundus Imaginalis*, where images appear as autonomous, or where dreams foretell the truth. In one sense neither real nor unreal, in another sense, perfectly capable of appearing to us as spirit, the world of imagination acts as if it were the source of significances, location of personae, breath of the world. Science and religion might unite to call this delusion - but for us it is rather a matter of sheer desperation. The two-dimensionality of duelling epistemologies, dichotomies, semantic traps, bad faiths - fuck

science and religion - we should demand a rationalism of the marvellous - an end to the violence of the explanation.

In this context, individuals and groups bear the responsibility of making contact with their own angels - even the mystic gurus has misled us here, since they stand between us and our own awareness and pretend to an authority that reduces us to subjects - or rather to objects - objects of someone else's interpretation. It seems we cannot escape the imputation of an old heresy here - based on the presumption that everyone at every moment knows precisely what's going on and what to do - if only they can break free of need, oppression, and the suffocation of false consciousness - and escape the scarcity by which authority measures its wealth and its power against us. Above all - the scarcity of interpretation.

The most pernicious power of interpretation belongs now to Capital itself, which claims to be free of all

dualities, all otherness - in a terminal "obscene ecstasy" of united and flattened consciousness - a universalization of money in conceptual space, far removed and transcended above all mere filthy production, a kind of numisphere or heavenly weather of pure money - and in global debt, everything's debt to nothing, like a black hole on the event horizon, sucking up every last particle of light in an emptiness beyond history. According to the "natural law" of this total liberation of money, nothing - not even air, water, or dirt - is to be experienced directly by the autonomous self or group; everything must be mediated by money itself, which intends to stand between consciousness and production as an absolute filter, sifting out every last trace of authenticity and charging for it - taxing reality itself - as an ultimate power beyond even authority or law. Above all, Capital intends to acquire a monopoly on interpretation.

Walter Benjamin has elucidated the process

whereby the commodity is imbued with a "utopian trace" - that is, by the image of a promise: that this object-for-sale contains a kind of futurity or no-place-place where your consciousness will once more be valid, your experience real. If the product were not so advertized, you would not buy it - but if the product delivered its promise, you would stop buying other products - why go on spending money once realization is attained? - and thus cause the collapse of Capitalism. Money can only circulate freely in a realm of continual disappointment - the reproduction of scarcity is the production of wealth. I am only rich if others are poor - but money itself has no other end or goal than the total poverty of everything that is not "the Market." Having long ago capitalized all material being, the power of scarcity has had no choice but to commodify the image (and the imagination) as well - on the presumption that this is an ever-expanding market. Awareness must be privatized - thought must be appropriated, adulterated,

alienated, packaged, labelled, advertized and sold back to consciousness. All creativity must be priced, and even the very process of resistance against this expropriation must be turned to profit ("Be a rebel - buy a Toyota!" - or "Image is nothing, taste is everything" as a slogan for some crappy softdrink). All informational media from education to advertizing are dedicated to detaching the image from any mooring in experienced life, floating it free, and rematerializing it in commodification. Work, consume, die.

Tourism is perfect
Capitalism: the consumption of the image of the world as it really is - the chief goods on sale include geography (the inscription of significance in the landscape) and historiography (the inscription of meaning in the culturescape). But the ultimate image is that of the "blessing" or baraka inherent in the object of the tourist's gaze. The possible moment of realization is packaged, pre-interpreted by official experts, transformed into a series of

views, distanced from the direct senses (touch, taste, smell); space is overwhelmed by time, stratified, separated, parcelled on a grid of permissible expectation; becoming is rendered into the rigid digitalizations of recording devices, banished from memory, and embalmed into a counterfeit of pure being. So-called primitives would say that soul is being stolen here, that meaning itself has entered a field of decay, a sort of beam emanating from an evil eye or withered self eaten by envy of all significance. The problem lies not in the content of the tourist's experience - one can imagine tours based on ideas we might consider quite correct or even beautiful - the problem is inherent in the container, in the very fact of interpretation, in the structure of a "dialogue" that excludes all response, resonance, or resistance. Certain kinds of travel - nomadism, pilgrimage - return meaning to the landscape. Other kinds - war, tourism - can only take it away. Reciprocity reaches a vanishing point in such

patterns of depredation. Even the most subtle propaganda of the State never approached this ultimate edge - after all, it always evoked its own opposition - while tourism represents the end of all dialectic - since the only negative gesture it evokes is terrorism, which is its own suppressed content, it's "evil twin". The tourist, seduced by the utopian trace in its most poignant aspect - the image of difference - becomes a molecule of pollution, bears the virus of sameness, and the burden of disappointment, into a world that once lived for itself.

The role of the artist in Capitalism can be compared with that of the tour-guide: -
- interpreter of experience for consumption on the most elite level, agent of recuperation for society's most exquisite longing or deepest resentments; --
and even a tour-guide may be sincere. But the comparison might prove invidious - inasmuch as the artist's intention is to add meaning to the sum total of experience, not to subtract or abstract it. The gesture

art makes presupposes the gesture of reciprocity, of presence. This movement is interrupted by the essentially non-human intervention of Capital, the exacerbated mediation of a power that can only grow by creating scarcity and separation. What if all the artists, poets, scholars and musicians of Ireland were invited to transform the country's new Interpretive Centres in their own image? Who cares what exalted aesthetic lays claim to the triumph of interpretation so long as the result is always the suppression of our own creativity? In Java, I heard that "Everyone must be an artist" - and indeed everyone already is an artist to the extent that all lived experience is a co-creation of self and other: -- production that is also play - and above all, the production of meaning. We do not need the artist to live for us, but simply to be our facilitator, our companion, part of our circle of reciprocity - and as for art, if there exists any way for it to avoid being englobed, we can see it only as a form of opposition to the One Big World of unified

representation. Such art refuses to become part of the Grand Unified Theory of the end of physics or history or the minimum wage or anything else. There's nothing "virtual" about it - and it's not headed for a condition of "disappearance," which would simply amount to defeat. I believe modern art as resistance is headed for the condition of the Unseen. That which is real but not seen has the power of the occult, of the imagination, of the erotic - like Sean's spirit-mask at Patrick's Well, it gives back meaning to the landscape - it abides unnoticed until someone perhaps takes it as a free gift - by its very existence it challenges the world of the commodified image and changes (however slightly) the shape of consensus reality. Even at its most hidden and secret, it exercises a magnetic effect, brings about subtle shifts and re-alignments - and at least in theory, it gives up merely talking about the world in order to change it. Is this perhaps however covertly an authoritarian act? No, not if it were a sharing of meaning, an

opening into the field of "delicate tenuities". What if it were rendered completely invisible? Then perhaps we might speak of the presence of spirits, of a necessary re-enchantment too tenuous for the imperial heaviness of the eye - and of a necessary clandestinity. And what if it were to re-appear sometime as sheer opposition to the unbreathing virtuality of a world which is always deferred, always someplace else, always fatal?

That evening we drive back to Dublin in the long summer light past megalithic mounds, travellers' encampments, and the crumbling 18th century follies and ziggurats of mad Ascendency lords - past St. Patrick's Hospital, which Dean Swift left in his will "to the lunaticks of Ireland" - sites that have perhaps not yet been absorbed into the new world of Euro-money, golf, and the National Heritage. Just before nightfall, we're in Dun Laoghaire near the Martello tower, looking out at a heavy and nostalgic view of the ocean under gray clouds. The front gardens of the seedy

Victorian seaside villas are adorned with one of my favorite Irish plants, mysterious and rather shabby palmtrees that evoke for me a secret Moorish past, a memory of Barbary corsairs, or of monks from Egypt and Spain. A Celtic cross was once discovered in Ireland engraved with the Arabic phrase "Bismillah," the opening of the Koran. These palmtrees were probably introduced by some turn-of-the-century horticulturalist with a taste for the exotic, but for me they stand for Ireland's "hidden African soul." A soft dark rain begins to fall. Or that at least is my interpretation.

Dublin, Aug. 23, 1996

MILLENNIUM

1. JIHAD

When two set out to dine or
duel together a third
appears -- tertium quid,
parasite, witness, prophet,
escapee. [see M.Serres,
Hermes.]

Five years ago it still
remained possible to occupy
a third position in the world,
a neither/nor of refusal or
slyness, a realm outside the
dialectic -- even a space of
withdrawal; --
disappearance as will to
power.

But now there is only one
world -- triumphant "end of
History", end of the
unbearable pain of
imagination -- actually an
apotheosis of cybernetic
Social Darwinism. Money
decrees itself a law of
Nature, and demands
absolute liberty. Completely
spiritualized, freed from its
outworn body (mere
production), circulating
toward infinity &
instantaneity in a gnostic
numisphere far above Earth,
money alone will define

consciousness. The 20th century ended five years ago; this is the millenium. Where there is no second, no opposition, there can be no third, no neither/nor. So the choice remains: -- either we accept ourselves as the "last humans", or else we accept ourselves as the opposition. (Either automonotony -- or autonomy.) All positions of withdrawal must be re-considered from a point of view based on new strategic demands. In a sense, we're cornered. As the oldtime ideologues would have said, our situation is "objectively pre-revolutionary" again. Beyond the temporary autonomous zone, beyond the insurrection, there is the necessary revolution -- the "jihad."

2. SAMENESS

21st century money is a chaos -- while 20th century ideology was merely an entropy. Both bourgeois & anti-bourgeois thought proposed a single world -- unified in consciousness by science -- but money alone will actually achieve that

world.

Money is not migratory, for the nomad moves from place to place while money moves from time to time, obliterating space. Money is not a rhizome but a chaos, an interdimensionality, inorganic but reproductive [infinite regressive bifurcation] -- the sexuality of the dead.

"Capital," then, must be considered a "strange attractor." Perhaps the very mathematics of this money ("out of control") could already be traced in such esoteric webs as SWIFT, the private internet for banks and arbitrage houses, where a trillion dollars a day disports itself in cyberspace (and less than 5% of it refers even obliquely to actual production).

The one world can deal with "chaos," but it reduces all true complexity to sameness & separation. Consciousness itself "enters into representation"; lived experience which demands presence must be denied lest it threaten to constitute another world beyond enclosure. In a heaven of

imagery there persists only
the afterlife of the screen,
the gnostic stargate, the
glass of disembodiment.
Infinitely the same within an
infinity of enclosures;
infinitely connected yet
infinitely alone.
Immeasurable identity of
desire, immeasurable
distance of realization.

3. MANAGEMENT OF DESIRES

The one world cannot
package pleasure itself but
only its image; malign
hermeticism, a kind of
baraka in reverse, the event
horizon or terminal of
desire. The "spirituality of
pleasure" lies precisely in a
presence that cannot be
represented without
disappearing; --
inexpressible,
unimpeachable, possible
only in that "economy of the
gift" that always exists (or
is always re-invented)
beneath the orthodoxy and
paralysis of exchange.
Desire is defined here as
movement along such a
trajectory -- not as the itch
that money can scratch.

Radical theory has recently developed a problematic of desire based on the perception that Capital is concerned with desire and able to satisfy it. Desire therefore is selfish and reactionary. But Benjamin has already shown that Capital's concern is precisely not to satisfy desire (i.e. to provide pleasure) but to exacerbate longing through the device of the "utopian trace" (the metaphysical shenanigans of the commodity, to paraphrase Marx). To say that capital liberates desire is a semantic absurdity based on a "mistranslation": -- Capital liberates itself by enslaving desire. Fourier claimed that the twelve Passions -- unrepressed -- constitute the only possible basis for social Harmony. We may not follow his numerology, but we catch his drift.

Against the negative hermetism of the one world and its sham carnality, opposition proposes a gnosis of its own, a dialogics of presence, the pleasure of overcoming the representation of pleasure -- a kind of touchstone. Not

ensorship, not
management of the image,
but the reverse -- the
liberation of the imagination
from the empire of the
image, from its overbearing
omnipresence and
singularity. The image alone
is tasteless, like a
bioindustrial tomato or pear -
- odorless as civilization
itself, our "society of
safety", our culture of mere
survival. Ours is partly a
struggle against colonial
hearing & imperial gaze,
and for smell, touch, taste --
and for the "third eye".

If desire has disappeared
into its representations then
it must be rescued. Silence
& secrecy are demanded,
even a veiling of the image -
- ultimately a
reenchantment of the
forbidden. Only an eros that
moves toward escape from
enclosure within the
banality of the image (and
here, consciousness scarcely
matters) can harmonize
with the aesthetic of the
jihad; whether it be
expressed in conventional or
unconventional roles or acts
seems almost irrelevant.

Sexuality itself can be
considered entheogenic --

like the "sacred plants", it can provide not only cognitive structure but also imaginal content. The festal for us is at least a "serious joke" [an old definition of alchemy] if not a ritual necessity. "Enlightenment" is also a material bodily principle -- and our secret is that our project need not be built exclusively on Nietzsche's nothing.

4. GREEN SHADE

Wild(er)ness stands for this very irreducibility of desire. The elimination of the non-human invokes the elimination of the human; culture can only be defined in relation to what it is not. Herein lies the profundity of paganism; in Islam, green is a heraldic color because "water, greenery & a beautiful face" (as the Prophet said) are ontologically privileged in experience -- and are in fact the basis of the esoteric rejection of sameness & separation -- the divine as difference, immanent & immediate -- not only in "Nature" but even in the garden or city as

spontaneous organic
crystallization of life's desire
for itself. Perhaps all "real"
wilderness has been
disappeared into a
cartomantic management of
desires -- after all, the one
world knows no other -- but
if so, then its spectre haunts
that world. It can be called
back; it can be restored.

If Nature is de-natured in
mediation's murderous
museological gaze and if
"everything" is mediated
(even "direct sensory
perception"), then how can
we speak of restoration or
of "immediacy"? First,
because (in another manner
of speaking) not everything
has "entered into
representation". The claim
of the one world to its
oneness is of course
spurious -- there persists by
definition an outside to
every enclosure in
representation; not to
mention a liminality around
every border, an area of
ambiguity. Oneness
represents itself as
invulnerable -- but its
weakness is revealed
precisely in the moment of
our perception that it is not
reflected in lived
experience; it shows itself in

dislocation, hollowness,
boredom, immiseration --
this moment might
constitute the "rending of
the veil" that would allow a
glimpse of the future, or at
least of our desire for the
future.

Second: we can speak here
of restoration because not
even every representation
subsumed or produced
within the enclosure of
oneness can be considered
effective in the service of
repression. Language itself
is haunted by the
(sometimes unintentional)
poetics of its own self-
overcoming, by the
subversive, the "eruption of
the marvellous". Life seems
to conspire with this
outsideness, such that even
representation finally
escapes representation.

5. CASH

Green is made to symbolize
the damned fertility of
money, its contranatural
fecundity -- the alchemy of
expropriation, the infinite
weight of the privileged &
Masonic gaze. In
transcending its own

textuality it becomes pure representation; from the very beginning however, from the first clay tokens or coins of electrum, money was already nothing but debt, nothing but absence.

Money "itself" retains a certain innocence as a simple medium of exchange -- "poor" money, so to speak, stripped of interest in sheer circulation. At this level money might play its role even in the temporary autonomous zone; in relation to the jihad however money remains and must be considered under the sign of Capital as the measure of expropriation and the basic mytheme of separation.

And as money transcends its textuality in virtuality, interest can be extracted from each transaction, each disturbance of the aether; -- "poor" money gives way to "pure" money. Who benefits?

The global machinery will never fall ripely into the hands of the insurgent masses, nor will its single Eye pass to the people (as if to one of three blind Fates);

there will be no transition, smooth or bumpy, between Capitalism & some economic utopia, some miraculous salvation for the unified consciousness of post Enlightenment rationalism & universal culture (with cozy corners for eccentric survivals & touristic bliss) -- no Social Democracy taking over the controls in the name of the people. The "money-power" (as the old agrarians called it) is not in the power of an elite (wether conspiratorial or sociological) -- rather the elite is in the power of money, like the hired human lackeys of some sci-fi AI entity in cyberspace. Money-power is the global machinery -- it can only be dismantled, not inherited. Will some sort of theoretical limit appear in the numisphere, so that the bubble bursts "on its own" as it were? Is Capitalism headed for the last round-up & final crisis to end all crises, or will it find a way to deal with & even profit by any "limits to growth" or chaotic perturbations within its closed atmosphere of suffocation? [Stay Tuned.] In any case (to evoke Gustav Landauer) there is

no "historical inevitability"
about a revolution reborn in
the very moment of
Capital's triumphant closure
of the dialectic.

[In one sense Capitalism
seems to become
"inevitable" in the invention
of scarcity -- the first
moment of expropriation.
But where precisely is this
moment to be located?
Agriculture is a great long-
drawn-out crisis -- but
many horticultural-tribal
societies remain as
staunchly non-authoritarian
& gift-oriented as the purest
hunter/gatherers. Ancient
hierarchic states (Sumer,
Egypt, Shang China, etc.)
and even feudalism still
retain economies of
reciprocity & redistribution; -
- the Market, as "predicted"
by Classical Economics,
simply fails to appear (see
Karl Polanyi). Moreover,
every threat of its
emergence is met with
prescient resistance (as
Clastres might have
predicted): -- separation &
expropriation never go
uncontested, and thus never
appear in their absolute
form. There exists in fact no
natural law of circulation &
exchange, no historical

fatality, no destined
atomicity of the social, and
no unified world of
representation. Capitalism
exists -- but not alone;
revolution is its other. And
vice versa.]

There is never a correct
moment for declaring
oneself in a state of
rebellion. Perennial heretics,
we have already made our
choices -- as if in some
previous incarnation, or in
some mythic time out of
time, as if everything
rethinks itself in us or
without us, and refusal were
a kind of tepid pre-death, a
resignation in morbidity.
There is for us no return to
innocence in the ecstasy of
600 channels, some dating
back to the so-called "Fall of
the Roman Empire" or even
the early Neolithic. The very
first emergences of
separation in the earliest
forms of money & the State
created for us a tradition
now some 10,000 years old -
- ultimately it doesn't
matter whether "this is the
crisis" or not. We would still
choose.

6. ASSAULT ON THE

SCREEN

The media of sameness & separation represent the one world in its most religious form -- the structuring of the social in images. Mere consciousness of this process cannot overcome it -- opposition must also take a religious form in a reenchantment of counter-imagery; here one might speak of a rationalism of the marvellous. The only way to evade mere reaction (and thus subsumption into the image) would seem to lie in "sacralizing" our struggle against sameness & separation; -- but only failure could induce us to accept the term "Romanticism" as critique (or praise) of our proposal.

Five years ago the media of sameness & separation attained much the same freedom & autonomy as the medium of money itself. Thus they shifted their emphasis from mere surpression to realization and to the "interdisciplinary" boundary-breaking amalgamation of all modes of representation (from education to advertizing) into a single "polysemic"

catastrophe of form: -- the body slumped before the screen, all corporeality reduced to a darkness given shape only by light from the gnostic pleroma, that realm of transcendence from which bodies are exiled: -- the heaven of glass.

The old Dualism has imploded into a totalized topology defined by the gnoseographic geosophy of money and its less-than-one dimensionality. The "mirror of production" has been superceded by a complete transparency, the vertigo of terror. Land, labor, nature, self itself, life itself, and even death can be re-invented as the basis of all exchange -- everything is money.

[Note: Needless to say, these generalizations do not concern the reality, but rather the ideology of global Capital (the ideology of the "post-ideological" con) -- the intoxicated pronouncements of an "information economy" -- the charade of "deregulation" (how can one speak of revolution when Capital has already broken all the rules?) Of course

Capital has not really transcended production, but merely resituated it -- somewhere near the realm of cemetery management or waste disposal. Capital wants ecstasy, not Taylorism; it longs for purity, for disembodiment.]

Ecstatic mediation finally blocks expression at the root, as for example in the biotechnological prosthesis or indifferentiation of body & screen. Mock nuptials of Eros & Thanatos: -- terminal enclosure. The "greater jihad" of course is directed against the separated self -- against suffocation of the true self that must express "its lord", its deepest meaning. But the "lesser jihad" is no less vital or imbued with baraka: -- the assault on the screen.

7. THE MORALITY OF VIOLENCE

Any paradoxical reappearance of morality here will naturally begin on the ruins of orthodoxy -- and pitch nothing more permanent there than the

black tents of Ibn Khaldun's
bedouin. And yet sooner or
later *jihad* (struggle) leads
back (via *ta'wil* or
hermeneutic exegesis) to
shariah or law. But *shariah*
also means path, or way --
it is already the "open road"
of the aimless wanderer.
Values arise from
imagination, i.e. from
motion. "Where the gods
have stopped" -- this is the
real. But the gods move on;
they move, like light on
water in Pindar's Odes.

The attentat is not immoral
but simply impossible. The
message of "terrorism" is
that there's no there there;
only the cybergnostic
history-dump of sheer
emptiness and anguish --
limited liability as a cosmic
principle. One might
consider a morality
(perhaps even an "imaginal
morality") of violence
against ideas & institutions --
but the language lacks
terms for such a form and
thus dooms militancy to an
indistinction of focus, even a
deficit of attention. In any
case it's not merely a
question of one's "spiritual
state" but of an actual auto-
restructuring of cognition --
not a state but a "station" in

Sufi terms. To borrow a phrase from Ismailism, this is our version of the Da'wa al Qadimi or the Ancient Propaganda -- old because it is never quite fully born.

8. FIN DE SIECLE

There's nothing of futurity left to the concept of utopia.

"Hope against hope"; no real choice is involved.

Presence remains impure -- only absence assumes the crystalline skeletal form of perfect eternity. A moral judgement if you like: intolerance for what opposes the jihad -- but no more dandyism, no more brittle & elaborate constructions of the self.

Difference as identity constitutes a mode of expression as well as a mode of volition; there exists a tao of this process, a spontaneous ordering rather than an imperialist Cartesian gaze. This mode of expression as it pertains to culture (the "self-made" aspect of the social) either sets up an amplificatory resonance with "Nature" and is thus capable of

changing the world-as-concensus or else it is mere criminal stupidity.

Here again "mere" consciousness scarcely matters; hence there emerges for us an emphasis on non-ordinary states that overcome the dichotomy of self-reflective auto-intellection in concentrated attentiveness and in "skill". The self-closure of aesthetic or mental isolation denies the fact that every pleasure is an expansion, that reciprocity is non-predatory expansiveness. If revolt as expression responds to sameness & separation simultaneously, it constitutes by definition a movement toward difference & presence -- and as the old phrenologists said, toward "communicativeness". That is neither mere "communication" -- subject to the drag of mediation & discorporealization -- nor ecstatic "communion" (a term which smacks of the exacerbated authoritarianism of an enforced presence) -- but rather a convivial connectivity -- an eros of the social.

9. THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

Proudhonian federalism based on non-hegemonic particularities in a "nomadological" or rhizomatic mutuality of synergistic solidarities -- this is our revolutionary structure. (The very dryness of the terms itself suggests the need for an infusion of life into the theoryscape!) Post-Enlightenment ideology will experience queasiness at the notion of the revolutionary implications of a religion or way of life always already opposed to the monoculture of sameness & separation. Contemporary reaction will blanch at the idea of interpermeability, the porosity of solidarity, conviviality & presence as the complementarity & harmonious resonance of "revolutionary difference".

To take Islam as an example -- the hyperorthodox & the ulemocracy cannot so easily reduce it to a hegemonistic/universalistic

ideology as to rule out divergent forms of "sacred politics" informed by Sufism [e.g. the Naqsbandis], radical Shiism [e.g. Ali Shariati], Ismailism, Islamic Humanism, the "Green Path" of Col. Qadafi (part neo-Sufism, part anarcho-syndicalism), or even the cosmopolitan Islam of Bosnia. [Note: we mention these elements not to condone them necessarily, but to indicate that Islam is not a monolith of "fundamentalism".]

Traditions of tolerance, voluntaryism, egalitarianism, concern for social justice, critique of "usury", mystical utopianism -- etc. -- can form the constellations of a new propaganda within Islam, unshakably opposed to the cognitive colonialism of the numisphere, oriented to "empirical freedoms" rather than ideology, critical of repression within Islam, but committed to its creativity, reticence, interiority, militance, & style. Islam's concern with pollution of the imagination, which manifests in a literal veiling of the image, constitutes a powerful

strategic realization for the jihad; -- that which is veiled is not absent or invisible, since the veil is a sign of its presence, its imaginal reality, its power. That which is veiled is *unseen*.

10. VOLKWAYS

Tribal societies, left to their own devices, wage war in a manner not so much hegemonistic as adventuristic -- and as P.Clastres pointed out, such horizontal warfare (like other "primitive" customs) actually militates against the emergence of "the State" and its verticality: -- violence as a form of resistance against separation, which is always felt by the tribe as a dangerous or "evil" possibility -- violence as a form of the perennial fission or break up & redistribution of power.

The jihad is not meant to be a return of this form of violence but a dialectical realization of its repressed content. This principle allows for a coalescence of variegated differences not

just as a utopian construct
but as a strategic bundling --
as a "war machine".

Gustav Landauer makes
clear that such groupings
can themselves be
considered both horizontally
(or "federally") and
vertically -- not as
categorical entifications,
that is, but as volk, peoples,
"nations" in the Native-
american sense of the term.
This concept was looted by
base reaction and distorted
into hegemonism of the
worst sort, but it too can be
rescued (an "adventure" in
itself). [We need to re-read
Proudon, Marx, Nietzsche,
Landauer, Fourier,
Benjamin, Bakhtin, the
IWW, etc.-- the way the
EZLN re-reads Zapata!]

Landauer also pointed out
that the State is in part an
inner relation, and not an
absolute. Inasmuch as
power shifts from the
national map to "pure"
Capital, the outer State
becomes increasingly
irrelevant as a focus of
opposition. "Neutrality" is
not an option: -- either a
zone is part of the one
world, or it enters
opposition. If the opposition

zone coincides with certain political entities, then the revolution may have to consider political alliances. The greater jihad -- against the inner relation of power -- remains always the same; but the lesser jihad, against the outer relation, constantly changes shape.

[Note: Everything hinges on the perception that two forces -- autonomy & federation -- are not opposed but complementary or even complicit; if this is paradox, then it is paradox that must be lived. Ethnic cleansing & violent chauvinism are to be opposed from the point of view of federalism & solidarity because the hegemonism of such reaction simply reproduces the hegemonism (the cruelty) of the one world & even augments it. And authentic (non-hegemonic) difference must be defended because (or inasmuch as) it cannot or "should not" be obliterated by the Moloch of capitalist consciousness. Autonomy without federalism is at best implausible, at worst reactionary -- but federalism without

autonomy simply threatens the one value that unites the jihad -- self-determination or "empirical freedom".]

For the strategic coalescence, complexity is not just an aesthetic but a necessity, a cognitive maquis or zone of resistance, a realm of ambiguity where the uprising must find its economy, its heartlands. Every "nation" whether self-formed or traditional, and every group which moves horizontally within or across this milieu -- councils, committees, unions, festivals -- indeed, every "sovereign individual" -- may consider federation on the basis of an ad-hoc anti-hegemonic front against the self-proclaimed totality of sameness & separation, and for a world of difference and presence.

From a certain viewpoint the force of presence or solidarity arises from the reality of "class" -- although if we adopt that term we must consider the vast realignments and kaleidoscopic shifts of meaning that have

unpacked & assembled it
anew, stripped it of its 19th
century accoutrements, its
one-world telos &
monocultural aesthetic -- its
scientism, its
disenchantments, & its
fatality. It's not just a
question of the
"proletarianization of the
zones", but of the seamless
and "natural" suppression of
autonomous consciousness
(and here, consciousness
does matter).

11. REVOLUTIONARY SOTERIOLOGY

Thus the "world to be
saved" by the jihad consists
not only of that Nature
which cannot suffer final
enclosure without the fatal
estrangement of
consciousness itself from all
"original intimacy", but also
the space of culture, of
authentic becoming: --
Tierra y Libertad.
Agriculture may be
considered as a tragic Fall
from natural human
economy -- (gathering,
hunting, reciprocity) -- and
even as a catastrophic shift

in cognition itself. But to entertain the notion of its abolition involves a crypto-malthusian or even biophobic nihilism suspiciously akin to Gnostic suicide. The morality of substruction is already a morality of rescue (and vice-versa); the kernel of the new society is always already forming within the shell of the old. Whatever the one world seeks to destroy or denigrate takes on for us the unmistakable aura of organic life; -- this applies to the whole panoply of our present "late stone age", even its Fourierist refinements, even its surrealist urbanism (even "Civilization" might be considered a "good idea" if it could be released from its own predatory determinism), --this defines our conservatism. Thus despite everything, despite the titanic depredations of Capital's artificial intelligence, the "world to be saved" sometimes seems to differ from "this" world only by a hair's-breadth of satori. But it is entirely from this crack that our radical opposition emerges. The millennium is always the opening of a present

moment -- but it is also
always the ending of a
world.

12. THE HIDDEN IMAM

The jist of the jihad: when
oppression takes the
simultaneous & even
paradoxical form of
sameness & separation,
then resistance or
opposition logically proposes
difference & presence -- a
revolutionary paradox. The
rhizomatic segmentary
society of identity that
precipitates from this super-
saturated logic of resistance
can be contemplated from
any angle, vertical or
horizontal, diachronic or
synchronic, ethnic or
aesthetic -- within the one
necessary revolutionary anti-
hegemonic principle of
presence.

Our present state of
flattened and irritable
inattentiveness can only be
compared to some esoteric
medieval sin like spiritual
sloth or existential
forgetfulness; our first
pleasure will be to imagine

for ourselves a propaganda potent as the gnostic "Call", an aesthetic of repentance-&-conversion or "self-overcoming", a Sorelian mythos -- a Millennium.

The blind panopticon of Capital remains, after all, most vulnerable in the realm of "magic" -- the manipulation of images to control events, hermetic "action at a distance". If the tong provides a possible form for the new propaganda of the deed, then it must be confessed that mere aesthetic withdrawal (disappearance as will to power) cannot provide sufficient heat to hatch the egg of its secrecy. All that was once tertium quid is now (or soon will be) engaged either in capitulation or in opposition, as conflagration, as uprising against the management of desire & imagination within the englobed enclosure of the one world.

But in a pre-revolutionary situation the tactical advantage of clandestinity, of the unseen (the language of the heart), already restores to aesthetics its revolutionary centrality. The

art of the unseen escapes absorption into the image-based "discourse of the totality" -- and thus, alone of all possible forms, still holds out the millennial promise of art, the changing of the world.

[Note: the term "art" is being used here in two different senses: -- the first sense is perhaps Romantic in that it addresses the dilemma of the artist per se & the problem of the "avant garde". But the second sense aims to dissolve the whole question of art's separateness in a practicum that is "normal" & that intersects (indeed almost coincides) with the realm of lived experience. The ordinary & the extraordinary are no longer opposed here, & are perhaps even in collusion, or in a dance of fused delineations. A crude truism: -- the moment of the well-made is the very fabric of life itself, of life's saturation with itself; it is in the sense that traditional cultures could see no distinction between life & art. If we were to speak of "political art", it could only be in the sense of an investigation of the fact that

for us Capital defines itself in the context of a split between these things that "cannot" be separated. But this is a problem for every "worker", & not just for the "cultural worker" -- & so in this sense, art begins to approach an area of identity with "revolutionary action".]

13. CALL & RESPONSE

Less than a decade ago it was still possible to think of the "enemy" as the Planetary Work Machine, or the Spectacle -- & therefore to think of resistance under the rubric of withdrawal or even escape. No great mysterious veil separated us from our will to imagine other forms of production, ludic & autonomous, or other form of representation, authentic & pleasurable. The obvious goal was to form (or sustain) alternative nuclei based on the implementation of such forms, deploying resistance as a tactic in defence of these zones (whether temporary or permanent).

In aikido there's no such thing as offense -- one simply removes oneself from the force of an attack, whereupon the attacker's force turns against itself & defeats itself. Capitalism actually lost some ground to these tactics, in part because it was susceptible to "third force" strategies, and in part because as an ideology it remained unable to deal with its own inner contradictions ("democracy" for example).

Now the situation has changed. Capitalism is freed of its own ideological armoring & need no longer concede space to any "third force". Although the founder of aikido could dodge bullets, no one can stand aside from the onslaught of a power that occupies the whole extent of tactical space. Escapism is possible for the "third guest, the parasite", but not for the sole opponent. Capitalism is now at liberty to declare war & deal directly as enemies with all former "alternatives" (including "democracy"). In this sense we have not chosen ourselves as opposition -- we have been chosen.

In kendo it is said that there is no such thing as a defensive move, or rather that the only defense is a good offense. The attacker however has the disadvantage (imbalance) as in aikido: -- so what to do? A paradox: when attacked, strike first. Clearly our "alternatives" are no longer merely interesting options, but life-or-death strategic positions. However, revolution is not a kendo match -- nor a morality play. It would seem that our tactics will be defined not so much by history as by our determination to remain within history -- not by "survival" but by persistence.

The "What Is To Be Done?" question must now be begged for two reasons: -- first, there already exists thousands of organisations working above-ground for de facto revolutionary goals (or at least for good causes) -- but no organizing myth, no propaganda, no transformative "revolutionary consciousness" capable of transcending separation as reformist institutionalization

& ideological sclerosis ["franchising the issues"]. Second, most "illegalism" is frustratingly doomed to counterproductivity & recuperation for precisely the same reason -- no consciousness, or rather, no metanoia, no unfragmented consciousness. In such a situation no coalescence seems feasible, and the jihad is faced first & foremost by the brutally theoretical need to comprehend & articulate its own historicity. To speak now of a "pre-revolutionary situation" smacks of the irony that such terms must inevitably invoke (history as "nightmare") -- What signs have arisen, & on what horizon?

Here it should be recalled that "propaganda of the deed" was originally intended to include "good works" as well as violent ones; the temporary autonomous zone thus retains its value not only for its own sake but as a historicization of lived experience, perhaps even a mode of propaganda-in-action. The uprising could then be seen as the proposal of a "permanent

autonomous zone"; and the coalescence of many such groups would make up the form of the "millennium". Here even "withdrawal" could have value as a tactic - - provided it were coordinated & practised militantly on a mass scale -- "revolutionary peace".

The very expression of such a scheme reveals at once how distant we remain from any realization. While we would like to indulge a crude existentialist penchant for "action", or at least for some sort of "anti-pessimism", any discussion of real tactics at this point might well prove fatally (or ludicrously) premature. Besides, "What should I do?" is perhaps the most mediated of questions, the one guaranteed to make any answer impossible.

Such is our density that it's taken five years to figure this out. Everything that was once a "third path" must be re-thought in the light of one fact: -- one world faces us, not two. If resistance has collapsed into bickering nostalgism (1968

has become as "tragic" for us as every other failure) -- if leftist bitchiness & fascist particularism hold such an allure for exhausted radicals etc. -- then it is because we have failed to articulate this one fact even to ourselves: - - that by proclaiming itself absolute and by constructing a world on that proclamation, Capital has called back into being its old nemesis (so disgraced by the 20th century, so dead, so dull) called it back into a whole new incarnation -- as the last ditch defense of all that cannot be englobed -- called back the revolution, the jihad.

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Note on Nationalism

Viewed as the quintessentialization of hierarchy & separation, the State can replicate itself on any level of experience -- from the individual psyche to the laws of nations. And yet society can exist in theory without the State -- & did so in fact for nearly a million years, 99% of the time span of the human species, thanks to the persistence of customs & institutions -- and mythemes -- that appear to have been designed for just this purpose, i.e. the suppression of the State & realization of the Social. War itself can be one of these institutions of "Society against the State", since (in its "primitive" form) it acts to disperse power & wealth rather than concentrate it. On another level we might say that shamanism also tends toward centrifugality of power in its emphasis on direct experience rather than mere symbolization (i.e. the shaman must "really" heal the patient, the medium must "really" be

possessed, otherwise their prestige evaporates: -- in some tribes shamanic failure was punishable by exile or death). The proto-State then must emerge in the moment of breakdown of centrifugal force in war & religion. Changes in economic structure appear to follow upon this breakdown rather than cause it. [Note: The "breakdown" itself may have had economic causes but we cannot perceive them -- certainly overpopulation and climatic change are inadequate "explanations"!] For instance, the replacement of hunting/gathering by agriculture failed to produce the proto-State. We cannot even blame the State on specialization of labor, since we are perfectly capable of imagining (with Fourier) a State-less Society based on fairly complex economics. The State seems almost *sui generis* -- its birth is shrouded in a certain mystery. Something went wrong somewhere -- the old myths (based on reciprocity & redistribution) collapsed before the power of a new "story" based on separation & accumulation. The precise

instant is lost, although the true State lurches into archaeological view sometime around the 4th to 3rd millennium in Sumer & Egypt. In both cases the realms of war & religion seem to have coalesced to produce figurative & literal pyramid-structures impossible to conceive without tribute & slavery. The centrifugality of the social is gradually supplanted by the centripetality of power & wealth till a crisis point is reached in the catastrophic emergence of a "priest-king" & a nascent bureaucracy -- the infallible signs of the true State.

The essence of the State is found in symbolization as mediation, & in mediation as alienation. These abstractions denote a brutal reality: -- The appearance of History's Bootheel. Separation & expropriation must be accomplished simultaneously on both the symbolic & actual plane. Symbols must be made to do the "work" of accumulation -- the State cannot expend its energy in re-creating itself in every moment. Writing for

instance technologizes symbolization to the point where power can "act at a distance" -- hence the "magic" of writing, its Hermetic origin -- but writing itself may have been invented in order to implement an even more basic form of symbolization - - i.e. money.

Let's examine the hypothesis that the State is impossible without money as symbolic exchange. Even the most primitive king (as opposed to "elder" or "chieftain") can only be defined by the creation of scarcity & the accumulation of wealth -- & this double process can only be reproduced in symbolization. Generally this means that the king is somehow "sacred" & thus in himself (or herself) symbolizes the very motion of energy in or between surplus & scarcity. But this motion must be impeded if the energy-transfer can only take crude material form (actual cows or jars of wheat etc.). The essential exchange of protection-for-wealth that defines the true State must be symbolized in order to transcend what

might be called the inherent egalitarianism of the material, its recalcitrance, its natural resistance to accumulation. "Protection" moreover has no overt material base, whereas wealth does -- hence the State will be at a disadvantage in the exchange unless it can present its power in symbolic (non-material) form -- as nothing for something.

If however the State remains impossible without money (even in its most unexpected or exotic or primitive form), money seems to be quite possible without the State. Our best evidence for this comes not only from the Past but also -- so to speak -- from the Future.

In the past we can discern money in the symbolic exchange & social construction of the sacrifice. When the tribe grows beyond the point where it can re-create itself in the sharing of a sacrificial animal, for instance, we might surmise that one's "due share" could be symbolized by some token.

Once the "spiritual content" of these tokens is transferred to an economic sphere outside the sacrifice (as for example in the Lydian temple-coins of the 7th century BC) the existence of the tokens would then facilitate the "creation of scarcity" by symbolizing the accumulation of wealth. Thus money would precede the State. If we wish to push the origin of money even farther back into the past, we could examine the mysterious clay tokens that appeared in the Neolithic "Near East" around the 7th millennium BC, apparently as counters for commodities. Real goods that are present only in symbolic form already express the possibility of scarcity -- & in fact these clay counters almost certainly stand for debt. When the symbolic counters themselves are then symbolized by writing -- a concept that appears at a very precise moment datable to about 3100 BC in the city of Uruk -- we can speak not only of money but of banking: the centralization of debt at the religio-political focus of

power, the Temple. Thus, to put it crudely, money exists for 4000 years before it mutates into a form that makes possible the emergence of the true State.

If we look to the future -- i.e. to the "logic" of the present -- we can see even more clearly that money exists beyond the State. In a situation where money is "free" to move across borders in defiance of all political economy, as in "neo-liberal" free-market internationalism, the State can find itself abandoned by money, & re-defined as a zone of scarcity rather than wealth. The State remains by definition mired in production, while money attains the transcendence of pure symbolization. In the last five years money has achieved almost absolute lift-off, since more than 90% of all money now refers to nothing in the sphere of production, not even to the dirty outmoded symbolic tokens called "cash" -- although the entire productive world remains utterly in the power of money, such that scarcely a tomato can be grown &

eaten without the mediation of symbolic exchange.

Paracelsus once told a petty German king, "Your Majesty is the true alchemist, not me (a mere puffer)! Your Majesty has only to empower a bank with a monopoly to coin money, and then borrow it. Thus you will create something out of nothing, a far more puissant act than making lead into gold!" The joke here is that the king was not the real alchemist. The locus of the magical act lay in the bank not the court. When all thrones in the world were hopelessly in debt to their own self-created central banks, the focus of power shifted. When governments resign their ancient role of protection, money breaks free at last -- governments can now provide only nothing for nothing -- their power is shattered. Their power has migrated into the alchemical sphere of pure symbolization.

Thus money & the State have never -- at any point -- been exactly identical, or even necessarily in alliance. Like the paradoxical relation

of money & religion, money & the State are sometimes in conspiracy, sometimes in competition, occasionally even at war. God & Moloch, Mammon & Moloch -- the intricacies of their cosmic dance might be revealed in the legend of the Templars -- or the IMF! Money & the State (& religion) do not possess the simple paradoxicality of the ancient riddle about chicken & egg, but a far more complex relation; the question about cause & effect is the wrong question.

Money, the State, & religion: -- all are powers of oppression, but not the same power of oppression. In fact, when deployed against each other, they can act as powers of liberation. Money "buys freedom" for example; the populist State can suppress the banks, thus freeing its citizens from "money-power"; and religion has been known to deploy its "higher morality" against both economic & political injustice.

Moreover, the State does not appear all at once in its "absolute" form. If "primitive" societies possess

institutions which successfully prevent the emergence of the State, nevertheless the emergence of the State cannot erase these institutions all at once. The "early" State must still co-exist with "customs & rights" that enable Society to resist its power. In ancient Ireland for example the kingship had to depend on (and often contend with) semi-independent warrior bands, the fianna, whose lives were devoted to sources of power (raiding) and wealth (hunting) that remained essentially outside the control of the State. The anthropology of "Society against the State" can be extended to a sociology of historical State systems *such as "feudalism") where some potent institutions & mythemes work against the total accumulation of power - - usually at the cost of violence. Moreover, as Karl Polanyi noted, money is also held in check in "pre-modern" cultures, not just in "primitive" societies (where money simply fails to appear), but also in quite complex State systems. "Classical civilizations" such as Mesopotamia, Greece,

Mesoamerica, Egypt & even Rome retained structures of redistribution of wealth to some extent -- if only as panem et circenses; no one could have conceived of a "free" market in such circumstance, since its obvious inhumanity would have violated every surviving principle of reciprocity -- not to mention religious law. It was left to our glorious modern era to conceive of the State as absolute power, & money as "free" of all social restraint. The result might be called the Capital State: the power of money wedded to the power of war. Ultimately, once the struggle against Communism was won, it would be logical to expect a last & final struggle between Capital & the State for power pure & supreme. Instead the Molochian State appears to know that it was already secretly beaten long ago (all thrones hopelessly in debt...) & has capitulated without a whimper to the triumph of Mammon. With a few exceptions the nations are now falling all over themselves in their eagerness to "privatize" everything from health to prisons to air & water to

consciousness itself.
"Protection" -- the only real
excuse for the State's
existence -- evaporates in
every sphere of
government's influence,
from tariffs to "human
rights". The State seems
somehow to believe it can
renounce not only its
vestigial power over money
but even its basic functions,
& yet survive as an elected
occupying army! Even the
US, which boasts of itself as
the last & final
"superpower", found itself in
the very moment of its
apocalyptic victory reduced
to a mercenary force at the
bidding of international
Capital -- blustering bush-
league bully boasting of its
crusade to overthrow a
"Hitler" of the Middle East,
but capable only of serving
the interests of oil cartels &
banks. National borders
must survive so that
political hirelings can divert
taxes to "corporate
welfare"; & so that huge
profits can be made on
arbitrage & currency
exchange; & so that labor
can be disciplined by
"migratory" capital.
Otherwise the State retains
no real function --
everything else is empty

ceremony, & the sheer terrorism of the "war on crime" (i.e. the State's post-Spectacular war on its own poor and different). Thatcher & Reagan foretold with true prescience what government should & would do once it had fulfilled its last historical goal -- the overthrow of the Evil Empire. Government would voluntarily dismantle itself (at the "people's" bidding of course) & gracefully submit to the real Hegelian absolute: -- money.

Of course to speak of the "end of History" when there has been no ending (for example) of writing -- nor for that matter of material production -- is merely a form of insanity -- perhaps even a terminal form! Like religion, the State has simply failed to "go away" -- in fact, in a bizarre extension of the thesis of "Society against the State", we can even re-imagine the State as in institutional type of "custom & right" which Society can wield (paradoxically) against an even more "final" shape of power -- that of "pure Capitalism". This is an uncomfortable thought for a

good anarchist; we've always tended to view the State as the enemy, & capitalism as one of its aspects or "accidents". The ideal opposite of the anarch is the monarch. [In fact there were some amusing & futile attempts in fin-de-siècle France to forge links between anarchism & monarchism against the common enemy, the fading illusion of "democracy" -- & the emerging reality of Capitalism.] In this sense we may have been out-thought by syndicalism & by "council-communism", which at least developed more mature economic critiques of power. Like the left in general however anarchism collapsed in 1989 (a growing North-american movement for example suddenly imploded) in all likelihood because at that moment our enemy the State also secretly collapsed. In order to move into the gap left by the defeat of Communism we needed a critique of Capitalism as the single power in a unified world. Our careful & sophisticated critique of a world divided into two forms of State/economic power was

rendered suddenly irrelevant. In an attempt to rectify this lack, I believe we need a new theory of "nationalism" as well as a new theory of Capitalism (and indeed a new theory of religion as well). So far the only interesting model for this is the EZLN in Mexico -- (it's gratifying to see Zapatista slogans scrawled all over Dublin!) -- & it would be worth analyzing their theory-&-praxis for inspiration. The EZLN is the first revolutionary force to define itself in opposition to "global neo-liberalism"; it has done so without aid or influence from the "Internationale" because it appeared in the very same moment that "Moscow" disappeared. It has received the support of the remnants of Liberation Theology as well as the secret councils of Mayan shamans & traditional elders. In the Native-american sense of the word it is a "nationalist" movement, & yet it derives its political inspiration from Zapata, Villa, & Flores Magon (i.e., two agrarian anarcho-syndicalists & one anarcho-communist). It is concerned with "empirical freedoms" rather than purist

ideology. [As Qaddafi says, "In need, freedom remains latent".] No wonder the *NYTimes* called Chiapas the first "post-modern" revolution; in fact, it is the first revolution of the 21st century.

James Connolly, one of the founders of the IWW, developed in Ireland a theory that socialism & nationalism were parts of one & the same cause -- & for this theory he suffered martyrdom in 1916. From one point of view Connolly's theory might lead toward "National Socialism" on the Right -- but from another point of view it leads to "third world nationalism" on the Left. Now that both these movements are dead it is possible to see more clearly how Connolly's theory also fits with anarchist & syndicalist ideas of his own period, such as the left volkism of Gustav Landauer or the "General Strike" of Sorel. These ideas in turn can be traced back to Proudhon's writings on mutualism & "anarcho-federalism". [The quarrel between Marx & Proudhon was for more unfortunate for history than Marx's

much noisier & more famous quarrel with Bakunin.] Inasmuch as we might propose a "neo-proudhonian" interpretation of the Zapatista uprising, therefore, Connolly's ideas may take on a new relevance for us [and thus perhaps it's not surprising if the EZLN sparks a response from the Irish left!]. Nationalism today is headed for a collision with Capitalism, for the simple reason that the nation per se has been redefined by Capital as a zone of depletion. In other words, the nation can either capitulate to Capitalism or else resist it -- no third way, no "neutrality" remains possible. The question facing the nation as zone of resistance is whether to launch its revolt from the Right (as "hegemonic particularity") or from the left (as "non-hegemonic particularity"). Not all nations are zones of resistance, & not all zones of resistance are nations. But wherever the two coincide to some extent the choice becomes not only an ethical but also a political process.

During the American Civil War the anarchist Lysander Spooner refused to support either side -- the South because it was guilty of chattel-slavery, the North because it was guilty of wage-slavery -- & moreover because it denied the right to secede, and obvious sine qua non of any genuinely free federation. In this sense of the term, nationalism must always be opposed because it is hegemonic -- & secession must always be supported inasmuch as it is anti-hegemonic. That is, it can only be supported to the extent that it does not seek power at the expense of others' misery. No State can ever achieve this ideal -- but some "national struggles" can be considered objectively revolutionary provided they meet basic minimal requirements -- i.e. that they be both non-hegemonic & anti-Capitalist. In the "New World" such movements might perhaps include the Hawaiian secession movement, Puerto Rican independence, maximum autonomy for Native-american "nations", the EZLN, & at least in

theory the bioregionalist movement in the US -- and it would probably exclude (with some regrets) such movements as Quebec nationalism, & the militia movement in the US. In Eastern Europe we might see potential in such states as Slovenia, Bosnia, Macedonia, the Ukraine -- but not in Serbia nor in Russia. In the "Mid-East" one cannot help supporting Chechnya & the Kurds. In Western Europe the EU must be opposed, & the smaller nations most likely to be crushed by the weight of Eurotrash & Eurodollars should be encouraged to stay out of the Union or to oppose it from within. This includes the Atlantic littoral from Morocco (where Berber resistance & Saharan independence have our sympathy) to Ireland, Denmark, perhaps, Scandinavia, the Baltics, & Finland. Celtic secessionism should be encouraged in Scotland, Wales, Brittany, & Man; this would add a strong socialist & green tint to any possible coalition of small Atlantic States. In Northern Ireland the best possible solution to the "Troubles" might be an

independent Ulster based on socialist anti-sectarian solidarity -- a dream perhaps but far more interesting than "Peace" at any price -- & a free revolutionary Ulster would no doubt release an unbelievable burst of energy into the anti-Capitalist movement -- despite its size Ulster would emerge as a leader of any such movement -- it would possess tremendous moral prestige.

Since we're indulging in dreams let's imagine that an anti-Communist/anti-Capitalist movement emerges in E. Europe, & allies itself with new movements within Islam, no longer "fundamentalist" & hegemonistic but definitely anti-Capitalist & opposed to "One World" culture. In turn an alliance is made with the anti-capitalist anti-"Europe" states of the Atlantic littoral - - & simultaneously within all these countries revolutionary forces are at work for social & economic justice, environmental activism, anti-hegemonic solidarity, & "revolutionary difference". NGOs & religious groups lend their

logistical support to the struggle. Meanwhile we can imagine Capitalism in crisis for any of a myriad reasons, from bank-collapse to environmental catastrophe. Suddenly the radical populist critique of "neo-liberalism" begins to cohere for millions of workers, farmers, tribal peoples, x-class drop-outs & artists, heretics, & even "petit-bourgeois" shopkeepers & professionals...

..."After the Revolution" of course all nationalist forms would have to be carefully reconsidered. The goal of "neo-Proudhonian federalism" would be the recognition of freedom at every point of organization in the rhizome, no matter how small -- even to a single individual, or any tiny group of "secessionists". No doubt these freedoms would have to be ensured through constant struggle against the "natural" tendencies to greed & power-hunger inherent within every individual & every collectivity. But that's a matter for the future. In the present we are faced with the monumental task of constructing an anti-

Capitalist resistance
movement out of the
shattered remnants of
radicalism, some glue, some
tissue paper, & some hot
rhetoric. We can no longer
afford the luxury of ignoring
politics. This does not mean
I'm about to ruin a perfect
anarchist record & vote for
the first time -- since in my
country voting means
nothing & gains one
nothing, not even \$5 or a
free drink (as in the old
days of Tammany Hall). I
mean politics in the
Clauswitzian sense. And war
makes for strange
bedfellows -- even for
unexpected comrades &
allies. I'd like to believe that
revolution could be a non-
violent "war for peace" --
but like a good scout, one
should be prepared.

Dublin, Sept. 23, 1996

Religion and Revolution

Real money & hierarchic religion appear to have arisen in the same mysterious moment sometime between the early Neolithic and the third millennium BC in Sumer or Egypt; which came first, the chicken or the egg? Was one a response to the other or is one an aspect of the other?

No doubt that money possesses a deeply religious implication since from the very moment of its appearance it begins to strive for the condition of the spirit -- to remove itself from the world of bodies, to transcend materiality, to become the one true efficacious symbol. With the invention of writing around 3100 BC money as we know it emerges from a complicated system of clay tokens or counters representing material goods & takes the form of written bills of credit impressed on clay tablets; almost without exception these "cheques" seem to concern debts owed

to the State Temple, & in theory could have been used in an extended system of exchange as credit-notes "minted" by the theocracy. Coins did not appear until around 700 BC in Greek Asia Minor; they were made of electrum (gold and silver) not because these metals had commodity value but because they were sacred -- Sun & Moon; the ratio of value between them has always hovered around 14:1 not because the earth contains 14 times as much silver as gold but because the Moon takes 14 "suns" to grow from dark to full. Coins may have originated as temple tokens symbolizing a worshipper's due share of the sacrifice -- holy souvenirs, which could later be traded for goods because they had "mana", not use-value. (This function may have originated in the Stone Age trade in "ceremonial" stone axe-heads used in potlach-like distribution rites.) Unlike Mesopotamian credit-notes, coins were inscribed with sacred images & were seen as liminal objects, nodal points between quotidian reality & the world of the spirits (this accounts

for the custom of bending coins to "spiritualize" them and throwing them into wells, which are the "eyes" of the otherworld.) Debt itself -- the true content of all money -- is a highly "spiritual" concept. As tribute (primitive debt) it exemplifies capitulation to a "legitimate power" of expropriation masked in religious ideology -- but as "real debt" it attains the uniquely spiritual ability to reproduce itself as if it were an organic being. Even now it remains the only "dead" substance in all the world to possess this power -- "money begets money". At this point money begins to take on a parodic aspect vis-à-vis religion -- it seems that money wants to rival god, to become immanent spirit in the form of pure metaphysicality which nevertheless "rules the world". Religion must take note of this blasphemous nature in money and condemn it as contra naturam. Money & religion enter opposition -- one cannot serve God & Mammon simultaneously. But so long as religion continues to perform as the ideology of separation (the

hierarchic State, expropriation, etc.) it can never really come to grips with the money-problem. Over & over again reformers arise within religion to chase the moneylenders from the temple, & always they return -- in fact often enough the moneylenders become the Temple. (It's certainly no accident that banks for along time aped the forms of religious architecture.) According to Weber it was Calvin who finally resolved the issue with his theological justification for "usury" -- but this scarcely does credit to the real Protestants, like the Ranters & Diggers, who proposed that religion should once & for all enter into total opposition to money -- thereby launching the Millennium. It seems more likely that the Enlightenment should take credit for resolving the problem -- by jettisoning religion as the ideology of the ruling class & replacing it with rationalism (& "Classical Economics"). This formula however would fail to do justice to those real illuminati who proposed the dismantling of all ideologies of power & authority -- nor

would it help to explain why "official" religion failed to realize its potential as opposition at this point, & instead went on providing moral support for both State & Capital.

Under the influence of Romanticism however there arose -- both inside & outside of "official" religion -- a growing sense of spirituality as an alternative to the oppressive aspects of Liberalism & its intellectual/artistic allies. On the one hand this sense led to a conservative-revolutionary form of romantic reaction (e.g. Novalis) -- but on the other hand it also fed into the old heretical tradition (which also began with the "rise of Civilization" as a movement of resistance to the theocracy of expropriation) - - and found itself in a strange new alliance with rationalist radicalism (the nascent "left"); William Blake, for example, or the "Blaspheming Chapels" of Spence & his followers, represent this trend. The meeting of spirituality & resistance is not some surrealist event or anomaly to be smoothed out or

rationalized by "History" -- it occupies a position at the very root of radicalism; -- and despite the militant atheism of Marx or Bakunin (itself a kind of mutated mysticism or "heresy"), the spiritual still remains inextricably involved with the "Good Old Cause" it helped create.

Some years ago Régis Debray wrote an article pointing out that despite the confident predictions of 19th century materialism, religion had still perversely failed to go away -- and that perhaps it was time for the Revolution to come to terms with this mysterious persistence. Coming from a Catholic culture Debray was interested in "Liberation Theology", itself a projection of the old quasi-heresy of the "Poor" Franciscans & the recurrent rediscovery of "Bible communism". Had he considered Protestant culture he might have remembered the 17th century, & looked for its true inheritance; if Moslem he could have evoked the radicalism of the Shiites or Ismailis, or the anti-colonialism of the 19th century "neo-Sufis". Every

religion has called forth its own inner antithesis over & over again; every religion has considered the implications of moral opposition to power; every tradition contains a vocabulary of resistance as well as capitulation to oppression. Speaking broadly one might say that up until now this "counter-tradition" -- which is both inside & outside religion -- has comprised a "suppressed content". Debray's question concerned its potential for realization. Liberation Theology lost most of its support within the church when it could no longer serve its function as rival (or accomplice) of Soviet Communism; & it could no longer serve this function because Communism collapsed. But some Liberation theologians proved to be sincere -- and still they persist (as in Mexico); moreover, an entire submerged & related tendency within Catholicism, exemplified in the almost Scholastic anarchism of an Ivan Illich, lingers in the background. Similar tendencies could be identified within Orthodoxy

(e.g. Bakunin), Protestantism, Judaism, Islam, and (in a somewhat different sense) Buddhism; moreover, most "surviving" indigenous forms of spirituality (e.g. Shamanism) or the Afro-american syncretisms can find common cause with various radical trends in the "major" religions on such issues as the environment, & the morality of anti-Capitalism. Despite elements of romantic reaction, various New Age & post-New-Age movements can also be associated with this rough category.

In a previous essay we have outlined reasons for believing that the collapse of Communism implies the triumph of its single opponent, Capitalism; that according to neo-liberal global propaganda only one world now exists; & that this political situation has grave implications for a theory of money as the virtual deity (autonomous, spiritualized, & all-powerful) of the single universe of meaning. Under these conditions everything that was once a third possibility (neutrality, withdrawal,

counter-culture, the "Third World", etc.) now must find itself in a new situation. There is no longer any "second" -- how can there be a "third"? The "alternatives" have narrowed catastrophically. The One World is now in a position to crush everything which once escaped its ecstatic embrace -- thanks to the unfortunate distraction of waging an essentially economic war against the Evil Empire. There is no more third way, no more neither/nor. Everything that is different will now be subsumed into the sameness of the One World -- or else will discover itself in opposition to that world. Taking this thesis as given, we must now ask where religion will locate itself on this new map of "zones" of capitulation & resistance. If "revolution" has been freed of the incubus of Soviet oppression and is now once again a valid concept, are we finally in a position to offer a tentative answer to Debray's question?

Taking "religion" as a whole, including even those forms such as shamanism that

belong to Society rather than the State (in terms of Clastres's anthropology); including polytheisms, monotheisms, & non-theisms; including mysticisms & heresies as well as orthodoxies, "reformed" churches, & "new religions" -- obviously the subject under consideration lacks definition, borders, coherence; & it cannot be questioned because it would only generate a babel of responses rather than an answer. But "religion" does refer to something -- call it a certain range of colors in the spectrum of human becoming -- & as such it might be considered (at least pro tem) as a valid dialogic entity & as a theorizable subject. In the triumphant movement of Capital -- in its processual moment so to speak -- all religion can only be viewed as nullity, i.e. as a commodity to be packaged & sold, an asset to be stripped, or an opposition to be eliminated. Any idea (or ideology) that cannot be subsumed into capital's "End of History" must be doomed. This includes both reaction & resistance -- & it

most certainly includes the non-separative "re-linking" (religio) of consciousness with "spirit" as unmediated imaginal self-determination & value-creation -- the original goal of all ritual & worship. Religion in other words has lost all connection with worldly power because that power has migrated off-world -- it has abandoned even the State & achieved the purity of apotheosis, like the God that "abandoned Anthony" in Cavafy's poem. The few States (mostly Islamic) wherein religion holds power are located precisely within the ever-shrinking region of national opposition to Capital -- (thus providing them with such potential strange bedfellows as Cuba!). Like all other "third possibilities" religion is faced with a new dichotomy: total capitulation, or else revolt. Thus the "revolutionary potential" of religion clearly appears -- although it remains unclear whether resistance might take the form of reaction or radicalism -- or indeed whether religion is not already defeated -- whether its refusal to go away is that

of an enemy, or a ghost.

In Russia & Serbia the Orthodox Church appears to have thrown in its lot with reaction against the New World Order & thus found new fellowship with its old Bolshevik oppressors, In Chechnya the Naqshbandi Sufi Order continues its centuries-old struggle against Russian imperialism. In Chiapas there's a strange alliance of Mayan "pagans" & radical Catholics. Certain factions of American Protestantism have been driven to the point of paranoia & armed resistance (but even paranoids have some real enemies); while Native-american spirituality undergoes a small but miraculous revival -- not a Ghost Shirt uprising this time, but a reasoned & profound stand against the hegemony of Capital's monoculture. The Dalai Lama sometimes appears as the one "world leader" capable of speaking truth both to the remnants of the Communist oppression & the forces of Capitalist inhumanity; a "Free Tibet" might provide some kind of focus for an "interfaith" bloc of small nations & religious

groups allied against the transcendental social darwinism of the consensus. Arctic shamanism may re-emerge as an "ideology" for the self-determination of certain new Siberian republics -- and some New Religions (such as Western neo-paganism or the psychedelic cults) also belong by definition or default to the pole of opposition.

Islam has seen itself as the enemy of imperial Christianity & European imperialism almost from the moment of its inception. During the 20th century it functioned as a "third way" against both Communism & Capitalism, & in the context of the new One World it now constitutes by definition one of the very few existing mass movements which cannot be englobed into the unity of any would-be Consensus. Unfortunately the spearhead of resistance - - "fundamentalism" -- tends to reduce the complexity of Islam into an artificially coherent ideology -- "Islamism" -- which clearly fails to speak to the normal human desire for difference & complexity.

Fundamentalism has already failed to concern itself with "empirical freedoms" which must constitute the minimal demands of the new resistance; for example, its critique of "usury" is obviously an inadequate response to the machinations of the IMF & World Bank. The "gates of Interpretation" of the Shariah must be re-opened - - not slammed shut forever - - and a fully-realized alternative to Capitalism must emerge from within the tradition. Whatever one may think of the Libyan Revolution of 1969 it has at least the virtue of an attempt to fuse the anarcho-syndicalism of '68 with the neo-Sufi egalitarianism of the North African Orders, & to create a revolutionary Islam -- something similar could be said of Ali Shariati's "Shiite socialism" in Iran, which was crushed by the ulemocracy before it could crystallize into a coherent movement. The point is that Islam cannot be dismissed as the puritan monolith portrayed in the Capitalist media. If a genuine anti-Capitalist coalition is to appear in the

world it cannot happen without Islam. The goal of all theory capable of any sympathy with Islam, I believe, is now to encourage its radical & egalitarian traditions & to substruct its reactionary & authoritarian modes of discourse. Within Islam there persist such mythic figures as the "Green Prophet" and hidden guide of the mystics, al-Khezr, who could easily become a kind of patron saint of Islamic environmentalism; while history offers such models as the great Algerian Sufi freedom-fighter Emir Abdul Qadir, whose last act (in exile in Damascus) was to protect Syrian Christians against the bigotry of the ulema. From outside Islam there exists the potential for "interfaith" movements concerned with ideals of peace, toleration, & resistance to the violence of post-secular post-rationalist "neo-liberalism" & its allies. In effect, then, the "revolutionary potential" of Islam is not yet realized -- but it is real.

Since Christianity is the religion that "gave birth" (in Weberian terms) to

Capitalism, its position in relation to the present apotheosis of Capitalism is necessarily more problematic than Islam's. For centuries Christianity has been drawing in on itself & constructing a kind of make-believe world of its own, wherein some semblance of the social might persist (if only on Sundays) -- even while it maintained the cozy illusion of some relation to power. As an ally of Capital (with its seeming benign indifference to the hypothesis of faith) against "Godless Communism", Christianity could preserve the illusion of power -- at least until five years ago. Now Capitalism no longer needs Christianity & the social support it enjoyed will soon evaporate. Already the Queen of England has had to consider stepping down as the head of the Anglican Church -- & she is unlikely to be replaced by the CEO of some vast international zaibatsu! Money is god -- God is really dead at last; Capitalism has realized a hideous parody of the Enlightenment ideal. But Jesus is a dying-&-resurrecting god -- one

might say he's been through all this before. Even Nietzsche signed his last "insane" letter as "Dionysus & the Crucified One"; in the end it is perhaps only religion that can "overcome" religion. Within Christianity a myriad tendencies appear (or have persisted since the 17th century, like the Quakers) seeking to revive that radical messiah who cleansed the Temple & promised the Kingdom to the poor. In America for instance it would seem impossible to imagine a really successful mass movement against Capitalism (some form of "progressive populism") without the participation of the churches. Again the theoretical task begins to clarify itself; one need not propose some vulgar kind of "entryism" into organized Christianity to radicalize it by conspiracy from within. Rather the goal would be to encourage the sincere & widespread potential for Christian radicalism either from within as an honest believer (however "existentialist" the faith!) or as an honest sympathizer from the outside.

To test this theorizing take an example -- say Ireland (where I happen to be writing this). Given that Ireland's "Problems" arise largely from sectarianism, clearly one must take an anti-clerical stance; in fact atheism would be at least emotionally appropriate. But the inherent ambiguity of religion in Irish history should be remembered: -- there were moments when Catholic priests & laity supported resistance or revolution, & there were moments when Protestant ministers & laity supported resistance or revolution. The hierarchies of the churches have generally proven themselves reactionary -- but hierarchy is not the same thing as religion. On the Protestant side we have Wolfe Tone & the United Irishmen -- a revolutionary "interfaith" movement. Even today in Northern Ireland such possibilities are not dead; anti-sectarianism is not just a socialist ideal but also a Christian ideal. On the Catholic side... a few years ago I met a radical priest at a pagan festival in the Aran Islands, a friend of Ivan Illich. When I asked him, "What exactly is your

relation to Rome?" he answered, "Rome? Rome is the enemy." Rome has lost its stranglehold on Ireland in the last few years, brought down by anti-puritan revolt & internal scandal. It would be incorrect to say that the Church's power has shifted to the State, unless we also add that the government's power has shifted to Europe, & Europe's power has shifted to international capital. The meaning of Catholicism in Ireland is up for grabs. Over the next few years we might expect to see both inside & outside the Church a kind of revival of "Celtic Christianity" -- devoted to resistance against pollution of the environment both physical & imaginal, & therefore committed to anti-Capitalist struggle. Whether this trend would lead to an open break with Rome and the formation of an independent church -- who knows? Certainly the trend will include or at least influence Protestantism as well. Such a broad-based movement might easily find its natural political expression in socialism or even in anarcho-socialism, & would serve a

particularly useful function as a force against sectarianism & the rule of the clerisy. Thus even in Ireland it would seem that religion may have a revolutionary future.

I expect these ideas will meet with very little acceptance within traditionally atheist anarchism or the remnants of "dialectical materialism". Enlightenment radicalism has long refused to recognize any but remote historical roots within religious radicalism. As a result, the Revolution threw out the baby ("non-ordinary consciousness") along with the bathwater of the Inquisition or of puritan repression. Despite Sorel's insistence that the Revolution needed a "myth", it preferred to bank everything on "pure reason" instead. But spiritual anarchism & communism (like religion itself) have failed to go away. Indeed, by becoming an anti-Religion, radicalism had recourse to a kind of mysticism of its own, complete with ritual, symbolism, & morality. Bakunin's remark about God

-- that if he existed we would have to kill him -- would after all pass for the purest orthodoxy within Zen Buddhism! The psychedelic movement, which offered a kind of "scientific" (or at least experiential) verification of non-ordinary consciousness, led to a degree of rapprochement between spirituality & radical politics -- & the trajectory of this movement may have only begun. If religion has "always" acted to enslave the mind or to reproduce the ideology of the ruling class, it has also "always" involved some form of entheogenesis ("birth of the god within") or liberation of consciousness; some form of utopian proposal or promise of "heaven on earth"; and some form of militant & positive action for "social justice" as God's plan for the creation. Shamanism is a form of "religion" that (as Clastres showed) actually institutionalizes spirituality against the emergence of hierarchy & separation -- & all religions possess at least a shamanic trace.

Every religion can point to a radical tradition of some

sort. Taoism once produced the Yellow Turbans -- or for that matter the Tongs that collaborated with anarchism in the 1911 revolution. Judaism produced the "anarcho-zionism" of Martin Buber & Gersholm Scholem (deeply influenced by Gustav Landauer & other anarchists of 1919), which found its most eloquent & paradoxical voice in Walter Benjamin. Hinduism gave birth to the ultra-radical Bengali Terrorist Party -- & also to M. Gandhi, the modern world's only successful theorist of non-violent revolution. Obviously anarchism & communism will never come to terms with religion on questions of authority & property; & perhaps one might say that "after the Revolution" such questions will remain to be resolved. But it seems clear that without religion there will be no radical revolution; the Old Left & the (old) New Left can scarcely fight it alone. The alternative to an alliance now is to watch while Reaction co-opts the force of religion & launches a revolution without us. Like it or not, some sort of pre-emptive strategy is required. Resistance

demands a vocabulary in which our common cause can be discussed; hence these sketchy proposals.

Even assuming we could classify all the above under the rubric of admirable sentiments, we would still find ourselves far from any obvious program of action. Religion is not going to "save" us in this sense (perhaps the reverse is true!) -- in any case religion is faced with the same perplexity as any other former "third position", including all forms of radical non-authoritarianism & anti-Capitalism. The new totality & its media appear so pervasive as to fore-doom all programs of revolutionary content, since every "message" is equally subject to subsumption in the "medium" that is Capital itself. Of course the situation is hopeless -- but only stupidity would take this as reason for despair, or for the terminal boredom of defeat. Hope against hope -- Bloch's revolutionary hope -- belongs to a "utopia" that is never wholly absent even when it is least present; & it belongs as well to a

religious sphere in which hopelessness is the final sin against the holy spirit: -- the betrayal of the divine within -- the failure to become human. "Karmic duty" in the sense of the Bhagavad Gita -- or in the sense of "revolutionary duty" -- is not something imposed by Nature, like gravity, or death. It is a free gift of the spirit -- one can accept or refuse it -- & both positions are perilous. To refuse is to run the risk of dying without having lived. To accept is an even more dangerous but far more interesting possibility. A version of Pascal's Wager -- not on the immortality of the soul this time, but simply on its sheer existence.

To use religious metaphor (which we've tried so far to avoid) the millennium began five years before the end of the century, when One World came into being & banished all duality. From the Judao-Christiano-Islamic perspective however this is the false millennium of the "Anti-Christ"; which turns out not to be a "person" (except in the world of Archetypes perhaps) but an

impersonal entity, a force
contra naturam -- entropy
disguised as life. In this
view the reign of iniquity
must & will be challenged in
the true millennium, the
advent of the messiah. But
the messiah is also not a
single person in the world --
rather, it is a collectivity in
which each individuality is
realized & thus (again
metaphorically or
imaginally) immortalized.
The "people-as-messiah" do
not enter into the
homogenous sameness nor
the infernal separation of
entropic Capitalism, but into
the difference & presence of
revolution -- the struggle,
the "holy war". On this basis
alone can we begin to work
on a theory of reconciliation
between the positive forces
of religion & the cause of
resistance. What we are
offered here is simply the
beginning of the beginning.

Dublin, Sept. 1, 1996

Interview with Hakim Bey

[A longer version appears
as a preface to the German
translation of *Immediatism*]

10 July 1996,
New York -- Vienna
(by phone)

Q: [The first questions
concern the book
Immediatism (a.k.a.
Radio Sermonettes) and
readers' response to it]:

A: Of course it's meant as a
discussion of what people
do rather than what people
should do. I'm not
interested in preaching, and
I don't think myself a guru
in any sense. More than
that, in this particular book
I really meant to describe
what I considered to be the
revolutionary potential of
everyday life, to put it in
Situationist terms. The
response has been pretty
good -- I mean I don't get
hundreds of letters or
anything, but I do get lots
of letters, and I do get lots

of response -- and it seems to strike a chord especially with people in the arts, which is who it was meant for really. I mean, when I say people in the arts that could be anybody, not just professional artists; it could be anyone who feels a necessity for creative action in their life. My idea was to define a space which I feel exists (anyway), that's a private, even secret space, if you like... clandestine... in which the whole problem of commodification, the buying and selling of art, the turning of art into a commodity and the use of art to sell commodities, which is sort of a curse to the modern artist, is avoided, just plain avoided; just a withdrawal from that world and a reaffirmation of a creative power in everyday life, outside the life of commodity, the life of the market. After all, this is why all artists are artists, this is why one becomes an artist -- not to sell your soul to the company store but to create.

Q: Is there a lot of media interest in what you do? -- because somehow the Disappearing One could

attract lots of attention, and the one who places a critique could become himself very interesting for the media. How would that circle work for you?

A: You're absolutely right, but it has not really worked that way. It's true that TAZ ["The Temporary Autonomous Zone"] was part of a book which caused a little bit of a stir in underground circles or whatever, there was some publicity involved in this, but in the first place I don't seek publicity for myself -- I'm not interested in establishing some sort of personality cult. I really would like to be invisible. Actually, it was probably a mistake to use an exotic name to write this material. It does actually draw curiosity and attention instead of just being accepted as a pseudonym. So there was a little bit of media attention but not very much, and one reason for that is that in America nothing reaches the media unless it's commodification. This is all the media is interested in, something which can sell products. And there's no product to be

sold here other than a small cheap book or two. In Europe things are slightly different, there is perhaps one may say a remnant of a public intelligentsia -- which we don't have here. We really do not have that here. We have some famous writers, who get published in all the journals, and then we have masses of people who are probably far more intelligent, far more creative, but who are not seen in the media and therefore are not seen to exist -- sometimes even in their own eyes, and this is why I'm writing a book like *Immediatism*: to emphasize to the artist and the creative people that they do exist, they should exist in their own eyes, so what they do is important, even politically important; even though it happens outside the mass media in a sense is a blessing, not a curse. Things are slightly different in Europe perhaps for these reasons, but in America there's been very little crossover between my world and the world of media -- and when I say that I don't even mean magazines and newspapers. I'm not even talking about television and

advertising that are really mass media. I'm talking just about local newspapers. They're just not interested. There's no interest in political radicalism in intellectual circles in America, and I think it would be fair to say that -- no interest whatsoever.

Q: In your text, you mentioned a certain psychic martial art and the return of the Paleolithic in the sense of a psychic technology which we forgot. Can you explain that?

A: Well, I'm really not trying to be so mysterious or to imply that there's a secret art which I know and which I'm not sharing. Why I called it a secret martial art is that it's simply secret because it's ignored or forgotten. What I mean to say is that living in the body, being aware of the positivity of the material bodily principle (to quote Bakhtin) is in fact a form of resistance, a martial art, if you will. In a world where the body is so degraded, so de-emphasized on the one hand by the empire of the image and on the other hand where the body is

degraded by a kind of obsessive narcissism, athletics, fashion, and health, that somewhere in between these extremes to me is the ordinary body which, as the Zen masters would say, is the Zen body, to rephrase the saying that the ordinary mind is the Zen mind. To be conscious and aware of this is already to take a stance of resistance against the obliteration of the body in media or the pseudo-apotheosis of the body in modern sports, or fast food or all this kind of degradation of the body which occurs along with its erasure. So what would that art be I don't know exactly, I think it would be different for each person maybe, and certainly involve a kind of physical creativity that I discuss in the essays. Unfortunately, I haven't got it down to a science yet that could be taught in dojos and you get a black belt in it. It hasn't occurred yet, although perhaps some genius will come along and invent it.

Q: Do you get many invitations to parties that are strange for you or really come as a surprise because

of who identifies with your stuff? Can you give examples?

A: I'll just give you one example. I was invited by a ceremonial magician who lives in a medieval castle in the south of France to come and see his museum of occult art. And this was simply as a result of reading my work and corresponding with me for a while. It was great. I won't give his address, though.

Q: There's a lot of frank non-pessimism in what you write, and there's one chapter in your book about laughter as either a weapon or medicine. I was wondering who the people who would communicate this sort of healing laughter might be?

A: First of all, there's an existential choice involved here. I've always thought that literature should be entertaining as well as instructive -- a very old-fashioned idea but one that I adhere to. When I set out to write in this way -- particularly in this way, a political way, if you want to call it that -- I intend to

make a donation, to try to give something. There doesn't seem to me to be any point in giving more misery or exacerbating unhappiness through some kind of hyper-intellectual, pyrotechnical writing about unhappiness and the shit that we all find ourselves in. That's been done plenty. I think first of all that it doesn't need to be done any more and second of all there's a kind of reactionary aspect to it which is that the emphasizing of misery without any anti-pessimism, as you put it, would be simply seduction into inactivity and political despair. In other words, to do politics at all on any level, especially on a revolutionary or on an insurrectionary level, there has to be some anti-pessimism -- I won't say optimism because that sounds so fatuous, futile; but anti-pessimism is a nice phrase. And there's a deliberate attempt at that in the writing. Then again it's a matter of my personality, I guess, inclined towards the notion of the healing laugh to some extent. We have an anarchist thinker in America, John Zerzan, who

wrote an essay against humor which maybe is one of the things I was reacting against. Even if irony is counter-revolutionary which I think it might be to a certain extent I don't see any way in which you could say that laughter itself is counter-revolutionary. This doesn't make any sense to me unless you mean to get rid of language and thought altogether, which is just another form of nihilism. So as long as you're going to accept culture on some level you're certainly going to have to accept humor. And as long as you're going to have to accept humor you might as well see humor as potentially revolutionary.
[...]

I'm actually not out to raise a lot of laughs. Humor can indeed become counter-revolutionary if it's simply exalted out of all proportion and made into the purpose or center of one's art. Well, this could perhaps be considered frivolity. Again, I would say that it's part of that natural martial art of the ordinary mind and body, it's just something that is, and therefore should be celebrated as part of

existence.

Q: Palimpsest.

A: The whole idea behind palimpsest was to get over the fetish of the single original philosophy, the origin of single philosophies or the philosophy of single origins. I don't think that we should throw the idea of origins out the window, as for example is done in certain post-structuralist thinkers, or indeed really across the board in modern scientific discourse. In other words, origins are mythological, and comparative mythology still has a great deal to teach us, obviously. We still live in a world which generates mythology, even though people don't realize it. So origins are important, whether for positive or negative reasons, and my idea of the palimpsest was that it inscribes origins upon origins, and every origin that is potentially interesting should be added to the text, and although I don't literally write on top of writing -- although it might be an interesting experiment -- I do sort of encourage the readers to

try to stack these origins or conceptual elements up in their minds as they read, and try to entertain them simultaneously. As the Red Queen told Alice in Wonderland, you have to entertain six impossible ideas before breakfast. This seem to me to be the best way to read. So there's that, but then on the other hand there's spontaneity, there's improvisation, there's the outflow of the moment, and so on, all of which are very important. But you know, I grew up in an era when improvisation really took over avantgarde art, especially theater and music and so forth, and I don't think the results were always very positive. When you improvise in a performance situation and you're not on, you're not brilliant, the results are totally disastrous, whereas at least if you had a plan, if you had some kind of structure that you're working with to begin with, you could at least turn it into a decent performance that would decently entertain everybody. So I tend to steer clear of improvisation as a principle, unless it's connected to

really exalted consciousness in some department or another. Perhaps personally I tend more towards the palimpsest than to improvisation. I wouldn't necessarily want to separate them as a body-mind split.

Noise might even be a better concept than improvisation.

(C. Loidl): Since I had the good fortune to meet you every now and then, I wonder what your mind is right now dwelling on. You always seem to be quite a bit ahead of your publications.

(H. Bey): I'm glad you asked. It's been over ten years since *TAZ* was written and about five years since I worked on those essays on immediatism and I think quite a lot has changed. I'm just now working on an essay "Millenium" to try to update some of my thinking. Basically, I've recently come to feel that the collapse of the Communist world between 1989 and 1991 really marks the end of the century, so to speak. Of course, these are artificial divisions in history,

but it still makes a kind of convenient way of thinking of it. And it's really taken me five years personally to figure out the implications of that for my own thinking. And the way I would express it now is that in TAZ and the Radio Sermonettes I was really proposing a third position, a position that was neither Capitalism nor Communism. This is basically, you could say, something that all Anarchist philosophy does. In this period I was telling it in my own way. It's a neither/nor position. It's a third position. Now, however, when you come to think about it, there are not two worlds any more or two possibilities or two contending opposing forces. There is in fact only one world, and that's the world of global capital. The world order, the world market, too-late capitalism, whatever you wanna call it, is now alone and triumphant. It's determinedly triumphant. It knows it's the winner although really it's only the winner by default, I think. And it tends to transform the world in its image. And that image, of course, is a monoculture based on

Hollywood, on Disney, on commodities, on the destruction of the environment in every sense, from trees to imaginations, and the turning of all that into commodity, the turning of all that into money and the turning of money itself into a gnostic phantom-like experience which exists outside the world somewhere in a mysterious sphere of its own where money circulates, never descends, never reaches you and me. So what we're looking at is one single world. Obviously this one single world is not going to go without its revolution, it's not going to go without its opposition, And in fact it's around the word revolution that my thoughts are circulating now, because it seems to me that anarchists and anti-authoritarians in general can no longer occupy this third position; because how can you occupy a third position when there is no longer a second position? We can't talk about the Third World any more for the one reason that there's no second world. So even this third world as it used to be is now simply just the slums of the

one world. It's just the no-go zone of that one single unified world of Capital. Obviously the communists are not going to step back into the position of opposition. Political Communism has completely shot its load, it's made itself look bad, taste bad in the mouth of history. No-one is calling on authoritarian Marxism to step back into this position of opposition. So where is this opposition supposed to come from? In my mind, first of all, this implies that if we're no longer trying to occupy a third position outside of this dichotomy, then WE are the opposition. Whether we know it or like it or not, we are the opposition. Now, who is we? For me the important thing is the realization that I have a new relation to the word revolution, whereas before I was inclined to look on it as a historical phantom, as in fact the lie told by Communism as opposed to the lie told by Capitalism. And whereas before I was extremely distrustful of the leftist dogma of revolution as opposed to the uprising or the insurrection, I would now say that history forces

me once again to have to consider the idea of revolution and of myself as revolutionary and of my theory as revolutionary theory, because the opposition to the one world is already quite real. There is no way in which this triumph of capital can really & truly be a monolithic triumph excluding all difference from the world in the name of its sameness. And it looks to me like the revolutionary force in the single world of sameness has to be difference: revolutionary difference. And at the same time since the single world is involved, since the one world of capital is the world of separation, of alienation, that along with revolutionary difference it also has to be revolutionary presence (used to be called solidarity, although this is a word that presents some difficulties; I'd prefer simply the word "presence" as opposed to separation or absence.) So, I would say that the revolution of the present is a revolution for difference and for presence. It's opposed to sameness and separation. And as I look around the world to see

where there might be arising a natural militant organisational form that speaks to this condition, the one shining example that I might be able to come up with would be the Zapatistas in Mexico, defending their right to be different, essentially. They want to be left alone in peace to be Mayan Indians, but they're not forcing anybody else to become Mayan Indians. They're not even suggesting it. They are different, but they're in solidarity with all those people around the world who have come to support them, because their message is very new, it's very fresh and it attracts a lot of people: the idea that one can be different and revolutionary, that one can fight for social justice without the shadow of Moscow continually poisoning every action, etc. This is something new in the world. *The New York Times* called it the first postmodern revolution, which was simply their sneering ironical way of trying to dismiss it, but in fact when you think about it, it is the first revolution of the 21st century in the

terms that I began with, saying that we're already at the beginning of a new century, we're already if you like at the beginning of a millennium. And I expect to see many many more phenomena such as the Zapatistas. I would say that Bosnia potentially could have been such a phenomenon, not in the sense of an ethnic particularity like the Mayans, but in the sense of a pluralistic particularity: a small society where people were different but wanted to live together in peace. And this was seen to be perhaps even more dangerous than the Zapatista model, which is why in my view it was destroyed. It's possible that Bosnia may never be able to recreate itself again in the utopian way that it dreamed of in 1991. But that moment was there, and I think it has great significance for us. So, this to me is the line of the future. I think we have to reconsider all our priorities, we have to realize that militancy is once again a very important concept. This is not to say that I have any plan of march. I don't know what armies to join and am always

suspicious of joining any army. But things have definitely changed. I'm embarrassed that it took me so long to figure it out. I don't think many people have really caught on to this yet. In fact, the fact that we still use words like "Third World" means that the popular language has not realized what happened in 1989-1991. So, the first goal is simply to try to raise consciousness about this and that's what I hope to do in the near future.

(D. Ender): Do you see any tangible effects of this lack of opposition in the USA?

(H. Bey): Oh yes, absolutely. The most tangible thing, and I think really the thing which gave me the clue to think about this, is precisely a psychic condition. One could point to lots of economic or social factors, but above all I feel a psychic malaise that is something quite new, and, well, a few years ago I began noticing in public speaking that there was a great deal less response on the part of audiences. You would get audiences that would sit there quite

passively looking at you as if you were on television. And if questions came, they were very likely to be questions such as "Tell us what to do". You know when people ask you this sort of question they have no intention of actually taking your advice. What they're doing to trying to fill up some hole in themselves. So I thought, first of all it's just the influence of TV that's been around since 1947 or whatever, but then I realized that that's not a sufficient explanation for this kind of strange passivity. And I began hearing about it from other people who are involved in public speaking and then finally I read a whole section about it in Noam Chomsky's latest book. He has exactly the same experience of audiences, and all of these experiences begin around 1989, 1991. What I think has happened to us is not just TV. TV is just a symptom. So, what's happening is a kind of cognitive collapse around this single world. When people no longer feel a possibility in the world, a possibility of another position, then they become

consciously opposed to the one. And conscious opposition is extremely difficult in an atmosphere that's completely poisoned by media such that no oppositional voice is ever really heard. Unless you yourself make the effort to get down to the alternative media, where that voice is still feebly speaking, then you're left simply in this one world of sameness and separation. Sameness -- everything is the same; separation -- every individual is separated from every other individual; complete alienation, complete unity. And I think that on the unconscious level, on the level of images, on the mythological level, on the religious level if you wanna put it that way, this is what's happening, especially in America. I can't really speak of other places to the same degree. I've traveled in other countries, but one never has the sense of other countries the way one has the sense of one's own country. But I would imagine that it's a world-wide phenomenon -- this kind of capitulation to the mono-culture on the

deepest psychic level. So, yeah, it was in fact this sign which began to bother me to the point where I had to think my way through this problem of the one world, the two worlds, the three worlds and the revolutionary world. By no means have I finished thinking about it, but I recently had this -- to me -- this breakthrough about the word "revolution". So I see that as the only way to break through this particular wall of glass, this screen, yeah, to break through the screen.

C.L.: Sounds like a conclusion almost.

H.B.: Well, if you wish.

C.L.: No, not that I wish... When you talk about one or two or three or opposition and so on, I get totally contrary images to that in my head, because Europe right now and the further you go East in the Old World Europe, you see how it all has collapsed into little, almost tribal, very chauvinistic entities of people trying frantically to survive -- the mafia is the very model -- from that point of view and also from

your talking about Too-Late Capitalism, I'd like to have an image of yours for how Europe as the EC or EU, which we're sitting right inside of right now, presents itself from over there.

H.B.: Well, obviously, especially from the breakdown of Communism you're going to get this smashing up into many little pieces. But it's more than that. We have to realize that difference is the organic revolutionary response to sameness and all of these splinter societies that you speak of consciously or unconsciously are revolutionary. Now, in the case of the Zapatistas or the Bosnians, let's say, this is a positive kind of revolution that we could support perhaps. In the case of the Serbians, it's something else. It's a conservative revolution, perhaps even a fascistic revolution. It's not really "nationalism", it's a form of ethnic imperialism. The point is that people are going to be emphasizing difference. Look at it this way: If you have your own culture, let's say it would be Bosnian Muslim or Finnish

or Celtic or Ashanti or some tribal culture -- this is going to become more and more precious to you as a source and a site of difference. This is where the difference is for you. It's in language, it's in cuisine, it's in art, it's in all of these things. The difference is that difference does not have to be hegemonistic or fascistic. And this is going to be extremely difficult for the old leftists to realize, because the old left itself had an ideal of a single world culture -- secular, rationalistic, you know, totally illumined, no shadows, industry, proletariat, forward into the future, basically extremely hegemonistic towards differences. Yes, they had their little Uzbeki folk-dancers, but this is simply a spectacle of difference, it's not true difference. And we have the same thing: we have 600 channels -- choose one! There's a channel for everybody. Is this difference? No. This is not really difference. This is just sameness disguised as difference. But true organic integral difference is revolutionary, now. It has to be, because it's opposed to

the single world, the mono-world, the mono-culture of capital. So, we have to choose and we have to influence other people's choices to go for an anti-hegemonistic particularity rather than a hegemonistic particularity. In other words, take the Zapatistas again as a model here. As I said, they are not asking other people to become Mayan Indians. They are simply saying, "This is our difference. This is revolutionary for us. We are defending it." So it seems to me that what's happening in Europe on the one hand is this shattering into all of these fragments, which is a situation where political consciousness becomes extremely difficult. On the other hand, you have things like the EEU, which is simply, in my mind, symptomatic of capitalist mono-culture. So I guess that would mean, although I would have to think about this very carefully, I would say that a revolutionary stance in Europe would be anti-EEU. I think it would have to be, because the thing that we have to preserve is an ecology, you know. An ecology of mind

and body implies difference. It implies difference in a state of balance -- balance which can even include conflict. If you look at tribal societies, they are not necessarily peaceful societies. But the idea of war to the extinction of all individual desire -- this is the monopoly of triumphant capital. And I think that it behooves us -- we have to rethink our position if we consider ourselves as leftists of some sort or part of the leftist tradition in some way. We have to really seriously re-think our view of what revolutionary difference is, what it really could be. So, this to me is all inevitable. What's going on in Eastern Europe is inevitable and is potentially revolutionary. If it gets bogged down into conservative revolution and neo-fascism, this would be the great tragedy of the 21st century, but I don't think it's strictly speaking necessary. There is such a thing as revolutionary particularity. And as far as Eastern Europe goes, I would mention not only Bosnia as a failure, but maybe some other small enclaves as possible

successes, you know. The anarchists in Ljubljana, they seem to be doing quite interesting things. It's a small enough country where they could have some real influence. So, interesting times ahead, not doubt about it.

C.L.: Yeah. I wish I could share your outlook on that.

H.B.: Go ahead and argue with me, because--

C.L.: No, no. What I saw much more was the latter part of what you said -- the conservative capitalist revival in all those countries like Lithuania and Romania and so on. There was sort of a resistance spirit there, while there were those authoritarian governments. And now that those collapsed, it's like the Dollar is the main authority for everyone and it's everyone against everyone, and it's very hard to see anything revolutionary in that. Except that it looks like something very self-defeating.

H.B.: I agree with you, but Eastern Europe is the ideological battleground where capital wants to

parade its triumph, where capital is determined to convert everybody. And of course, there's no doubt about it that sixty years of Communism made everybody extremely exhausted.

C.L.: And left them backwards also mentally. People have just been deprived of all sorts of information.

H.B.: I know exhaustion, but at the same time when I meet bright people from Eastern Europe, young intellectuals, punks, anarchists and so forth, I get the feeling of a kind of freshness of approach that's lacking in Western Europeans and Americans; because they were out of the loop for so long, because there is a certain perhaps even naivete based on (laughter) ignorance. This can be turned into a kind of strength, too, in a paradoxical way. I mean, at conferences that I went to last year in Europe which mostly concerned the Internet and communication theory, always without exception the most interesting people were

from Eastern Europe. They had the most to say, they had the most energy, the most creative ideas etc. etc. etc. So I don't think it's a totally grim and hopeless situation. I think that the power of international capital is very much focussed on that part of the world right now. So, resistance is extremely important. I think that it's a top priority for Americans and Western Europeans to show every kind of support for resistance in Eastern Europe. Whether it's going to work or not, who knows, you know. But what else have we got to do?

David Ender
Jack Hauser
Christian Loidl

The Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade Collective

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& we refuse to give up the word).

Immediatism

i.

All experience is mediated--by the mechanisms of sense perception, mentation, language, etc.--& certainly all art consists of some further mediation of experience.

ii.

However, mediation takes place by degrees. Some experiences (smell, taste, sexual pleasure, etc.) are less mediated than others (reading a book, looking through a telescope, listening to a record). Some media, especially ``live'' arts such as dance, theater, musical or bardic performance, are less mediated than others such as TV, CDs, Virtual Reality. Even among the media usually called ``media,'' some are more & others are less mediated, according to the intensity of imaginative participation they demand. Print & radio demand more of the imagination, film less, TV even less, VR the least of all--so far.

iii.

For art, the intervention of Capital always signals a further degree of mediation. To say that art is commodified is to say that a mediation,

or standing-in-between, has occurred, & that this betweenness amounts to a split, & that this split amounts to ``alienation." Improv music played by friends at home is less ``alienated" than music played ``live" at the Met, or music played through media (whether PBS or MTV or Walkman). In fact, an argument could be made that music distributed free or at cost on cassette via mail is LESS alienated than live music played at some huge We Are The World spectacle or Las Vegas nightclub, even though the latter is live music played to a live audience (or at least so it appears), while the former is recorded music consumed by distant & even anonymous listeners.

iv.

The tendency of Hi Tech, & the tendency of Late Capitalism, both impel the arts farther & farther into extreme forms of mediation. Both widen the gulf between the production & consumption of art, with a corresponding increase in ``alienation."

v.

With the disappearance of a ``mainstream" & therefore of an ``avant-garde" in the arts, it has been noticed that all the more advanced & intense art-experiences have been recuperable almost instantly by the media, & thus are rendered into trash like all other trash in the ghostly world of commodities. ``Trash," as the term

was redefined in, let's say, Baltimore in the 1970s, can be good fun--as an ironic take on a sort of inadvertent folkkultur that surrounds & pervades the more unconscious regions of ``popular'' sensibility--which in turn is produced in part by the Spectacle. ``Trash'' was once a fresh concept, with radical potential. By now, however, amidst the ruins of Post-Modernism, it has finally begun to stink. Ironic frivolity finally becomes disgusting. Is it possible now to BE SERIOUS BUT NOT SOBER? (Note: The New Sobriety is or course simply the flipside of the New Frivolity. Chic neo-puritanism carries the taint of Reaction, in just the same way that postmodernist philosophical irony & despair lead to Reaction. The Purge Society is the same as the Binge Society. After the ``12 steps'' of trendy renunciation in the '90s, all that remains is the 13th step of the gallows. Irony may have become boring, but self-mutilation was never more than an abyss. Down with frivolity--Down with sobriety.)

Everything delicate & beautiful, from Surrealism to Break-dancing, ends up as fodder for McDeath's ads; 15 minutes later all the magic has been sucked out, & the art itself dead as a dried locust. The media-wizards, who are nothing if not postmodernists, have even begun to feed on the vitality of ``Trash,'' like vultures regurgitating & re-consuming the same carrion, in an obscene ecstasy of self-referentiality. Which way to the Egress?

vi.

Real art is play, & play is one of the most immediate of all experiences. Those who have cultivated the pleasure of play cannot be expected to give it up simply to make a political point (as in an "Art Strike," or "the suppression without the realization" of art, etc.). Art will *go on*, in somewhat the same sense that breathing, eating, or fucking will go on.

vii.

Nevertheless, we are repelled by the *extreme* alienation of the arts, especially in "the media," in commercial publishing & galleries, in the recording "industry," etc. And we sometimes worry even about the extent to which our very involvement in such arts as writing, painting, or music implicates us in a nasty abstraction, a removal from immediate experience. We miss the directness of play (our original kick in doing art in the first place); we miss smell, taste, touch, the feel of bodies in motion.

viii.

Computers, video, radio, printing presses, synthesizers, fax machines, tape recorders, photocopiers--these things make good toys, but terrible *addictions*. Finally we realize we cannot "reach out and touch someone" who is not present in the flesh. These media may be useful to our art--but they must

not possess us, nor must they stand between, mediate, or separate us from our animal/animate selves. We want to control our media, not be Controlled by them. And we should like to remember a certain psychic martial art which stresses the realization that the body itself is the least mediated of all media.

ix.

Therefore, as artists & ``cultural workers'' who have no intention of giving up activity in our chosen media, we nevertheless demand of ourselves an extreme awareness of *immediacy*, as well as the mastery of some direct means of implementing this awareness as play, immediately (at once) & immediately (without mediation).

x.

Fully realizing that any art ``manifesto'' written today can only stink of the same bitter irony it seeks to oppose, we nevertheless declare without hesitation (without too much thought) the founding of a ``movement,'' IMMEDIATISM. We feel free to do so because we intend to practice Immediatism *in secret*, in order to avoid any contamination of mediation. Publicly we'll continue our work in publishing, radio, printing, music, etc., but privately we will create *something else*, something to be shared freely but never consumed passively, something which can be discussed openly but never understood

by the agents of alienation, something with no commercial potential yet valuable beyond price, something occult yet woven completely into the fabric of our everyday lives.

xi.

Immediatism is not a movement in the sense of an aesthetic program. It depends on *situation*, not style or content, message or School. It may take the form of any kind of creative play which can be performed by two or more people, by & for themselves, face-to-face & together. In this sense it is like a game, & therefore certain "rules" may apply.

xii.

All spectators must also be performers. All expenses are to be shared, & all products which may result from the play are also to be shared by the participants only (who may keep them or bestow them as gifts, but should not sell them). The best games will make little or no use of obvious forms of mediation such as photography, recording, printing, etc., but will tend toward immediate techniques involving physical presence, direct communication, & the senses.

xiii.

An obvious matrix for Immediatism is the party. Thus a good meal could be an Immediatist art project, especially if

everyone present cooked as well as ate. Ancient Chinese & Japanese on misty autumn days would hold odor parties, where each guest would bring a homemade incense or perfume. At linked-verse parties a faulty couplet would entail the penalty of a glass of wine. Quilting bees, *tableaux vivants*, exquisite corpses, rituals of conviviality like Fourier's ``Museum Orgy'' (erotic costumes, poses, & skits), live music & dance--the past can be ransacked for appropriate forms, & imagination will supply more.

xiv.

The difference between a 19th century quilting bee, for example, & an Immediatist quilting bee would lie in our awareness of the practice of Immediatism as a response to the sorrows of alienation & the ``death of art."

xv.

The mail art of the '70s & the zine scene of the '80s were attempts to go beyond the mediation of art-as-commodity, & may be considered ancestors of Immediatism. However, they preserved the mediated structures of postal communication & xerography, & thus failed to overcome the isolation of the players, who remained quite literally out of touch. We wish to take the motives & discoveries of these earlier movements to their logical conclusion in an art which banishes all

mediation & alienation, at least to the extent that the human condition allows.

xvi.

Moreover, Immediatism is not condemned to powerlessness in the world, simply because it avoids the publicity of the marketplace. ``Poetic Terrorism'' and ``Art Sabotage'' are quite logical manifestations of Immediatism.

xvii.

Finally, we expect that the practice of Immediatism will release within us vast storehouses of forgotten power, which will not only transform our lives through the secret realization of unmediated play, but will also inescapably well up & burst out & permeate the *other* art we create, the more public & mediated art.

And we hope that the two will grow closer & closer, & eventually perhaps become one.

The Tong

The mandarins draw their power from the law; the people, from the secret societies. (Chinese saying)

Last winter I read a book on the Chinese Tongs (*Primitive Revolutionaries of China: A Study of Secret Societies in the Late Nineteenth Century*, Fei-Ling Davis; Honolulu,

1971-77):-- maybe the first ever written by someone who *wasn't* a British Secret Service agent!-- (in fact, she was a Chinese socialist who died young--this was her only book)--& for the first time I realized *why* I've always been attracted to the Tong: not just for the romanticism, the elegant decadent chinoiserie decor, as it were-- but also for the form, the structure, the very essence of the thing.

Some time later in an excellent interview with William Burroughs in *Homocore* magazine I discovered that he too has become fascinated with Tongs & suggests the form as a perfect mode of organization for queers, particularly in this present era of shitheel moralism & hysteria. I'd agree, & extend the recommendation to *all* marginal groups, especially ones whose jouissance involves illegalism (potheads, sex heretics, insurrectionists) or extreme eccentricity (nudists, pagans, post-avant-garde artists, etc., etc.).

A Tong can perhaps be defined as a mutual benefit society for people with a common interest which is illegal or dangerously marginal--hence, the necessary *secrecy*. Many Chinese Tongs revolved around smuggling & tax-evasion, or clandestine self-control of certain trades (in opposition to State control), or insurrectionary political or religious aims (overthrow of the Manchus for example-- several tongs collaborated with the Anarchists in the 1911 Revolution).

A common purpose of the tongs was to collect & invest membership dues & initiation fees in insurance funds for the indigent, unemployed, widows & orphans of deceased members, funeral expenses, etc. In an era like ours when the poor are caught between the cancerous Scylla of the Insurance Industry & the fast-evaporating Charybdis of welfare & public health services, this purpose of the Secret Society might well regain its appeal. (Masonic lodges were organized on this basis, as were the early & illegal trade unions & "chivalric orders" for laborers & artisans.) Another universal purpose for such societies was of course conviviality, especially banqueting-- but even this apparently innocuous pastime can acquire insurrectionary implications. In the various French revolutions, for example, dining clubs frequently took on the role of radical organizations when all other forms of public meeting were banned.

Recently I talked about tongs with "P.M.," author of *bolo'bolo* (Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series). I argued that secret societies are once again a valid possibility for groups seeking autonomy & individual realization. He disagreed, but not (as I expected) because of the "elitist" connotations of secrecy. He felt that such organizational forms work best for already-close-knit groups with strong economic, ethnic/regional, or religious

ties--conditions which do not exist (or exist only embryonically) in today's marginal scene. He proposed instead the establishment of multi-purpose neighborhood centers, with expenses to be shared by various special-interest groups & small-entrepreneurial concerns (craftspeople, coffeehouses, performance spaces, etc.). Such large centers would require official status (State recognition), but would obviously become foci for all sorts of non-official activity--black markets, temporary organization for "protest" or insurrectionary action, uncontrolled "leisure" & unmonitored conviviality, etc.

In response to P.M.'s critique I have not abandoned but rather modified my concept of what a modern Tong might be. The intensely hierarchical structure of the traditional tong would obviously not work, although some of the forms could be saved & used in the same way titles & honors are used in our "free religions" (or "weird" religions, "joke" religions, anarcho-neo-pagan cults, etc.). Non-hierarchic organization appeals to us, but so too does ritual, incense, the delightful bombast of occult orders--"Tong Aesthetics" you might call it--so why shouldn't we have our cake & eat it too?--(especially if it's Moroccan *majoun* or *baba au absinthe*--something a bit *forbidden!*). Among other things, the Tong should be a work of art.

The strict traditional rule of secrecy

also needs modification. Nowadays anything which evades the idiot gaze of publicity is already *virtually* secret. Most modern people seem unable to believe in the reality of something they never see on television --therefore to escape being televisualized is already to be quasi-invisible. Moreover, that which is *seen* through the mediation of the media becomes somehow unreal, & loses its power (I won' t bother to defend this thesis but simply refer the reader to a train of thought which leads from Nietzsche to Benjamin to Bataille to Barthes to Foucault to Baudrillard). By contrast, perhaps that which is *unseen* retains its reality, its rootedness in everyday life & therefore in the possibility of the marvelous.

So the modern Tong cannot be elitist-- but there's no reason it can't be *choosy*. Many non-authoritarian organizations have foundered on the dubious principle of open membership, which frequently leads to a preponderance of assholes, yahoos, spoilers, whining neurotics, & police agents. If a Tong is organized around a special interest (especially an illegal or risky or marginal interest) it certainly has the right to compose itself according to the ``affinity group" principle. If secrecy means (a) avoiding publicity & (b) vetting possible members, the ``secret society" can scarcely be accused of violating anarchist principles. In fact, such societies have a long & honorable history in the anti-authoritarian movement, from Proudhon's dream of

re-animating the Holy Vehm as a kind of ``People's Justice," to Bakunin's various schemes, to Durutti's ``Wanderers." We ought not to allow marxist historians to convince us that such expedients are ``primitive" & have therefore been left behind by ``History." The absoluteness of ``History" is at best a dubious proposition. We are not interested in a return to the primitive, but in a return OF the primitive, inasmuch as the primitive is the ``repressed."

In the old days secret societies would appear in times & spaces forbidden by the State, i.e. where & when people are *kept apart* by law. In our times people are usually not kept apart by law but by mediation & alienation (see Part 1, ``Immediatism"). Secrecy therefore becomes an avoidance of mediation, while conviviality changes from a secondary to a primary purpose of the ``secret society." Simply to meet together face-to-face is already an action against the forces which oppress us by isolation, by loneliness, by the trance of media.

In a society which enforces a schizoid split between Work & Leisure, we have all experienced the trivialization of our ``free time," time which is organized neither as work nor as leisure. (``Vacation " once meant ``empty" time--now it signifies time which is organized & filled by the industry of leisure.) The ``secret" purpose of conviviality in the secret society then

becomes the self-structuring & auto-valorization of free time. Most parties are devoted only to loud music & too much booze, not because we enjoy them but because the Empire of Work has imbued us with the feeling that empty time is wasted time. The idea of throwing a party to, say, make a quilt or sing madrigals together, seems hopelessly outdated. But the modern Tong will find it both necessary & enjoyable to seize back free time from the commodity world & devote it to shared creation, to *play*.

I know of several societies organized along these lines already, but I'm certainly not going to blow their secrecy by discussing them in print. There are *some* people who do not need fifteen seconds on the Evening News to validate their existence. Of course, the marginal press and radio (the only media in which this sermonette will appear) are practically invisible anyway - certainly still quite opaque to the gaze of Control. Nevertheless, there's the principle of the thing: secrets should be respected. Not everyone needs to know everything! What the 20th century lacks most--& needs most--is *tact*. We wish to replace democratic epistemology with ``dada epistemology'' (Feyerabend). Either you're on the bus or you're not on the bus.

Some will call this an elitist attitude, but it is not--at least not in the C. Wright Mills sense of the word: that is, a small group which exercises power

over non-insiders for its own aggrandizement. Immediatism does not concern itself with power-relations; - it desires neither to be ruled nor to rule. The contemporary Tong therefore finds no pleasure in the degeneration of institutions into conspiracies. It wants power for its own purposes of mutuality. It is a free association of individuals who have chosen each other as the subjects of the group's generosity, its ``expansiveness" (to use a sufi term). If this amounts to some kind of ``elitism," then so be it.

If Immediatism begins with groups of friends trying not just to overcome isolation but also to enhance each other's lives, soon it will want to take a more complex shape:-- nuclei of mutually-self-chosen allies, working (playing) to occupy more & more time & space outside all mediated structure & control. Then it will want to become a horizontal network of such autonomous groups--then, a ``tendency" --then, a ``movement"--& then, a kinetic web of ``temporary autonomous zones." At last it will strive to become the kernel of a new society, giving birth to itself within the corrupt shell of the old. For all these purposes the secret society promises to provide a useful framework of protective clandestinity-- a cloak of invisibility that will have to be dropped only in the event of some final showdown with the Babylon of Mediation....

Prepare for the Tong Wars!

Immediatism vs Capitalism

Many monsters stand between us & the realization of Immediatist goals. For instance our own ingrained unconscious alienation might all too easily be mistaken for a virtue, especially when contrasted with crypto-authoritarian pap passed off as "community," or with various upscale versions of "leisure." Isn't it natural to take the *dandyism noir* of curmudgeonly hermits for some kind of heroic Individualism, when the only visible contrast is Club Med commodity socialism, or the gemütlich masochism of the Victim Cults? To be doomed & cool naturally appeals more to noble souls than to be saved & cozy.

Immediatism means to enhance individuals by providing a matrix of friendship, not to belittle them by sacrificing their "ownness" to group-think, leftist self-abnegation, or New Age clone-values. What must be overcome is not individuality per se, but rather the addiction to bitter loneliness which characterizes consciousness in the 20th century (which is by & large not much more than a re-run of the 19th).

Far more dangerous than any inner monster of (what might be called) "negative selfishness," however, is the outward, very real & utterly objective monster of too-Late

Capitalism. The marxists (R.I.P.) had their own version of how this worked, but here we are not concerned with abstract/dialectical analyses of labor-value or class structure (even though these may still require analysis, & even more so since the ``death" or ``disappearance" of Communism). Instead we'd like to point out specific tactical dangers facing any Immediatist project.

1. Capitalism only *supports* certain kinds of groups, the nuclear family for example, or ``the people I know at my job," because such groups are already self-alienated & hooked into the Work/Consume/Die structure. Other kinds of groups may be *allowed*, but will lack all support from the societal structure, & thus find themselves facing grotesque challenges & difficulties which appear under the guise of ``bad luck."

The first & most innocent-seeming obstacle to any Immediatist project will be the ``busyness" or ``need to make a living" faced by each of its associates. However there is no real innocence here--only our profound ignorance of the ways in which Capitalism itself is organized to prevent all genuine conviviality.

No sooner have a group of friends begun to visualize immediate goals realizable only thru solidarity & cooperation, then suddenly one of them will be offered a ``good" job in Cincinnati or teaching English in Taiwan-

-or else have to move back to California to care for a dying parent--or else they'll lose the ``good'' job they already have & be reduced to a state of misery which precludes their very enjoyment of the group's project or goals (i.e. they'll become ``depressed''). At the most mundane-seeming level, the group will fail to agree on a day of the week for meetings because everyone is ``busy.'' But this is not mundane. It's sheer cosmic evil. We whip ourselves into froths of indignation over ``oppression'' & ``unjust laws'' when in fact these abstractions have little impact on our daily lives--while that which really makes us miserable goes unnoticed, written off to ``busyness'' or ``distraction'' or even to the nature of reality itself (``Well, I can't *live* without a *job*!").

Yes, perhaps it's true we can't ``live'' without a job--although I hope we're grown-up enough to know the difference between *life* & the accumulation of a bunch of fucking *gadgets*. Still, we must constantly remind ourselves (since our culture won't do it for us) that this monster called WORK remains the precise & exact target of our rebellious wrath, the one single most oppressive *reality* we face (& we must learn also to recognize Work when it's disguised as ``leisure'').

To be ``too busy'' for the Immediatist project is to miss the very essence of Immediatism. To struggle to *come*

together every Monday night (or whatever), in the teeth of the gale of busyness, or family, or invitations to stupid parties--that struggle is *already* Immediatism itself. Succeed in actually physically meeting face-to-face with a group which is not your spouse-&-kids, or the ``guys from my job," or your 12-Step Program--& you have *already* achieved virtually everything Immediatism yearns for. An actual project will arise almost spontaneously out of this successful slap-in-the-face of the social norm of alienated boredom. Outwardly, of course, the project will seem to be the group's purpose, its motive for coming together--but in fact the opposite is true. We're not kidding or indulging in hyperbole when we insist that *meeting face-to-face is already ``the revolution."* Attain it & the creativity part comes naturally; like ``the kingdom of heaven" it will be added unto you. *Of course* it will be horribly difficult--why else would we have spent the last decade trying to construct our ``bohemia in the mail," if it were easy to have it in some *quartier latin* or rural commune? The rat-bastard Capitalist scum who are telling you to ``reach out and touch someone" with a telephone or ``be there!" (where? alone in front of a goddam television??)--these lovecrafty suckers are trying to turn you into a scrunched-up blood-drained pathetic crippled little cog in the death-machine of the human soul (& let's not have any theological quibbles about what we mean by ``soul"!). Fight them--by meeting with friends, not to consume

or produce, but to enjoy friendship-- & you will have triumphed (at least for a moment) over the most pernicious conspiracy in EuroAmerican society today--the conspiracy to turn *you* into a living corpse galvanized by prosthesis & the terror of scarcity-- to turn you into a spook haunting your own brain. This is not a petty matter! This is a question of failure or triumph!

2. If busyness & dissipation are the first potential failures of Immediatism, we cannot say that its triumph should be equated with ``success." The second major threat to our project can quite simply be described as the tragic success of the project itself. Let's say we've overcome physical alienation & have actually met, developed our project, & created something (a quilt, a banquet, a play, a bit of eco-sabotage, etc.). Unless we keep it an absolute secret--which is probably impossible & in any case would constitute a somewhat poisonous selfishness--*other people* will hear of it (other people from hell, to paraphrase the existentialists)-- & among these other people, some will be agents (conscious or unconscious, it doesn't matter) of too-Late Capitalism. The Spectacle-- or whatever has replaced it since 1968--is above all *empty*. It fuels itself by the constant Moloch-like gulping-down of everyone's creative powers & ideas. It's more desperate for *your* ``radical subjectivity " than any vampire or cop for your blood. It wants your creativity much more even than you want it yourself. It would die unless you

desired it, & you will only desire it if it seems to offer you the very desires you dreamed, alone in your lonely genius, disguised & sold back to you as commodities. Ah, the metaphysical shenanigans of objects! (or words to that effect, Marx cited by Ben jamin).

Suddenly it will appear to you (as if a demon had whispered it in your ear) that the Immediatist art you've created is so good, so fresh, so original, so strong compared to all the crap on the ``market'' --so *pure*--that you could water it down & sell it, & *make a living* at it, so you could all knock off WORK, buy a farm in the country, & do art together forever after. And perhaps it's true. You *could*... after all, you're geniuses. But it'd be better to fly to Hawaii & throw yourself into a live volcano. Sure, you could have success; you could even have 15 seconds on the Evening News-- or a PBS documentary made on your life. Yes indeedy.

3. But this is where the last major monster steps in, crashes thru the living room wall, & snuffs you (if Success itself hasn't already ``spoiled'' you, that is).

Because in order to succeed you must first be ``seen." And if you are *seen*, you will be perceived as wrong, illegal, immoral--different. The Spectacle's main sources of creative energy are all in prison. If you're not a nuclear family or a guided tour of the Republican Party, then why are you meeting every

Monday evening? To do drugs? illicit sex? income tax evasion? satanism?

And of course the chances are good that your Immediatist group *is* engaged in something illegal-- since almost everything enjoyable is in fact illegal. Babylon hates it when anyone actually enjoys life, rather than merely spends money in a vain attempt to buy the illusion of enjoyment. Dissipation, gluttony, bulimic overconsumption-- these are not only legal but mandatory. If you don't waste yourself on the emptiness of commodities you are obviously *queer* & must by definition be breaking some law. True pleasure in this society is more dangerous than bank robbery. At least bank robbers share Massa's respect for Massa's money. But you, you perverts, clearly deserve to be burned at the stake --& here come the peasants with their torches, eager to do the State's bidding without even being asked. Now *you* are the monsters, & your little gothic castle of Immediatism is engulfed in flames. Suddenly cops are swarming out of the woodwork. Are your papers in order? Do you have a permit to exist?

Immediatism is a picnic--but it's not *easy*. Immediatism is the most natural path for free humans imaginable--& *therefore* the most unnatural abomination in the eyes of Capital. Immediatism will triumph, but only at the cost of *self-organization of power, of clandestinity, & of insurrection*. Immediatism is our delight, Immediatism is *dangerous*.

Involution

So far we've treated Immediatism as an aesthetic movement rather than a political one--but if the ``personal *is* political'' then certainly the aesthetic must be considered even more so.

``Art for art's sake'' cannot really be said to exist at all, unless it be taken to imply that art *per se* functions as political power, i.e. power capable of expressing or even changing the world rather than merely describing it.

In fact art always seeks such power, whether the artist remains unconscious of the fact & believes in ``pure'' aesthetics, or becomes so hyper-conscious of the fact as to produce nothing but agit-prop. Consciousness in itself, as Nietzsche pointed out, plays a less significant role in life than power. No snappier proof of this could be imagined than the continued existence of an ``Art World'' (SoHo, 57th St., etc.) which still believes in the separate realms of political art & aesthetic art. Such failure of consciousness allows this ``world'' the luxury of producing art with overt political *content* (to satisfy their liberal customers) as well as art without such content, which merely expresses the power of the bourgeois scum & bankers who buy it for their investment portfolios.

If art did not possess & wield this power it would not be worth doing & nobody would do it. Literal art for art's

sake would produce nothing but impotence & nullity. Even the fin-de-siècle decadents who invented *l'art pour l'art* used it politically: --as a weapon against bourgeois values of ``utility," ``morality" & so on. The idea that art can be voided of political meaning appeals now only to those liberal cretins who wish to excuse ``pornography" or other forbidden aesthetic games on the grounds that ``it's only art" & hence can change nothing. (I hate these assholes worse than Jesse Helms; at least *he* still believes that art has *power!*)

Even if an art without political content can--for the moment--be admitted to exist (altho this remains exceedingly problematic), then the political meaning of art can still be sought in the *means of its production & consumption*. The art of 57th St. remains bourgeois no matter how radical its content may appear, as Warhol proved by painting Che Guevara; in fact Valerie Solanis revealed herself far more radical than Warhol-- by shooting him-- (& perhaps even more radical than Che, that Rudolf Valentino of Red Fascism).

In fact we're not terribly concerned with the content of Immediatist art. Immediatism remains for us more *game* than ``movement" ; as such, the game might result in Brechtian didacticism or Poetic Terrorism, but it might equally well leave behind no content at all (as in a banquet), or else one with no obvious political message (such as a quilt). The radical quality of

Immediatism expresses itself rather in its mode of production & consumption.

That is, it is produced by a group of friends either for itself alone or for a larger circle of friends; it is *not* produced for sale, nor is it sold, nor (ideally) is it allowed to slip out of the control of its producers in any way. If it is meant for consumption outside the circle then it must be made in such a way as to remain impervious to cooptation & commodification. For example, if one of our quilts escaped us & ended up sold as "art" to some capitalist or museum, we should consider it a disaster. Quilts must remain in our hands or be *given* to those who will appreciate them & keep them. As for our agitprop, it must resist commodification by its very *form*; --we don't want our posters sold twenty years later as "art," like Myakovsky (or Brecht, for that matter). The best Immediatist agitprop will leave no trace at all, except in the souls of those who are *changed* by it.

Let us repeat here that participation in Immediatism does not preclude the production/consumption of art in other ways by the individuals making up the group. We are not ideologues, & this is not Jonestown. This is a game, not a movement; it has rules of play, but no laws. Immediatism would love it if everyone were an artist, but our goal is not mass conversion. The game's payoff lies in its ability to escape the paradoxes & contradictions of the

commercial art world (including literature, etc.), in which all liberatory gestures seem to end up as mere representations & hence betrayals of themselves. We offer the chance for art which is immediately *present* by virtue of the fact that it can exist only in our presence. Some of us may still write novels or paint pictures, either to ``make a living'' or to seek out ways to redeem these forms from recuperation. But Immediatism sidesteps both these problems. Thus it is ``privileged,'' like all games.

But we cannot for this reason alone call it *involuted*, turned in on itself, closed, hermetic, elitist, art for art's sake. In Immediatism art is produced & consumed in a certain way, & this *modus operandi* is already ``political'' in a very specific sense. In order to grasp this sense, however, we must first explore ``involution'' more closely.

It's become a truism to say that society no longer expresses a consensus (whether reactionary or liberatory), but that a false consensus is expressed *for* society; let's call this false consensus ``the Totality.'' The Totality is produced thru mediation & alienation, which attempt to subsume or absorb all creative energies *for* the Totality. Myakovsky killed himself when he realized this; perhaps we're made of sterner stuff, perhaps not. But for the sake of argument, let us assume that suicide is *not* a ``solution.''

The Totality isolates individuals &

renders them powerless by offering only illusory modes of social expression, modes which seem to promise liberation or self-fulfillment but in fact end by producing yet more mediation & alienation. This complex can be viewed clearly at the level of ``commodity fetishism," in which the most rebellious or avant-garde forms in art can be turned into fodder for PBS or MTV or ads for jeans or perfume.

On a subtler level, however, the Totality can absorb & re-direct any power whatsoever simply by re-contextualizing & re-presenting it. For instance, the liberatory power of a painting can be neutralized or even absorbed simply by placing it in the context of a gallery or museum, where it will automatically become a mere *representation* of liberatory power. The insurrectionary gesture of a madman or criminal is not negated only by locking up the perpetrator, but even more by allowing the gesture to be represented-- by a psychiatrist or by some brainless Kop-show on channel 5 or even by a coffee-table book on Art Brut. This has been called ``Spectacular recuperation" ; however, the Totality can go even farther than this simply by *simulating* that which it formerly sought to recuperate. That is, the artist & madman are no longer necessary even as sources of appropriation or ``mechanical reproduction, " as Benjamin called it. Simulation cannot reproduce the faint reflection of ``aura" which Benjamin allowed even

to commodity-trash, its ``utopian trace." Simulation cannot in fact reproduce or produce anything except desolation & misery. But since the *Totality thrives* on our misery, simulation suits its purpose quite admirably.

All these effects can be tracked most obviously & crudely in the area generally called ``the Media" (alho we contend that *mediation* has a much wider range than even the term *broadcast* could ever describe or indicate). The role of the Media in the recent Nintendo War--in fact the Media's one-to-one identification with that war--provides a perfect & exemplary scenario. All over America millions of people possessed *at least* enough ``enlightenment" to condemn this hideous parody of morality enforced by that murderous crack-dealing spy in the White House. The Media however produced (i.e. simulated) the impression that virtually no opposition to Bush's war existed or could exist ; that (to quote Bush) ``there is no Peace Movement." And in fact there *was* no *Peace Movement*--only millions of people whose desire for peace had been *negated by the Totality*, wiped out, ``disappeared " like victims of Peruvian death squads; people separated from each other by the brutal alienation of TV, news management, infotainment & sheer disinformation; people made to feel isolated, alienated, weird, queer, wrong, finally no n-existent; people without voices; people without power.

This process of fragmentation has reached near-universal completion in our society, at least in the area of social discourse. Each person engages in a ``relation of involution'' with the spectacular simulation of Media. That is, our ``relation'' with Media is essentially empty & illusory, so that even when we seem to reach out & perceive reality in Media, we are in fact merely driven back in upon ourselves, alienated, isolated, & impotent.

America is full to overflowing with people who feel that no matter what they say or do, no difference will be made; that no one is listening; that there is no one to listen. This *feeling* is the triumph of the Media. ``They'' speak, *you* listen--& therefore turn in upon yourself in a spiral of loneliness, distraction, depression, & spiritual death.

This process affects not only individuals but also such groups as still exist outside the Consensus Matrix of nuke-family, school, church, job, army, political party, etc. Each *group* of artists or peace activists or whatever is also made to feel that no contact with other groups is possible. Each ``life-style'' group buys the simulation of rivalry & enmity with other such groups of consumers. Each class & race is assured of its unquenchable existential alienation from all other classes & races (as in *Lifestyles of the Rich & Famous*).

The concept of ``networking'' began as

a revolutionary strategy to bypass & overcome the Totality by setting up horizontal connections (unmediated by authority) among individuals & groups. In the 1980s we discovered that networking could also be mediated & in fact had to be mediated--by telephone, computers, the post office, etc.--& thus was doomed to fail us in our struggle against alienation. Communication technology may still prove to offer useful *tools* in this struggle, but by now it has become clear that CommTech is not a goal in itself. And in fact our distrust of seemingly ``democratic'' tech like PCs & phones increase with every revolutionary failure to hold control of the means of production. Frankly we do not wish to be forced to make up our minds whether or not any new tech will be or must be either liberatory or counter-liberatory. ``After the revolution'' such questions would answer themselves in the context of a ``politics of desire.'' For the time being, however, we have discovered (not invented) Immediatism as a means of direct production & presentation of creative, liberatory & ludic energies, carried out without recourse to mediation of any mechanistic or alienated structures *whatsoever...*or at least so we hope.

In other words, whether or not any given technology or form of mediation can be used to overcome the Totality, we have decided to play a game that uses no such tech & hence does not need to question it-- at least, not within the borders of the game. We reserve

our challenge, our question, for the total Totality, not for any one ``issue'' with which it seeks to distract us.

And this brings us back to the ``political form'' of Immediatism. Face-to-face, body-to-body, breath-to breath (literally a conspiracy)--the game of Immediatism simply *cannot* be played on any level accessible to the false Consensus. It does not represent ``everyday life''--*it cannot BE other than ``everyday life,*'' although it positions itself for the penetration of the marvelous," for the illumination of the real by the wonderful. Like a secret society, the networking it does must be slow (infinitely more slow than the ``pure speed'' of CommTech, media & war), & it must be *corporeal* rather than abstract, fleshless, mediated by machine or by authority or by simulation.

In this sense we say that Immediatism is a picnic (a con-viviality) but is not *easy*--that it is most natural for free spirits but that it is *dangerous*. Content has nothing to do with it. The sheer existence of Immediatism is already an insurrection.

Imagination

There is a time for the theatre.--If a people's imagination grows weak there arises in it the inclination to have its legends presented to it on the stage: it can now endure these crude substitutes for imagination. But for those ages to

which the epic rhapsodist belongs, the theatre and the actor disguised as a hero is a hindrance to imagination rather than a means of giving it wings: too close, too definite, too heavy, too little in it of dream and bird-flight.
(Nietzsche)

But of course the rhapsodist, who here appears only one step removed from the shaman ("...dream and bird-flight") must also be called a kind of *medium* or bridge standing between "a people" and its imagination. (Note: we'll use the word "imagination" sometimes in Wm. Blake's sense & sometimes in Gaston Bachelard's sense without opting for either a "spiritual" or an "aesthetic" determination, & without recourse to metaphysics.) A bridge carries across ("translate," "metaphor") but is not the original. And to translate is to betray. Even the rhapsodist provides a little poison for the imagination.

Ethnography, however, allows us to assert the possibility of societies where shamans are not *specialists* of the imagination, but where everyone is a special sort of shaman. In these societies, all members (except the psychically handicapped) act as shamans & bards for themselves as well as for their people. For example: certain Amerindian tribes of the Great Plains developed the most complex of all hunter/gatherer societies quite late in their history (perhaps partly thanks to the gun & horse, technologies adopted from European culture). Each

person acquired complete identity & full membership in "the People" only thru the Vision Quest, & its artistic enactment for the tribe. Thus each person became an "epic rhapsodist" in sharing this individuality with the collectivity.

The Pygmies, among the most "primitive" cultures, neither produce nor consume their music, but become *en masse* "the Voice of the Forest." At the other end of the scale, among complex agricultural societies, like Bali on the verge of the 20th century, "everyone is an artist" (& in 1980 a Javanese mystic told me, "Everyone *must be* an artist!").

The goals of Immediatism lie somewhere along the trajectory described roughly by these three points (Pygmies, Plains Indians, Balinese), which have all been linked to the anthropological concept of "democratic shamanism." Creative acts, themselves the outer results of the inwardness of imagination, are not *mediated & alienated* (in the sense we've been using those terms) when they are carried out BY everyone FOR everyone-- when they are produced but not reproduced--when they are shared but not fetishized. Of course these acts are achieved thru mediation of some sort & to some extent, as are all acts-- but they have not yet become forces of extreme alienation between some Expert/Priest/Producer on the one hand & some hapless "layperson" or

consumer on the other.

Different media therefore exhibit different degrees of mediation--& perhaps they can even be ranked on that basis. Here everything depends on reciprocity, on a more-or-less equal exchange of what may be called ``quanta of imagination." In the case of the epic rhapsodist who mediates vision for the tribe, a great deal of work--or active dreaming-- still remains to be done by the hearers. They must participate imaginatively in the act of telling/hearing, & must call up images from their own stores of creative power to complete the rhapsodist's act.

In the case of Pygmy music the reciprocity becomes nearly as complete as possible, since the entire tribe mediates vision only & precisely for the entire tribe;-- while for the Balinese, reciprocity assumes a more complex economy in which specialization is highly articulated, in which ``the artist is not a special kind of person, but each person is a special kind of artist."

In the ``ritual theater" of Voodoo & Santeria, everyone present must participate by visualizing the loas or orishas (imaginal archetypes), & by calling upon them (with ``signature" chants & rhythms) to manifest. Anyone present may become a ``horse" or medium for one of these *santos*, whose words & actions then assume for all celebrants the aspect of the presence of the spirit (i.e. the possessed person does not represent but presents). This

structure, which also underlies Indonesian ritual theater, may be taken as exemplary for the creative production of ``democratic shamanism." In order to construct our scale of imagination for all media, we may start by comparing this ``voodoo theater" with the 18th century European theater described by Nietzsche.

In the latter, nothing of the original vision (or ``spirit") is actually present. The actors merely re-present--they are ``disguised." It is not expected that any member of troupe or audience will suddenly become possessed (or even ``inspired" to any great extent) by the playwright's images. The actors are specialists or experts of representation, while the audience are ``laypeople" to whom various images are being transferred. The audience is passive, too much is being *done for* the audience, who are indeed locked in place in darkness & silence, immobilized by the money they've paid for this vicarious experience.

Artaud, who realized this, attempted to revive ritual voodoo theater (banished from Western Culture by Aristotle)--but he carried out the attempt *within* the very structure (actor/audience) of aristotelian theater; he tried to destroy or mutate it from the inside out. He failed & went insane, setting off a whole series of experiments which culminated in the Living Theater's assault on the actor/audience barrier, a

literal assault which tried to force audience members to ``participate'' in the ritual. These experiments produced some great theater, but all failed in their deepest purpose. None managed to overcome the alienation Nietzsche & Artaud had criticized.

Even so, Theater occupies a much higher place on the Imaginal Scale than other & later media such as film. At least in theater actors & audience are physically present in the same space together, allowing for the creation of what Peter Brook calls the ``invisible golden chain'' of attention & fellow-feeling between actors & audience--the well-known ``magic'' of theater. With film, however, this chain is broken. Now the audience sits alone in the dark with nothing to do, while the absent actors are represented by gigantic icons. Always the same no matter how many times it is ``shown,'' made to be reproduced mechanically, devoid of all ``aura,'' film actually *forbids* its audience to ``participate''--film has no need of the audience's imagination. Of course, film does need the audience's money, & money is a kind of concretized imaginal residue, after all.

Eisenstein would point out that montage establishes a dialectic tension in film which engages the viewer's mind--intellect & imagination-- & Disney might add (if he were capable of ideology) that animation increases this effect because animation is, in effect, completely made up of montage. Film

too has its ``magic." Granted. But from the point of view of *structure* we have come a long way from voodoo theater & democratic shamanism-- we have come perilously close to the commodification of the imagination, & to the alienation of commodity-relations. We have almost resigned our power of flight, even of dream-flight.

Books? Books as media transmit only words--no sounds, sights, smells or feels, all of which are left up to the reader's imagination. Fine...But there's nothing ``democratic" about books. The author/publisher produces, you consume. Books appeal to ``imaginative" people, perhaps, but all their imaginal activity really amounts to passivity, sitting alone with a book, letting someone else tell the story. The magic of books has something sinister about it, as in Borges's Library. The Church's idea of a list of damnable books probably didn't go far enough-- for in a sense, all books are damned. The *eros* of the text is a perversion-- albeit, nevertheless, one to which we are addicted, & in no hurry to kick.

As for radio, it is clearly a medium of absence--like the book only more so, since books leave you alone in the light, radio alone in the dark. The more exacerbated passivity of the ``listener" is revealed by the fact that advertisers pay for spots on radio, not in books (or not very much). Nevertheless radio leaves a great deal more imaginative ``work" for the listener than, say,

television for the viewer. The magic of radio: one can use it to listen to sunspot radiation, storms on Jupiter, the whizz of comets. Radio is old-fashioned; therein lies its seductiveness. Radio preachers say, ``Put your haaands on the Radio, brothers & sisters, & feel the heeeeaaling power of the *Word!*''
Voodoo Radio?

(Note: A similar analysis of recorded music might be made: i.e., that it is alienating but not yet alienated. Records replaced family amateur music-making. Recorded music is too ubiquitous, too easy-- that which is not present is not *rare*. And yet there's a lot to be said for scratchy old 78s played over distant radio stations late at night-- a flash of illumination which seems to spark across all the levels of mediation & achieve a paradoxical presence.)

It's in this sense that we might perhaps give some credence to the otherwise dubious proposition that ``radio is good--television evil!'' For television occupies the bottom rung of the scale of imagination in media. No, that's not true. ``Virtual Reality'' is even lower. But TV is the medium the Situationists meant when they referred to ``the Spectacle. '' Television is the medium which Immediatism most wants to overcome. Books, theater, film & radio all retain what Benjamin called ``the utopian trace'' (at least *in potentia*)-- the last vestige of an impulse against alienation, the last perfume of the

imagination. TV however *began* by erasing even that trace. No wonder the first broadcasters of video were the Nazis. TV is to the imagination what virus is to the DNA. The end. Beyond TV there lies only the infra-media realm of no-space/no-time, the instantaneity & ecstasis of CommTech, pure speed, the downloading of consciousness into the machine, into the program--in other words, hell.

Does this mean that Immediatism wants to ``abolish television"? No, certainly not-- for Immediatism wants to be a game, not a political movement, & certainly not a revolution with the power to abolish any medium. The goals of Immediatism must be positive, not negative. We feel no calling to eliminate any ``means of production " (or even re-production) which might after all some day fall into the hands of ``a people."

We have analyzed media by asking how much imagination is involved in each, & how much reciprocity, solely in order to implement for ourselves the most effective means of solving the problem outlined by Nietzsche & felt so painfully by Artaud, the problem of alienation. For this task we need a rough hierarchy of media, a means of measuring their potential for our uses. Roughly, then, *the more imagination is liberated & shared, the more useful the medium.*

Perhaps we can no longer call up spirits to possess us, or visit their realms as

the shamans did. Perhaps no such spirits exist, or perhaps we are too ``civilized'' to recognize them. Or perhaps not. The creative imagination, however, remains for us a reality--& one which we must explore, even in the vain hope of our salvation.

Lascaux

Every culture (or anyway every major urban/agricultural culture) cherishes two myths which apparently contradict each other: the myth of Degeneration & the myth of Progress. Rene Guenon & the neo-traditionalists like to pretend that no ancient culture ever believed in Progress, but of course they all did.

One version of the myth of Degeneration in Indo-European culture centers around the image of metals: gold, silver, bronze, iron. But what of the myth wherein Kronos & the Titans are destroyed to make way for Zeus & the Olympians?-- a story which parallels that of Tiamat & Marduk, or Leviathan & Jah. In these ``Progress'' myths, an earlier chthonic chaotic earthbound (or watery) ``feminine'' pantheon is replaced (overthrown) by a later spiritualized orderly heavenly ``male'' pantheon. Is this not a *step forward* in Time? And have not Buddhism, Christianity, & Islam all claimed to be *better* than paganism?

In truth of course both myths-- Degeneration as well as Progress-- serve the purpose of Control & the

Society of Control. Both admit that before the present state of affairs something else existed, a different form of the Social. In both cases we appear to be seeing a "race-memory" vision of the Paleolithic, the great long unchanging pre-history of the human. In one case that era is seen as a nastily brutish vast disorder; the 18th century did not *discover* this viewpoint, but found it already expressed in Classical & Christian culture. In the other case, the primordial is viewed as precious, innocent, happier, & easier than the present, more numinous than the present--but *irrevocably vanished*, impossible to recover except through death.

Thus for all loyal & enthusiastic devotees of Order, Order presents itself as immeasurably more perfect than any original Chaos; while for the disaffected potential enemies of Order, Order presents itself as cruel & oppressive ("iron") but utterly & fatally unavoidable--in fact, omnipotent.

In neither case will the mythopoeists of Order admit that "Chaos" or "the Golden Age" could still exist in the present, or that they *do* exist in the present, here & now in fact-- but repressed by the illusory totality of the Society of Order. We however believe that "the paleolithic" (which is neither more nor less a myth than "chaos" or "golden age") does exist even now as a kind of unconscious within the social. We also believe that as the Industrial Age comes to an end, & with it the last

of the Neolithic "agricultural revolution," & with it the decay of the last religions of Order, that this "repressed material" will once again be uncovered. What else could we mean when we speak of "psychic nomadism" or "the disappearance of the Social"?

The end of the Modern does not mean a return TO the Paleolithic, but a return OF the Paleolithic.

Post-classical (or post-academic) anthropology has prepared us for this return of the repressed, for only very recently have we come to understand & sympathize with hunter/gatherer societies. The caves of Lascaux were rediscovered precisely when they needed to be rediscovered, for no ancient Roman nor medieval Christian nor 18th century rationalist could have ever have found them beautiful or significant. In these caves (symbols of an archaeology of consciousness) we found the artists who created them; we discovered them as ancestors, & also as *ourselves*, alive & present.

Paul Goodman once defined anarchism as "neolithic conservatism." Witty, but no longer accurate. Anarchism (or Ontological Anarchism, at least) no longer sympathizes with peasant agriculturalists, but with the non-authoritarian social structures & surplus-value economics of the hunter/gatherers. Moreover we cannot describe this sympathy as

``conservative." A better term would be ``radical," since we have found our roots in the Old Stone Age, a kind of eternal present. We do not wish to return *to* a material technology of the past (we have no desire to bomb ourselves back to the Stone Age), but rather for the return *of* a psychic technology which we forgot we possessed.

The fact that we find Lascaux beautiful means that Babylon has at last begun to fall. Anarchism is probably more a symptom than a cause of this melting away. Despite our utopian imaginations we do not know what to expect. But we, at least, are prepared for the *drift* into the unknown. For us it is an adventure, not the End of the World. We have welcomed the return of Chaos, for along with the danger comes--at last--a chance to create.

Vernissage

What's so funny about *Art*?

Was Art laughed to death by dada? Or perhaps this sardonicide took place even earlier, with the first performance of *Ubu Roi*? Or with Baudelaire's sarcastic phantom-of-the-opera laughter, which so disturbed his good bourgeois friends?

What's funny about Art (though it's more funny-peculiar than funny-ha-ha) is the sight of the corpse that refuses to lie down, this zombie jamboree, this

chanel puppetshow with all the strings attached to Capital (bloated Diego Rivera-style plutocrat), this moribund simula crum jerking frenetically around, pretending to be the one single most truly alive thing in the universe.

In the face of an irony like this, a doubleness so extreme it amounts to an impassable abyss, any *healing* power of laughter-in-art can only be rendered suspect, the illusory property of a self-appointed elite or pseudo-avant-garde. To have a genuine avant-garde, Art must be *going somewhere*, and this has long since ceased to be the case. We mentioned Rivera; surely no more genuinely funny political artist has painted in our century--but in aid of what? Trotskyism! The deadest dead-end of twentieth-century politics! No healing power *here*--only the hollow sound of powerless mockery, echoing over the abyss.

To heal, one first destroys--and political art which fails to destroy the target of its laughter ends by strengthening the very forces it sought to attack. ``What doesn't kill me makes me stronger," sneers the porcine figure in its shiny top hat (mocking Nietzsche, or course, poor Nietzsche, who tried to laugh the whole nineteenth century to death, but ended up a living corpse, whose sister tied strings to his limbs to make him dance for fascists).

There's nothing particularly mysterious or metaphysical about the process. Circumstance, poverty, once forced

Rivera to accept a commission to come to the USA and paint a mural--for Rockefeller!-- the very archetypal Wall Street porker himself! Rivera made his work a blatant piece of Commie agitprop--and then Rockefeller had it *obliterated*. As if this weren' t funny enough, the real joke is that Rockefeller could have savored victory even more sweetly by *not* destroying the work, but by paying for it and displaying it, turning it into Art, that toothless parasite of the interior decorator, that *joke*.

The dream of Romanticism : that the reality-world of bourgeois values could somehow be persuaded to consume, to take into itself, an art which at first seemed like all other art (books to read, paintings to hang on the wall, etc.), but which would secretly infect that reality with *something else*, which would change the way it saw itself, overturn it, replace it with the revolutionary values of art.

This was also the dream surrealism dreamed. Even dada, despite its outward show of cynicism, still dared to hope. From Romanticism to Situationism, from Blake to 1968, the dream of each succeeding yesterday became the parlor decor of every tomorrow-- bought, chewed, reproduced, sold, consigned to museums, libraries, universities, and other mausolea, forgotten, lost, resurrected, turned into nostalgia-craze, reproduced, sold, etc., etc., *ad*

nauseum.

In order to understand how thoroughly Cruikshank or Daumier or Grandville or Rivera or Tzara or Duchamp *destroyed* the bourgeois worldview of their time, one must bury oneself in a blizzard of historical references and *hallucinate--* for in fact the destruction-by-laughter was a theoretical success but an actual flop--the dead weight of illusion failed to budge even an inch in the gales of laughter, the *attack* of laughter. It wasn't bourgeois society which collapsed after all, it was art.

In the light of the trick which has been played on us, it appears to us as if the contemporary artist were faced with two choices (since suicide is *not* a solution): one, to go on launching attack after attack, movement after movement, in the hope that one day (*soon*) ``the thing'' will have grown so weak, so *empty*, that it will evaporate and leave us suddenly alone in the field; or, two, to begin *right now immediately* to live as if the battle were already won, as if *today* the artist were no longer a special kind of person, but each person a special sort of artist. (This is what the Situationists called ``the suppression and realization of art'').

Both of these options are so ``impossible'' that to act on either of them would be a joke. We wouldn't have to make ``funny'' art because just making art would be funny enough to bust a gut. But at least it would be

our joke. (Who can say for certain that we would fail? ``I love not knowing the future."-- Nietzsche) In order to begin to play this game, however, we shall probably have to set certain rules for ourselves:

1. There are no *issues*. There is no such thing as sexism, fascism, speciesism, looksism, or any other ``franchise issue" which can be separated out from the social complex and treated with ``discourse" as a ``problem." There exists only the *totality* which subsumes all these illusory ``issues" into the complete falsity of *its* discourse, thus rendering all opinions, pro and con, into mere thought-commodities to be bought and sold. And this *totality* is itself an illusion, an evil nightmare from which we are trying (through art, or humor, or by any other means) to awaken.

2. As much as possible whatever we do must be done outside the psychic/economic structure set up by the *totality* as the permissible space for the game of art. How, you ask, are we to make a living without galleries, agents, museums, commercial publishing, the NEA, and other welfare agencies of the arts? Oh well, one need not ask for the improbable. But one must indeed demand the ``impossible"-or else why the fuck is one an artist?! It's not enough to occupy a special holy catbird seat called Art from which to mock at the stupidity and injustice of the ``square" world. Art is part of the

problem. The Art World has its head up its ass, and it has become necessary to disengage--or else live in a landscape full of shit.

3. Of course one must go on ``making a living'' somehow-- but the essential thing is to make a life. Whatever we do, whichever option we choose (perhaps all of them), or however badly we compromise, we should pray never to mistake art for life: Art is brief, Life is long. We should try to be prepared to drift, to nomadize, to slip out of all nets, to never settle down, to live through many arts, to make our lives better than our art, to make art our boast rather than our excuse.

4. The healing laugh (as opposed to the poisonous and corrosive laugh) can only arise from an art which is serious-- *serious, but not sober*. Pointless morbidity, cynical nihilism, trendy postmodern frivolity, whining/bitching/moaning (the liberal cult of the ``victim''), exhaustion, Baudrillardian ironic hyperconformity-- none of these options is *serious* enough, and at the same time none is *intoxicated* enough to suit our purposes, much less elicit our laughter.

``Raw Vision''

The categories of naive art, art brut, and insane or eccentric art, which shade into various & further categories of neo-primitive or urban-primitive art-- all these ways of categorizing &

labelling art remain *senseless*:-- that is, not only ultimately useless but also essentially unsensual, unconnected to body & desire. What really characterizes all these art forms? Not their marginality in relation to a mainstream of art/discourse...for heaven's sake, *what* mainstream?! *what* discourse?! If we were to say that there's a ``post-modernist'' discourse currently going on, then the concept ``margin'' no longer holds any meaning. Post-post-modernism, however, will not even admit the existence of *any* discourse of *any* sort. Art has fallen silent. There are no more categories, much less maps of ``center'' & ``margin.'' We are free of all that shit, right?

Wrong. Because *one* category survives: Capital. Too-Late Capitalism. The Spectacle, the Simulation, Babylon, whatever you want to call it. All art *can* be positioned or labelled in relation to *this* ``discourse.'' And it is *precisely & only* in relation to this ``metaphysical'' commodity-spectacle that ``outsider'' art can be seen as marginal. If this spectacle can be considered as a paramedium (in all its sinuous complexity), then ``outsider'' art must be called *immediate*. It does not *pass thru* the paramedium of the spectacle. It is meant only for the artist & the artist's ``immediate entourage'' (friends, family, neighbors, tribe); & it participates only in a ``gift'' economy of positive reciprocity. Only this non-category of ``immediatism'' can therefore approach an adequate

understanding & defense of the *bodily* aspects of ``outsider'' art, its connection to the senses & to desire, & its avoidance or even ignorance of the mediation/alienation inherent in spectacular recuperation & reproduction. Mind you, this has nothing to do with the *content* of any outsider genre, nor for that matter does it concern the *form* or the *intention* of the work, nor the naivete or knowingness of the artist or recipients of the art. Its ``immediatism'' lies solely in its means of *imaginal production*. It communicates or is ``given'' from person to person, ``breast-to-breast'' as the sufis say, without passing thru the distortion-mechanism of the spectacular paramedium.

When Yugoslavian or Haitian or NYC-graffiti art was ``discovered'' & commodified, the results failed to *satisfy* on several points:-- (1) In terms of the pseudo-discourse of the ``Art World, '' all so-called ``naivete'' is doomed to remain quaint, even campy, & decidedly marginal--even when it commands high prices (for a year or two). The forced entrance of outsider art into the commodity spectacle is a *humiliation*. (2) Recuperation as commodity engages the artist in ``negative reciprocity''--i.e., where first the artist ``received inspiration'' as a free gift, and then ``made a donation'' directly to other people, who might or might not ``give back'' their understanding, or mystification, or a turkey & a keg of beer (positive reciprocity), the artist now first creates

for money & receives money, while any aspects of ``gift" exchange recede into secondary levels of meaning & finally begin to fade (negative reciprocity). Finally we have *tourist* art, & the condescending amusement, & then the condescending boredom, of those who will no longer pay for the ``inauthentic." (3) Or else the Art World vampirizes the energy of the outsider, sucks everything out & then passes on the corpse to the advertising world or the world of ``popular" entertainment. By this *re-production* the art finally loses its ``aura" & shrivels & dies. True, the ``utopian trace" may remain, but in essence the art has been *betrayed*.

The *unfairness* of such terms as ``insane" or ``neo-primitive" art lies in the fact that this art is not produced only by the mad or innocent, but by all those who evade the alienation of the paramedium. Its true appeal lies in the intense aura it acquires thru immediate imaginal *presence*, not only in its ``visionary" style or content, but most importantly by its mere present-ness (i.e., it is ``here" and it is a ``gift"). In this sense it is more, not less, noble than ``mainstream " art of the post-modern era--which is precisely the art of an absence rather than a presence.

The only *fair* way (or ``beauty way," as the Hopi say) to treat ``outsider" art would seem to be to keep it ``secret"--to refuse to define it--to *pass it on* as a secret, person-to-

person, breast-to-breast--rather than *pass it thru* the paramedium (slick journals, quarterlies, galleries, museums, coffee-table books, MTV, etc.). Or even better:--to become ``mad" & ``innocent" ourselves--for so Babylon will label us when we neither worship nor criticize it anymore--when we have *forgotten* it (but not ``forgiven" it!), & remembered our own prophetic selves, our bodies, our ``true will."

An Immediatist Potlatch

i.

Any number can play but the number must be pre-determined. Six to twenty-five seems about right.

ii.

The basic structure is a banquet or picnic. Each player must bring a dish or bottle, etc., of sufficient quantity that everyone gets at least a serving. Dishes can be prepared or finished on the spot, but nothing should be bought ready-made (except wine & beer, although these could ideally be home-made). The more elaborate the dishes the better. Attempt to be *memorable*. The menu need not be left to surprise (although this is an option)-- some groups may want to coordinate the banquets so as to avoid duplications or clashes. Perhaps the banquet could have a theme & each player could be responsible for a given course

(appetizer, soup, fish, vegetables, meat, salad, dessert, ices, cheeses, etc.). Suggested themes: Fourier's Gastrosophy--Surrealism--Native American--Black & Red (all food black or red in honor of anarchy)--etc.

iii.

The banquet should be carried out with a certain degree of formality: toasts, for example. Maybe ``dress for dinner'' in some way? (Imagine for example that the banquet theme were ``Surrealism''; the concept ``dress for dinner'' takes on a certain meaning). Live music at the banquet would be fine, providing some of the players were content to perform for the others as their ``gift,'' & eat later. (Recorded music is not appropriate.)

iv.

The main purpose of the potlatch is of course gift-giving. Every player should arrive with one or more gifts & leave with one or more *different* gifts. This could be accomplished in a number of ways: (a) Each player brings one gift & passes it to the person seated next to them at table (or some similar arrangement); (b) Everyone brings a gift for every other guest. The choice may depend on the number of players, with (a) better for larger groups & (b) for smaller gatherings. If the choice is (b), you may want to decide beforehand whether the gifts should be the same or different. For example, if I

am playing with five other people, do I bring (say) five hand-painted neckties, or five totally different gifts? And will the gifts be given specifically to certain individuals (in which case they might be crafted to suit the recipient's personality), or will they be distributed by lot?

v.

The gifts must be made by the players, *not* ready-made. This is vital. Pre-manufactured elements can go into the making of the gifts, but each gift must be an individual work of art in its own right. If for instance I bring five hand painted neckties, I must paint each one myself, either with the same or with different designs, although I may be allowed to buy ready-made ties to work on.

vi.

Gifts need not be physical objects. One player's gift might be live music during dinner, another's might be a performance. However, it should be recalled that in the Amerindian potlatches the gifts were supposed to be superb & even ruinous for the givers. In my opinion physical objects are best, & they should be *as good as possible*-- not necessarily costly to make, but really impressive. Traditional potlatches involved prestige-winning. Players should feel a competitive spirit of giving, a determination to make gifts of real splendor or value. Groups may

wish to set rules beforehand a bout this-
-some may wish to insist on physical
objects, in which case music or
performance would simply become
extra acts of generosity, but *hors de
potlatch*, so to speak.

vii.

Our potlatch is non-traditional,
however, in that theoretically all
players *win*--everyone gives & receives
equally. There' s no denying however
that a dull or stingy player will lose
prestige, while an imaginative &/or
generous player will gain ``face." In a
really successful potlatch each player
will be equally generous, so that all pl
ayers will be equally pleased. The
uncertainty of outcome adds a zest of
randomness to the event.

viii.

The host, who supplies the place, will of
course be put to extra trouble &
expense, so that an ideal potlatch
would be part of a series in which each
player takes a turn as host. In this case
another competition for prestige would
transpire in the course o f the series:--
who will provide the most memorable
hospitality? Some groups may want to
set rules limiting the host's duties,
while others may wish to leave hosts
free to knock themselves out; however,
in the latter case, there should really be
a complete series of events, so that no
one need feel cheated, or superior, in
relation to the other players. But in

some areas & for some groups the entire series may simply not be feasible. In New York for example not everyone has enough room to host even a small party. In this case the hosts will inevitably win some extra prestige. And why not?

ix.

Gifts should not be ``useful.'' They should appeal to the senses. Some groups may prefer works of art, others might like home-made preserves & relishes, or gold frankincense & myrrh, or even sexual acts. Some ground rules should be agreed on. No mediation should be involved in the gift-- no videotapes, tape recordings, printed material, etc. All gifts should be present at the potlatch ``ceremony"-- i.e. no tickets to other events, no promises, no postponements. Remember that the purpose of the game, as well as its most basic rule, is to avoid all mediation & even representation--to be ``*present*,'' to give ``*presents*."

Silence

The problem is not that too much has been revealed, but that every revelation finds its sponsor, its CEO, its monthly slick, its clone Judases & replacement people.

You can't get sick from too much knowledge--but we *can* suffer from the virtualization of knowledge, its alienation from us & its replacement by

a weird dull changeling or simulacrum--
the same ``data," yes, but now dead--
like supermarket vegetables; no
``aura."

Our malaise (January 1, 1992) arises
from this: we hear not the language
but the echo, or rather the
reproduction ad infinitum of the
language, its reflection upon a
reflection-series of itself, even more
self-referential & corrupt. The
vertiginous perspectives of this VR
datascape nauseate us because they
contain no hidden spaces, no privileged
capacities.

Infinite access to knowledge that
simply fails to interact with the body or
with the imagination--in fact the
manichean ideal of fleshless soulless
thought-- modern media/politics as
pure gnostic mentation, the anaesthetic
ruminations of Archons & Aeons,
suicide of the Elect...

The organic is secretive--it secretes
secrecy like sap. The inorganic is a
demonic democracy-- everything equal,
but equally valueless. No gifts, only
commodities. The Manichaeans
invented usury. Knowledge can act as a
kind of poison, as Nietzsche pointed
out.

Within the organic (``Nature,"
``everyday life") is embedded a kind of
silence which is not just dumbness, an
opacity which is not mere ignorance--a
secrecy which is also an affirmation-- a

tact which knows how to act, how to change things, how to breathe into them.

Not a ``cloud of unknowing"--not ``mysticism"--we have no desire to deliver ourselves up again to that obscurantist sad excuse for fascism-- nevertheless we might invoke a sort of taoist sense of ``suchness-of-things"-- "a flower does not talk," & it's certainly not the genitals which endow us with logos. (On second thought, perhaps this is not quite true; after all, myth offers us the archetype of Priapus, a talking penis.) An occultist would ask how to ``work" this silence--but we'd rather ask how to *play* it, like musicians, or like the playful boy of Heraclitus.

A bad mood in which every day is the same. When are a few lumps going to appear in this smooth time? Hard to believe in the return of Carnival, of Saturnalia. Perhaps time has stopped here in the Pleroma, here in the Gnostic dreamworld where our bodies are rotting but our ``minds" are downloaded into eternity. We know so much--how can we not know the answer to this most vexing of questions?

Because the answer (as in Odilon Redon's ``Harpocrates") isn't answered in the language of reproduction but in that of gesture, touch, odor, the hunt. Finally *virtu* is impassable-- eating & drinking is eating & drinking--the lazy yokel plows a crooked furrow. The

Wonderful World of Knowledge has turned into some kind of PBS Special from Hell. I demand real mud in my stream, real watercress. Why, the natives are not only sullen, they're taciturn--downright incommunicative. Right, gringo, we're tired of your steinking surveys, tests & questionnaires. There are some things bureaucrats were not meant to know-- & so there are some things which even artists should keep secret. This is not self-censorship nor self-ignorance. It is cosmic tact. It is our homage to the organic, its uneven flow, its backcurrents & eddies, its swamps & hideouts. If art is ``work" then it will become knowledge & eventually lose its redemptive power & even its taste. But if art is ``play" then it will both preserve secrets & tell secrets which will remain secrets. Secrets are for sharing, like all of Nature's secretions.

Is knowledge *evil*? We're no mirror-image Manichees here--we're counting on dialectics to break a few bricks. Some knowledge is dadata, some is commodata. Some knowledge is wisdom-- some simply an excuse for doing nothing, desiring nothing. Mere academic knowledge, for example, or the knowingness of the nihilist post-mods, shades off into realms of the UnDead--& the UnBorn. Some knowledge breathes-- some knowledge suffocates. What we know & how we know it must have a basis in the flesh-- the whole flesh, not just a brain in a jar of formaldehyde. The knowledge we

want is neither utilitarian nor ``pure'' but celebratory. Anything else is a totentanz of data-ghosts, the ``beckoning fair ones'' of the media, the Cargo Cult of too-Late Capitalist epistemology.

If I could escape this bad mood of course I'd do so, & take you with me. What we need is a plan. Jail break? tunnel? a gun carved of soap, a sharpened spoon, a file in a cake? a new religion?

Let me be your wandering bishop. We'll play with the silence & make it ours. Soon as Spring comes. A rock in the stream, bifurcating its turbulence. Visualize it: mossy, wet, viridescent as rainy jadefaded copper struck by lightning. A great toad like a living emerald, like Mayday. The strength of the *bios*, like the strength of the bow or lyre, lies in the *bending back*.

Critique of the Listener

To speak too much & not be heard-- that's sickening enough. But to acquire *listeners*--that could be worse.

Listeners think that to listen suffices-- as if their true desire were to hear with someone else's ears, see thru someone else's eyes, feel with someone else's skin...

The text (or the broadcast) which will change reality:-- Rimbaud dreamed of that, & then gave up in disgust. But he entertained too subtle an idea about

magic. The crude truth is perhaps that texts can only change reality when they inspire readers to *see & act*, rather than merely *see*. Scripture once did this--but Scripture has become an idol. To see thru its eyes would be to possess (in the Voodoo sense) a statue--or a corpse.

Seeing, & the literature of seeing, is too easy. Enlightenment is easy. ``It's easy to be a sufi," a Persian shaykh once told me. ``What's difficult is to be human." Political enlightenment is even easier than spiritual enlightenment--neither one changes the world, or even the self. Sufism & Situationism--or shamanism & anarchy--the theories I've played with-- are just that: theories, visions, ways of seeing. Significantly, the ``practice" of sufism consists in the repetition of words (dhikr). This action itself is a text, & nothing but a text. And the ``praxis" of anarcho-situationism amounts to the same: a text, a slogan on a wall. A moment of enlightenment. Well, it's not totally valueless--but afterwards what will be *different*?

We might like to purge our radio of anything which lacks at least the *chance* of precipitating that difference. Just as there exist books which have inspired earthshaking crimes, we would like to broadcast texts which cause hearers to seize (or at least make a grab for) the happiness God denies us. Exhortations to hijack reality. But even more we would like to purge our lives of everything which obstructs or delays

us from setting out--not to sell guns & slaves in Abyssinia-- not to be either robbers or cops--not to escape the world or to rule it--but to open ourselves to *difference*.

I share with the most reactionary moralists the presumption that art can really affect reality in this way, & I despise the liberals who say all art should be permitted because--after all--it's only art. Thus I 've taken to the practice of those categories of writing & radio most hated by conservatives-- pornography & agitprop--in the hope of stirring up trouble for my readers/hearers & myself. But I accuse myself of ineffectualism , even futility. Not enough has changed. Perhaps nothing has changed.

Enlightenment is all we have, & even that we've had to rip from the grasp of corrupt gurus & stumbling suicidal intellectuals. As for our art--what have we accomplished, other than to spill our blood for the ghostworld of fashionable ideas & images?

Writing has taken us to the very edge beyond which writing may be impossible. Any texts which could survive the plunge over this edge--into whatever abyss or Abyssinia lies beyond-- would have to be virtually self-created, like the miraculous hidden-treasure Dakini-scrolls of Tibet or the tadpole-script spirit-texts of Taoism-- & absolutely incandescent, like the last screamed messages of a witch or

heretic burning at the stake (to paraphrase Artaud).

I can sense these texts trembling just beyond the veil.

What if the mood should strike us to renounce both the mere objectivity of art & the mere subjectivity of theory? to risk the abyss? What if no one followed? So much the better, perhaps-- we might find our equals amongst the Hyperboreans. What if we went mad? Well--that's the risk. What if we were bored? Ah...

Already some time ago we placed all our bets on the irruption of the marvelous into everyday life--won a few, then lost heavily. Sufism was indeed much much easier. Pawn everything then, down to the last miserable scrawl? double our stakes? cheat?

It's as if there were angels in the next room beyond thick walls--arguing? fucking? One can't make out a single word.

Can we retrain ourselves at this late date to become Finders of hidden treasure? And by what technique, seeing that it is precisely technique which has betrayed us? Derrangement of the senses, insurrection, piety, poetry? *Knowing how* is a cheap mountebank's trick. But *knowing what* might be like divine self-knowledge--it might create *ex nihilo*.

Finally, however, it will become necessary to leave this city which hovers immobile on the edge of a sterile twilight, like Hamelin after all the children were lured away. Perhaps other cities exist, occupying the same space & time, but... different. And perhaps there exist jungles where mere enlightenment is outshadowed by the black light of jaguars. I have no idea--& I'm terrified.

Jubilee Saints Project

c/o Koehline
POB 85777
Seattle, WA 98145-1777

Every fifty years the Ancients observed the **jubilee** - a time of renewal when all slaves were freed, all debts were cancelled, all prisoners were released, all fields lay fallow, and all laborers observed feast days and festivals of **zerowork!**

For 500 years the 'New' World has been sentenced to life at hard labor, death in the fields, mines, big houses, schools, prisons & factories of competing cabals. But the Capitalist/Socialist Planetary Work & War Machine will not rule forever! In the cracks and on the margins of this Wetiko-diseased world, Temporary Autonomous Zones flourish! Sound the ram's horn! We call for a celebration of the Grand Jubilee of the New World's discovery. In advance of the feasting and revelry we are preparing a Calendar of Saints, with each and every day a Feast Day! We invite your nominations! Sponsor a saint today!

The Chronicle Of Higher Jubiliation

An Introduction to the Jubilee Sainthood Project

Columbian Jubilee

In 1984 the United States government established the Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commision to plan and co-ordinate nation-wide celebrations of the 500th anniversary of Columbus' first landing in the so- called New World, the traditional starting point for the European Invasion of the Americas.

Columbus, Admiral of the Ocean Sea, or, as he liked to call himself, the Christ-bearing Dove, was a religious nut of the first order. He had two great obsessions. The first was to loot the gold of the heathen world in order to finance a triumphant Crusade by the Roman Church to retake Jerusalem, the center of the Christian world. The second was to sew-up the world for Christ, in preparation for the Millenium.

If Columbus had had the slightest interest in the possibility that he had discovered a "New World," we would most likely have continents named North and South Columbia today. He had no such interest. The last thing he wanted was a New World to worry about. It was a considerable complication for his simple-minded faith. He wanted to show that the world was of manageable size; the aging world made whole, holy, harmonious - a small world after all. A "New World" with countless lost and scattered tribes to find and convert was a serious set-back, forcing unavoidable delays; a major pain in the ass. In his will he directed his son to establish a fund for the reconquest of Jerusalem. Someone else's children could

shoulder the burden of a "New World." Chris was disgusted with the whole business.

We, in turn, are disgusted with the official Quincentenary hype designed to celebrate one of Europe's premier imperializing cannibals. But we take some ironic pleasure in the fact that the U.S. government has settled on that far more convivial Biblical tradition, the Jubilee.

Jubilee

It is quite likely that the Christian conception of the Millenium evolved out of ancient Hebrew Jubilee legislation. In the Gospel according to Luke, especially, the coming Kingdom of God has very much the character of a divinely-ordained, universal Jubilee, a great social leveling. When Jesus went to Nazareth to begin preaching, the first thing he did was open the scroll to the words of the prophet Isaiah which proclaim the "acceptable year of the Lord" - in other words, the year of Jubilee. Then he said, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Jubilee evolves in the Bible from the legal ideal of social justice in Leviticus, through the poetic prophecy of Isaiah, to the fulfillment announced by Jesus in Luke.

Historically, Jubilee began as an ancient prerogative of kings, a kind of social safety valve. Later it was codified as law, though probably never fully enacted. Finally, with Jesus, the trumpet (ram's horn or jubel) is sounded for all who have ears to hear; for all who are in touch with the spirit within; the Millenium, the kingdom of God is here and now - a timeless, universal Jubilee. The Empire of Lies is exposed and the chains of the law are broken.

Needless to say, this is no way to run a profitable Church, and so the official line has always been "Look sharp, it's coming soon! It's right around the corner!" And a hundred generations have dutifully watched for signs of the coming of the Paraclete, rather than discovering the divine spark within; rather than saying, with the Ranters, "All is ours and all is well!"

The spirit of the here-and-now Jubilee never died. It is a nourishing underground stream, the "Medicine of the Mole." It tends to rise to the surface amid the most desperate and mean-spirited Millennial hopes and fears. The time has come again for a long, clear blast of the ram's horn! Let the new Jubilee begin!

Grand Jubilee

In the ancient Hebrew tradition, Jubilee was celebrated every fiftieth year. It was supposed to be a great festival of social leveling, a time when all debts were cancelled, lands were returned to their traditional inhabitants, slaves and prisoners were set free, all taxes were suspended, fields lay fallow, gleaning rights were extended to all, people quit their labors and joined in all manner of feasting and revelry.

Those with a mundane and practical turn of mind will protest that

the feasting could not have gone on for long, with no one in the fields or the kitchens.

We will complicate your distress. Since Jubilee was proclaimed for one year every fifty, and since there has not been a proper Jubilee in the five hundred years since the European invasion of the Americas began, we are proclaiming a Grand Jubilee of ten years duration - October 1992 to October 2002.

And now, regarding your mundane concerns, we refer you to Charles Fourier's theory of "attractive labor," which suggests that in a convivial and harmonious social environment many of the activities we tend to think of as hard labor become a kind of playful celebration for those who are inclined towards them. We don't pretend to have solved all of the problems of alienated labor, particularly in a world which appears to have lost even imaginative alternatives to the planetary work machine. But we think things may yet find a way of working themselves out. We all certainly feel worked out.

Of course, there may be people quite unable to hear and heed the trump of Jubilee, unfortunates so damaged by the machines of work and war that they mistake the ticking of the time-clock for the beating of their own hearts. They might go on working, oblivious to the good times rolling on around them. Much of the work they continue to do is quite useless - often even very harmful. Perhaps they can be subtly steered toward more suitable machines.

In any case, full zerowork is what is called for, and we're not backing down from that goal. A Jubilee is a Jubilee. The Bible said it! We believe it! That settles it!

Saints

In the earliest days of Christianity, cults grew up around certain individuals, and grew until that person was proclaimed a saint. Martyrdom practically assured sainthood, though official public honor required the authorization of the local bishop. The anniversaries of notable martyrdoms were celebrated by the faithful.

The worship of saints really got into full swing when the Roman Empire, under Constantine, adopted Christianity as a state religion. It became a profitable thing to be a Christian, in name, at least. Gradually saints were found to take the places of all the old deities, and the old rites were given a Christian gloss. Icons and relics became the centerpieces of these cults. A lucrative trade in relics developed, enjoying a huge boom during the Crusades. Crowns of thorns, crosses, holy coats, tears of Our Saviour, tears of the Virgin Mary, tears of the Saints, the blood of Jesus and the martyrs, the milk of Mary, toenails of the Saints, holy ones, teeth and hair all became hot commodities. Wars were fought for their possession. Monasteries raided one another for their relics. At the height of the boom the extant fragments of the True Cross were sufficient to build a cross a mile high.

But then the spoilsports of the Reformation got up their own Crusade to root out pagan idolatry, to do away with the cults, the icons and relics, the Feasts and Festivals. Even Christmas was attacked as an evil influence by the Puritans. In an effort to shore up its power base, the Roman Church officially cleaned up its act. The stone bestiary of the Gothic cathedral was cut loose from its Holy Roman moorings to wander the countryside along with the more marginal of the Saints, who now seemed to resemble... well, witches. The Church cut itself off at its living roots and hung itself > from an antiseptic Heaven, inviting the Faithful to do the same, that they might rise from their graves about twenty times lighter than a dehumidified air bubble.

Jubilee Saints

The root of religion is the desire for accomodation with the mysterious forces in our lives, one of the most mysterious being the way in which our ancestors seem to be with us, though they are gone. The ancestors are inextricably linked to our beginnings, and, by association, with all beginnings. Thus the ancient pantheons were essentially deified ancestors, representing various aspects of the human psyche and corresponding to various phenomena of the natural world.

The Saints are precisely the same thing, though placed under the umbrella of monotheism. Looked at in this light, it becomes immediately apparent that the Catholic Saints reflect an extreme obsession with passive submission to grisly torture and death by violence. This is perhaps appropriate to the mission of the Roman Church - the continuation of the Roman Empire - but entirely inappropriate to the mission of the Jubilee Church - Universal Jubilation. You may wonder where we will find so many saints for a church that has just come into being, especially if we stipulate that the living are, by and large, ineligible. There are plenty of precedents. Mother Ann of the Shakers had little difficulty converting all of her favorite historical personages to her cause. The Mormons do the same. The surrealists pulled the same stunt in the secular realm. Anyone who in any way furthered the cause seems to us a likely candidate for Jubilee Sainthood. For the most part we have decided to rule out popes and heads of state, though there may be miraculous exceptions. Essentially, we are attempting to reconstruct a spiritual family tree of venerable ancestors. Our new liturgical calendar will be open-ended and non-repeating. Individual Jubilators and branches of the Mother Church may feel free to establish tradition by honoring the same saints on the same days from year to year, but we shall continue to encourage the growth of our tree for the duration.

Jubela, Jubelo, Jubelum

It is quite reasonable to describe the founding of the United States as the triumph of a conspiracy of wealthy Anglo-American males against the powers of Church and King. Through a covert network of Freemasonic lodges they plotted and carried out their bid for power, accumulating great wealth through slave trading, smuggling,

swindling, and other forms of free enterprise. They consolidated their position by orchestrating a revolution and by designing a government and economic system which would ensure their maintenance in positions of power and privilege. We overstate the case, to be sure, but the lineaments are clear.

We don't mean to trot out the old Masonic Conspiracy routine again, but stay with this just a moment longer. The central figure in the rituals and legends of freemasonry is one Hiram Abiff, the Master Builder of King Solomon's Temple. The temple was of course the greatest symbol of Solomon's power and authority, built with the forced labor of prisoners of war and "free" Israelites (under Solomon's system of corvee, the Israelites weren't much better off than they had been under Pharaoh). Before the Temple is completed, Hiram Abiff is murdered by three underlings. Perhaps they thought him a cruel taskmaster. Perhaps they were revolting against involuntary servitude. Perhaps they objected to this Phoenician-style monument to Solomon's brand of state capitalism, his avarice, his disregard for traditional tribal authority and religious tradition. Perhaps it was a combination of all these things.

At any rate, the names of these three great villains of masonic legend are Jubela, Jubelo, and Jubelum, collectively known as the Juwes. Since all explanations of masonic symbolism are pretty far-fetched, we do not hesitate to advance our own. The murderers of Hiram Abiff and the greatest threat to the freemasonic project are the remnants of the ancient Hebrew tradition of Jubilee. This lingering sentiment was one of the reasons Solomon was so anxious to bust up traditional tribal authority and structure. Yet Jubilee spirit remains.

Grand Jubilee Calendar

It now appears that the United States Christopher Columbus Quincentenary Jubilee Commision has been so battered by storms of controversy, by scandal, corruption and mismanagement, that it is almost sure to sink before reaching its destination. This means that the Jubilee is now entirely up to us. This is probably for the best, of course. They really didn't have the slightest idea of what Jubilee is supposed to be. We could make a great fuss and demand some of their funding, but why bother? Instead, we are devoting our meager resources to spreading the good word and soliciting nominations for saints. We will be producing a "regular" newsletter, and, some time in late summer 1992, we will unveil the World's Columbian Grand Jubilee Calendar of Saints, to be published by [Autonomeia](#). The calendar will be the first installment, covering the period from October 1991 through December 1993. Completing one or more copies of the attached Saints nomination form is one way in which you may make a material contribution to this project.

And the founder and Chief Iconographer of the Jubilee Church, Frater Harpo Ben Ishmael Bey, offers his services in return for contributions to the Mission fund. Supply him with some form of portrait, and he will produce a holy icon for your veneration. Spurious relics of the saints will also be available, complete with the

Church Imprimatur. He remains open to your suggestions, and will personally answer all mail possible. The Jubilee Church awaits your active participation; nominate and/or sponsor a Saint today!

For Universal Jubilation,
Frater Harpo Ben Ishmael Bey
c/o Jubilee Koehline
PO B 85777
Seattle, WA 98145-1777

Nomination For Sainthood & Inclusion In The World's Columbian Grand Jubilee Calendar Of Saints

Please copy this form [or make your own] to offer any number of candidates you wish, and circulate additional copies to friends throughout the world.

Note:

Saints need not have lived in the last 500 years. They need not have any direct connection with the New World. Living persons may not qualify for sainthood. No popes or heads of state please.

1. Sponsor: (you may be anonymous if you prefer)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Country: _____
Telephone: _____

2. Name of Candidate (groups will also be considered):

3. Proposed Feast Day:

4. Alternate Feast Day:

Reason for Day

5. Brief Argument for Inclusion:

6. Brief Biographical Sketch:

7. Suggested Symbols and Motifs for
Artwork: _____

Biographic references and supporting materials are very welcome. We especially seek portraiture and other graphic work, original or copies, in color or black and white. Documents, quotations or miscellaneous ephemera will all be very helpful. The decisions of the Committee for the Causes of Saints will be final only in the context of the first calendar, which is meant to be spiritually nourishing and inspirational, not authoritative or exhaustive. Thanks in advance for your help.

HTML'ized by Jonathan Rochkind
jrochkin@cs.oberlin.edu

Permanent TAZs

by Hakim Bey

TAZ-theory tries to concern itself with existing or emerging situations rather than with pure utopianism. All over the world people are leaving or "disappearing" themselves from the Grid of Alienation and seeking ways to restore human contact. An interesting example of this-on the level of "urban folk culture"-can be found in the proliferation of hobby networks and conferences. Recently I discovered the zines of two such groups, Crown Jewels of the Hlgh Wire (devoted to the collection of glass electrical insulators) and a journal on cucurbitology (The Gourd). A vast amount of creativity goes into these obsessions. The various periodic gatherings of fellow-maniacs amount to genuine face-to-face (unmediated) festivals of eccentricity. It's not just the "counter-culture" which seeks its TAZs, its nomad encampments and nights of liberation from the Consensus. Self-organized and autonomous groups are springing up amongst every "class" and "sub-culture". Vast tracts of the Babylonian Empire are now virtually empty, populated only by the spooks of MassMedia, and a few psychotic policemen.

TAZ-theory realizes that THIS IS HAPPENING- we're not talking about "should" or "will be"-we're talking about

an already-existing movement. Our use of various thought-experiments, utopian poetics, paranoia criticism, etc., aims at helping to clarify this complex and still largely undocumented movement, to give it some theoretical focus and self-awareness, and to suggest tactics based on coherent integral strategies-to act the midwife or the panegyrist, not the "vanguard"!

And so we've had to consider the fact that not all existing autonomous zones are "temporary". Some are (at least by intention) more-or-less "permanent". Certain cracks in the Babylonian Monolith appear so vacant that whole groups can move into them and settle down. Certain theories, such as "Permaculture", have been developed to deal with this situation and make the most of it. "Villages", "communes", "communities", even "arcologies" and "biospheres" (or other utopian-city forms) are being experimented with and implemented. Even here however TAZ-theory may offer some useful thought-tools and clarifications.

What about a poetique (a "way of making") and a politique (a "way of living-together) for the "permanent" TAZ (or "PAZ")? What about the actual relation between temporariness and permanence? And how can the PAZ renew and refresh itself periodically with the "festival" aspect of the TAZ?

THE QUESTION OF PUBLICITY

Recent events in the US and Europe have shown that self-organized/autonomous groups strike fear into the heart of the State. MOVE in Philadelphia, the Koreshites of Waco, Deadheads, Rainbow Tribes, computer-hackers, squatters, etc., have been targeted for varying intensity-levels of extermination. And yet other autonomous groups go unnoticed, or at least unpersecuted. What makes the difference? One factor may be the malign effect of publicity or mediation. The Media experience a vampiric thirst for the shadow-Passion play of "Terrorism", Babylon's public ritual of expiation, scapegoating, and blood-sacrifice. Once any autonomous group allows this particular "gaze" to fall upon it, the shit hits the fan: -the Media will try to arrange a mini-armageddon to satisfy its junk-sickness for spectacle and death.

Now, the PAZ makes a fine sitting target for such a Media smart-bomb. Beseiged inside its "con-pound", the self-organized group can only succumb to some sort of cheap pre-determined martyrdom. Presumably this role appeals only to neurotic masochists???

In any case, most groups will want to live out their natural span or trajectory in peace and quiet. A good tactic here might be to avoid publicity from the Mass Media as if it were the plague. A bit of natural paranoia comes in handy, so long as it doesn't become an end in itself. One must be cunning in order to get away with being bold. A touch of camouflage, a flair for invisibility, a

sense of tact as a tactic...might be as useful to a PAZ as a TAZ. Humble suggestions: -Use only "intimate media" (zines, phonetrees, BBSs, free radio and mini-FM, public-access cable, etc.)- avoid blustering-macho-confrontationist attitude-you don't need five seconds on the Evening News ("Police Raid Cultists") to validate your existence. Our slogan might be: -"Get a life, not a life-style."

ACCESS

People probably ought to choose the people they live with. "Open-membership" communes invariably end up swamped with freeloaders and sex-starved pathetic creeps. PAZs must choose their own membership mutually-this has nothing to do with "elitism". The PAZ may exercise a temporarily open function-such as hosting festivals or giving away free food, etc.-but it need not be permanently open to any self-proclaimed sympathizer who wanders by.

THE EMERGENCE OF A GENUINELY ALTERNATIVE ECONOMY

Once again, this is already happening-but it still needs a huge amount of work before it comes into focus. The sub-economies of "lavoro nero", untaxed transactions, barter, etc., tend to be severely limited and localized. BBSs and other networking systems could be used to link up these regional/marginal economies ("household

managements") into a viable alternative economy of some magnitude. "P.M." has already outlined something like this in bolo'bolo-in fact a number of possible systems already exist, in theory anyway. The problem is: -how to construct a true alternative economy, i.e. a complete economy, without attracting the IRS and other capitalist runningdogs? How can I exchange my skills as, say, a plumber or moonshiner, for the food, books, shelter, and psychoactive plants I want-without paying taxes, or even without using ally State-forged money? How can I live a comfortable (even luxurious) life free of all interactions and transactions with CommodityWorld? If we took all the energy the Leftists put into "demos", and all the energy the Libertarians put into playing futile little 3rd-party games, and if we redirected all that power into the construction of a real underground economy, we would already have accomplished "the Revolution" long ago.

THE "WORLD" CAME TO AN END IN 1972

The hollowed-out effigy of the Absolute State finally toppled in "1989". The last ideology, Capitalism, is no more than a skin-disease of the Very Late Neolithic. It's a desiring-machine running on empty. I'm hoping to see it deliquesce in my lifetime, like one of Dali's mindscapes. And I want to have somewhere to "go" when the shit comes down. Of course the death of

Capitalism needn't entail the Godzilla-like destruction of all human culture; this scenario is merely a terror-image propagated by Capitalism itself. Nevertheless it stands to reason that the dreaming corpse will spasm violently before rigor mortis sets in-and New York or LA may not be the smartest places to wait out the storm. (And the storm may already have begun.) [On the other hand NYC and LA might not be the worst places to create the New World; one can imagine whole squatted neighborhoods, gangs transformed into Peoples' Militias, etc.] Now, the gypsy-RV way of life may be one way to deal with the on-going meltdown of Too-Late Capitalism - but as for me, I'd prefer a nice anarchist monastery somewhere-a typical place for "scholars" to sit out the "Dark Ages". The more we organize this NOW the less hassle we'll have to face later. I'm not talking about "survival"-I'm not interested in mere survival. I want to thrive. **BACK TO UTOPIA.**

FESTIVALS

The PAZ serves a vital function as a node in the TAZ-web, a meetingplace for a wide circle of friends and allies who may not actually live fulltime on the "farm" or in the "village". Ancient villages held fairs which brought wealth to the community, provided markets for travelers, and created festal time/space for all participants. Nowadays the festival is emerging as one of the most important forms for the TAZ itself, but

can also provide renewal and fresh energy for the PAZ. I remember reading somewhere that in the Middle Ages there were one hundred and eleven holidays a year; we should take this as our "utopian minimum" and strive to do even better. [Note: the utopian minima proposed by C. Fourier consisted of more food and sex than the average 18th century French aristocrat enjoyed; B. Fuller proposed the term "bare minimum" for a similar concept]

THE LIVING EARTH

I believe that there exist plenty of good selfish reasons for desiring the "organic" (it's sexier), the "natural" (it tastes better), the "green" (it's more beautiful), the Wild(er)ness (it's more exciting). Communitas (as P. Goodman called it) and conviviality (as I. Illich called it) are more pleasurable than their opposites. The living earth need not exclude the organic city-the small but intense conglomeration of humanity devoted to the arts and slightly decadent joys of a civilization purged of all its gigantism and enforced loneliness-but even those of us who enjoy cities can see immediate and hedonic motives for fighting for the "environment". We are militant biophiles. Deep ecology, social ecology, permaculture, appropriate tech..we're not too picky about ideologies. Let 1000 flowers bloom.

PAZ TYPOLOGY

A "weird religion" or a rebel art movement can become a kind of non-local PAZ, like a more intense and all-consuming hobby network. The Secret Society (like the Chinese Tong) also provides a model for a PAZ without geographic limits. But the "perfect case scenario" involves a free space that extends into free time. The essence of the PAZ must be the long-drawn-out intensification of the joys-and risks-of the TAZ. And the intensification of the PAZ will be....Utopia Now.

Hakim Bey

D R E A M T I M E, A U G U S T 1 9 9 3

CONTACT:

DREAMTIME VILLAGE * ROUTE 2 BOX
242W VIOLA WI 54664 \$4 FOR
NEWSLETTER

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NoGoZone

Is theory a crystal ball? Is there any magic in theory? (Originally, the word meant "vision", which certainly suggests the mysterious.) Can Ontological/Anarchic Theory be used to predict the future like a Ouija board in some degree of that clarity with which it describes the present or "predicts" the past? Is specto-simulo-commodity-ism on its last legs, like "Marxism" in the 80's? What would cause it to collapse? What about "resurgent" Islam -- unifying ideology of the "South", or cultural death rattle? Religion in general? Various sci-fi scenarios? The police as the final simulacrum of power, final organ of disappearance? Balkanization and ethnic cleansing? Is theory a zodiac we can skry? Can we make some New Year predictions, like the National Enquirer?

I don't see Capitalism vanishing overnight like Communism -- it's too organic, too closely linked up with "what's really going on". Marxism fell because it had entered a state of abstraction and denial -- failed to embrace the Spectacle as the true site of power -- but Capital didn't make this mistake. Capital will disintegrate or deliquesce, rather than undergo sudden implosion. The signs of disintegration will become more and more obvious to experience and theory, but will not erase the simulacrum of the totality with any "revolutionary" collapse. The

murky clouds in the crystal are starting to drift and clear. Suddenly, a concept: social triage. And immediately a corollary: the no-go zone.

The state, as the last spectacular locus of the world of simulation, will be forced to practise social triage, letting go of real control over zones which fall beneath the level of adequate involvement in the empty discourse. Zones: classes, races, marginalized groups, and to some extent actual geographic areas. Triage: gradual and imperceptible letting-go of "services", leading to the emergence of no-go zones where "control" is reduced to purely simulated means (e.g. TV as social glue). Zones which have been economically abandoned (the homeless, small farmers, migrant workers, "welfare classes") will gradually be eliminated from all other networks controlled by the spectacle of the state, including the final interface, the Police. Officially of course this policy will not exist and the specto-state will continue to claim jurisdiction and proprietorship of these zones -- no political autonomy will be permitted, and occasional terror acts will be broadcast in the spectacle to provide a veneer of control-simulation. But in stark economic reality these zones will have been sacrificed, like passengers thrown out of the troika of History to the wolves of Memory.

Inasmuch as this process is already under weigh, the study of demographics provides a clue to the

future: -- where are the classes leaving, where are they going? Mike Davis has analyzed this movement in the microcosm of Los Angeles, where a complex pattern of triage and terror has already emerged to prove him a prescient prophet, whose brand of geomancy reads the bones of buildings and entrails of urban space rather than "natural" features of animals or landscape. (Inasmuch as "culture" has an unconscious it disgorges magic signs and symbols -- not the smoke of burnt offerings but of burning cop cars.) I believe this process will speed up to the point where it will be quite obvious, in 5 to 10 years, that portions of "America" are no longer on the map. They will produce no "growth", neither will they "consume", and they will no longer be serviced by any of the spectacle's vanishing bureaux -- IRS, Healthcare, military/police, social security, communication and education. These areas (economic/social/geographic) will cease to exist for all practical purposes of control. The consuming classes will leave these areas and move "elsewhere", either socially or geographically or both simultaneously.

Having been seduced by the commodity, we will be abandoned by it - or rather, "they" will be abandoned, the alien others who were never really part of it in the first place. Interestingly, however, this "them" will gradually come to include more and more individuals and groups who now

think of themselves as "us" -- the heirs of that great Bourgeois Rational sun-lit world which the spectacle still simulates and preserves -- the ones with "rights", the ones who are "safe" and destined to "survive". Triage will be practised in these zones as well. The cracks in the monolith will widen, and a lot of "us" will miss that last helicopter out of town. I could move to Boulder or Portland now, hang on to my rentier status, survive as a licensed clown on the margin of the spectacle -- and believe me the temptation is real enough. Those no-go zones are not going to be very comfortable -- they're not going to be utopias -- they might even end up nasty as the resurgent fascist statelets of E. Europe in the wake of 1989. Who would volunteer to live in Bosnia (or South L.A.) simply because disorder and violence can produce "wild freedoms" as well as sheer panic and genuine horror? As for specto-simulo-capital itself, its next (and perhaps final?) stage will consist of the Empire of pure Speed -- the instantaneity of communications technology, elevated to the status of transcendent being -- (omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence): -- a kind of TechGnosis in which the body (earth, production) will be "transcended" under the sign of pure spirit ("information"). This will unveil the terminal false transcendence or totality of the commodity: the final disembodiment of desire, the absolute flotation of the signifier -- language as gnostic prison, and death the last bargain holiday special. The "lines" of this structure are

already being laid, and a map of these lines transforms itself into a map of the future, or at least of future "History". If we study this embryonic or ontogenic map we can see clearly that the "South" has already been cut out of the pattern, by an act of cartomantic imperialism that denies meaning to the same areas which have been denied "access" to the Commlinks. The South will not enter the paradise of information -- for information is glacial crystalline ice, while the South is the realm of fire and noise.

And indeed the "South" is (or will become) the body, the realm of everything which is not pure spirit and information, everything heavy and mortal -- the realm of agriculture and industry -- the dark last vestiges of the neolithic -- of production (that crude demiurgic barrier to the free mutagenesis of significance and the free exchange of emblems and images -- of pure information). The South will supply "us" with microchips and soylent green, so we can all jack into virtual reality and download our consciousness (what a relief!) into the software. The information economy may have already begun to cut its ties with the material economy -- it's not at all clear that certain kinds of "money" retain any link -- even a symbolic link -- with actual social wealth. This is "virtual" money. In the context of specto-simulo-capital this money is hyperreal, and thus seems more powerful than money which is merely real and still tied to the "material bodily principle." In this

scenario we can finally "let our servants live for us" (Maldoror) while we go on and rise up to something better. The machine is not our servant (as some old sci-fi authors believed) but rather our symbiont. Our servant is the South.

So part of the North disappears into Cyberspace, leaving the other part deserted and bereft, no-go zones, cracks in the monolith. What could be more natural than this: -- that the South will interpenetrate the North like mycelia in a loaf of bread? The holes and cracks in the North will become more Southern, more African, more Latino, more Asiatic, more Islamic. (P.K. Dick, a true Gnostic visionary, seems particularly prophetic on this point.)

Now the crucial question: is it possible to imagine the no-go-zone fulfilling a liberatory function? (in any way other than as a reversion to primitive warfare interesting perhaps to a few Neitzschean Vikings?) -- that is, do the NGZ's play any necessary role in the emergence of the Temporary Autonomous Zone or even the Permanent Autonomous Zone? Does the NGZ represent -- in some weird paradoxical way -- the rebirth of the possibility of the social?

Forget political autonomy -- no Republic of the South Bronx or Free State of Western Wisconsin -- no Libertarian enclaves or anarchist liberated zones, no Ecotopia, no New

Afrika, etc., etc. The spectacle (even in its last gasp) will ruthlessly destroy anyone who threatens its monopoly of spectacular authority. The TAZ, the clandestine time/space society of the festival, provides a much more realistic model for the NGZ's than the model of micronationalism. The important thing is not postage stamps or flags -- the image of freedom (freedom as commodity) -- but the reality of freedom on the level of everyday life. We can forego the emblematicism of power for the possibility of power over our destinies (or at least of unmediated failure!).

The sine qua non for the NGZ as a possible locus for liberation consists of the implementation of an economy adequate to this function; and the implementization of such an economy depends (at least in part) on an idea of the social. So far neither of these stages has emerged in any but the crudest preliminary outline -- so here we shift the burden of this text from prediction to prescription. We'll try to imagine what we could do -- right now -- to turn the NGZ's into autonomous zones, and snatch our freedom even in "hell" even from the Lord of the Flies.

Is it possible to picture an economy for the NGZ's which would relate somehow (in countless and complex ways) with the economy of the South -- which is already beginning to appear in marginal areas of the North where control is shaky? I'm not at all sure what this would mean, but I picture an advanced

and "borderless" stage of bricolage, not just of things but of entire systems and fragments of systems. I envision an alternative communications system, self-organized and non-hierarchical -- what I call a "web" rather than a "net" -- which might make use of some "cyberpunk" ideas, but only the poor ones and the rough ones (and really, fuck "cyberspace" -- I'd rather live in New Jersey!). I see not only "black work" (lavoro nero, a fine art in Italy) but also "black service", "black production", and "black exchange" used in "alternative" (but not purely PC) technology. I suspect we'll have a technology more human than "green", more concerned with farming or permaculture and low-tech ad-hocism than with wilderness and deep ecology. The green aspect of our tech will arise not out of any sentimental predilections but from inescapable economic logic, the "mad" logic of bricolage and the "poor" logic of recycling. These ideas are not specifically utopian in the maximal sense, but we can admit them as adequate to the concept of the "utopian minimum" (Fourier) -- and for this reason, these forms of technology will involve at least some satisfaction -- which is not at all the case with commodity economy (based as it is in the surplus of the image as mask for the scarcity of good). The economy I foresee will not adhere exclusively to any current model, neither the entrepreneurial humanism of the Libertarians nor the "Associational" schemes of Socialism, but will concoct a melange of whatever works within a

very broad framework of organic non-authoritarianism. The NGZ must be self-organized in non-hierarchical form, or else fall prey to crimino-fascism or sheer entropy; no other possibility seems very probable, or at least very palatable! We're looking at vacua of control -- if we don't fill the NGZ with positive chaos, it will be filled with negative chaos. This line of thought predicts that the NGZ will develop at least one "political" form -- the "Peoples' Militia" -- which can all too easily be mistaken for (or become) a vigilante committee. Only an economics which resists hierarchization, not out of ideological conviction but rather out of sheer "will to power", can guarantee that the People's Militia will not become the posse of the secret elite. A vital task in the present: -- to imagine and to begin setting up the conditions for such an economy now, in the pre-NGZ areas where it can already serve a real function -- i.e., by providing "good things" (as the IWW Preamble calls them); and by preparing the kernel of the new social within the (rotting) shell of the old, to paraphrase the Wobbly manifesto. By the way, "syndicalism" has a future only in the NGZ's, where production will actually be capitalized directly by labor and by simple accumulation, in part amidst the ruins of the early industrial era -- Bayonne, New Jersey, Detroit, Michigan, etc. -- where the NGZ will first blossom in all its appalling ugliness. The same holds true for all forms of agrarian radicalism - - that is, no future except in the rural

NGZs; -- all this, however, not as a Museum of the Social, but as a living mutating (drifting) situational praxis or nomadic bricolage of social models -- real-life experiments based on dire necessity and the obsessive passion for freedom. No one will willingly risk life in the NGZ for mere ideology -- but the utility of certain utopian models can be tested.

To speak of such models however brings up the question of the idea of the social, which is (according to a very loose categorization) either political or "religious". We've assumed that the NGZ has abandoned -- or been abandoned by -- the political. Can it be that the idea of the social appropriate to the NGZ is "religious" in nature? I mention this for two reasons: (1) religion has not gone away, as predicted by Rationalism, and (2) religion has proven to be a powerful source for social cohesion, for example, in the history of intentional communities -- more powerful than political ideology or utopian planning. I hypothesize the possibility and reality of non-authoritarian, autonomous, self-organized, non-hierarchic aspects of the huge complex subsumed in the word "religion" -- shamanism, for example, or the multivalent and infinitely expandable pattern of "paganism", in which no culture can gain a monopoly of interpretation, or even a hegemony. I'm not saying the NGZ should be "religious", I'm saying it will be "religious", and is "religious" -- and that if we believe in the desire for

some liberatory potential in the NGZ, we should begin now to find a "religious" language that will reflect and help to shape and realize that potential - - or else we will face a "religion of fascism" (xtian right-wingers attempting to dominate the NGZ's) or a spirituality of entropy. One good reason, for instance, to ransack the history of Protestantism for radical models (Ranters, Diggers, Antinomians, etc.) would be to resurrect them -- and not merely to serve as camouflage. Earth and body forms of spirituality (shamanic, neo-pagan, Afro-American, etc) -- immanentist rather than transcendentalist -- emphasizing an existentialism of works not faith, hence ethicalism not moralism -- radical tolerance for all cults (on the "pagan" model) -- distrust of dualist models but also of totalitarian-monist models - mystical but not ascetic -- festal but not sacrificial. These would be some of the models proposed by our form of spirituality. None of the established means of propagating a religion would be appropriate here, however. Just as we need now to re-imagine the "Economy of the Gift", so also we need to re-invent (or even to fabricate) a "spirituality of freedom" relevant to our future as inhabitants of the NGZs -- a spirituality of "everyday life" in the situ sense of the word.

I'm thinking of certain old European genre paintings which always fascinated me as a child, depicting peasants or gypsies living in the ruins of some vanished empire -- usually

Roman. The images appealed to a Bachelardian sense of reverie and magic about certain kinds of "home", certain kinds of "space". I like the sense of abandonment implied in the paradox of abandoned ruins brought to life by "abandoned" bohemians, low-lives, Breughelian fiddlers and dancers -- the contrast of the heavy remains of vanished triumphalism with the lightness and brightness of nomads. I may very well be romanticizing the NGZ as a possible utopian topos or site - - but then again, I might be inclined to defend the occasional usefulness of romanticism: -- it beats despair. The NGZ is on the way, whether we dread it or romanticize it.

The Periodic Autonomous Zone

I would guess that the old life way of transhumancy always proved both enjoyable and practical, at least in small scale economies. Twice a year you get up and move, travel, change your life and even your diet -- a taste of nomadic freedom. But always the same two places. One place is typically more heimlich than the other -- the village, the hearth; while the other place is typically wilder than the first, and this one might be called the place of Desire, of Summer. In the tales of Finn Mac Cumal and his Fenian band we nearly always meet them at this wilder end of the spectrum, the greenwood, the landscape of the hunt which reaches "back" in time to a more golden pre-agricultural age, and also "aslant" in time -- to Tir nan Og, the Land of Summer, realm of the Tuatha de Danaan, who are both the Dead and the Fairies.

We forget that the Fenians spent only half the year free in the forests. They were like transhumants -- they owed the other half of the year to work (military service) for the King. In this respect they resembled the Irish peasants, who until recently practiced pastoral transhumancy. Traces may survive even now. Irish folklore certainly preserves the image of this Summertime freedom; "Nature" always seems somehow interlaced and even

confused with "Culture" in Irish tradition (as in the zoomorphic capitals of the Book of Kells), in ways which have often impressed the foreign observer as uniquely Irish. Elizabethan colonists compared native Irish with native American Indians: -- both were perceived as "wild" -- and both received the same treatment from the English. Transhumancy gives a people the chance to remain in touch with Nature in its "merrie" aspect (as Morton of Merrymount would have phrased it), even if that people's economic life is virtually defined by agriculture, peonage, and drudgery. This explains the "radical" aspect of poaching, from Robin Hood to the Black Laws, and also the universal human romanticization of hunting. This romanticism begins already even in hunter/gatherer societies, where the prestige (and fun) of the hunt provides far less food for the tribe than the (comparative) drudgery of gathering -- and the romanticism continues to this day. I think of my two late uncles, who cultivated the country romance of the hunt like characters out of Turgenev's Sketchbook. I find it impossible to despise this romanticism, which appears to me so clearly as the last remnant of Paleolithic freedom in a world given over to the gridwork of the plow -- and the highway.

In effect Romanticism itself can be said to revolve (if not resolve) around this tension in the Nature/Culture spectrum. The transhumant must be a

sort of practical romantic, an
"ambulatory schizophrenic" who
functions as a personality, "split"
between the magnetic poles, and
ambulating back and forth according to
the weather.

Winter / Summer
village / mountain or forest
work / play

agriculture / festival
pastoralism/hunt
fireside (axes of "bothy" (the hut of
greenery)
narrative the year) adventure
reverie / desire
etc.

When agriculture reproduces itself,
through a process of further
rationalization and abstraction, and
creates industrial culture, then the split
widens beyond breaching. The
transhumants lose the basic structure
of their economy through enclosure of
village commons and loss of "forest
rights" or traditional grazing lands.
Pure nomads, who provide (as Ibn
Khaldun recognized) a necessary
dialectic tension in traditional
(agricultural) societies, become
"redundant" in the Industrial regime --
but they do not disappear. The Tinkers
and Travelers still roam around Ireland
as in the 18th and 19th centuries (and
perhaps even in prehistory). But the
transhumants are simply doomed. The
liminal space they once occupied, in
between settlement and nomadry, in

between Culture and Nature, has simply been erased.

The psychic space of transhumancy however cannot be so easily disappeared. No sooner does it vanish from the map but it re-appears in Romanticism -- in the new-found appreciation for landscape and even wilderness, in "Nature worship" and Naturphilosophie, in tours of the Alps, in the Parks movement, in picnics, in nudist camps, in the Summer cottage, even in the Summer vacation.

Nowadays "reformers" want children to attend school year round, and they criticize the summer vacation of two or three months as an inefficient remnant of an agricultural economy. But from the (romantic) viewpoint of children, summer is sacred to freedom -- a temporary (but periodic) autonomous zone. Children are diehard transhumants.

To a certain extent -- and from a certain point of view -- we now inhabit a "post-industrial" world; and it has been noted that precisely to the extent that this is so, "nomadism" has reappeared. This has its good aspects (as in Deluze and Guattari) and its bad aspects -- as for instance in tourism. But what has become of transhumancy in this new context? What situations might we elucidate by seeking out its traces?

A very clear trace or remnant of psychic transhumancy expressed itself

in the 1920's - 1950's in America as the summer camp movement. A great many of these camps were inspired by various progressive and radical tendencies -- naturism, communism and anarchism, Reichianism and other psychological schools, oriental mysticism, spiritualism -- a plethora of "marginal" forces. The utopian rural commune like Brook Farm was diluted into a low-cost summer vacation for cranks. During the same period countless thousands of "vacation communities" were created, with cabins only a bit less primitive than those of the camps. My family owns one in a decaying lakeside resort-town in Upstate New York, where all the streets are named after Indians, forests, wild animals. These humble communities represent the "individualist" or entrepreneurial version of the summer camp's communalism; but even now some vestiges of seasonal communitarian spirit survive in them. As for the camps, eventually the majority began to cater to children, those natural citizens of summer. As the price of sheer hedonistic idleness went up and up, soon only the children of the well-to-do could afford camp -- and then not even them. One by one the camps began to close, a slow decline over the 70's, 80's, and 90's. Desperate measures are still attempted ("Marxist Computer Slim-down Camp"; neo-pagan gatherings and holistic seminars, etc.) -- but by now the Summer Camp almost seems like an

anachronism.

Now the Summer Camp may be an extremely watered-down version of the utopia of transhumancy -- much less the utopia of utopia! -- but I would argue that it is worth defending, or rather, worth re-organizing. If the old economics failed to support it, perhaps a new economics can be envisioned and realized. In fact such a tendency has already appeared. As old Summer Camps go bankrupt and come on the market, a few are acquired by groups who try to preserve them as camps (with perhaps some year-round residents), either as private or semi-private summer "communes". Some of these neo-camps will simply serve as vacation retreats for the groups who acquire them; but others will need extra funding, and will thus be drawn into experiments in subsistence gardening, craft work, conference-organizing, cultural events, or some other semi-public function. In this latter case we can speak of a neo-transhumancy, since the camp will serve not simply as a space of "leisure" but also as a space of "work" for the primary participants. Summer "work" appears to the transhumant as a kind of "play" by comparison with village labor. Pastoralism leaves time for some arcadian pleasures unknown to full-time agriculture or industry; and the hunt is pure sport. (Play is the point of the hunt; "game" is a bonus.) In somewhat the same way the neo-summer camp will have to "work" to

get by, but its labor will be "self-managed" and "self-owned" to a greater extent than Winter's wages, and it will be work of a "festal" nature -- "recreation", hopefully in the original sense of the word -- or even "creation". (Artists and craftsfolk make good citizens of Summer.)

If the economy determined the downfall of the old summer camp movement, the state played a role as well: -- regulations, restrictions, precautions, insurance requirements, codes, etc., helped raise the real cost of running a camp above the level of feasibility. One might almost begin to suspect that "the State" somehow felt the camp movement as some vague sort of threat. For one thing, camps escape the daily gaze of control, and are removed from the flow of commodities and information. Then too, camps are suspiciously communal, focuses of possible resistance to the alienation and atomization of consumerism and "modern democracy." Camps have an erotic subversiveness to them, as every ex-Summer-camper will testify, a wildness and laxness of super-ego, an air of Misrule, of Midsummer Night's dreams, skinny-dipping, the crush, the languor of July. The camp cannot be reconciled to the ideal of the industrial production of leisure ("holiday package") and the reproduction and simulation of summer as a theme park, the vacation process, the systematic "emptying-out" of all difference, all authentic desire.

Inasmuch as the State distrusts the camp, the neo-camp will (to that extent) need to cultivate certain forms of invisibility or social camouflage. One possible disguise for the neo-camp however would be to assume the precise guise of an old-fashioned half-bankrupt summer camp. After all, the Summer camp is not illegal, and if your group can meet the insurance requirements, why not fit yourselves into an already-existing archetype? Provided you're not running a kids' camp, or an openly-proclaimed Anarcho-Nudist retreat, you might be able to pass yourselves off as just another bunch of harmless make-believe Indians with a month's vacation to waste.

My defense of the summer (neo-)camp is based on two simple premises: -- one, a month or two of relative freedom is better than absolutely none; two, it's affordable. I'm assuming that your group is not made up of "nomads" or full-time freedom fighters, but of people who need to work for a living or are stuck in a city or 'burb most of the year -- potential transhumants. You want something more than a summer vacation - you want a summer community. Splashing in a humble Adirondack lake is more pleasureable to you than Disney World - - provided you can do it with the people you like. Sharing the costs makes it possible, but also makes it an adventure in communicativeness and mutual enhancement. Making the place

pay for itself or even turn a little off-the-books profit would transform your group into true neo-transhumants, with two economic focuses in your lives. Even if you seek legal status (as a tax-exempt educational center religious retreat, or Summer camp) your proprietorship affords you a certain degree of privacy which -- if used discreetly -- can exceed all legal bounds in terms of sex, nudity, drugs, or pagan excess. As long as you don't frighten the horses or challenge local interests, you're simply another bunch of "Summer people", and as such expected to be a bit weird.

Of all the versions of the TAZ imagined so far, this "periodic" or seasonal zone is most open to criticism as a social palliative or an "Anarchist Club Med.:" It's saved from mere selfishness however by the necessary fact of its self-organization. Your group must create the zone -- you can't buy it pre-packaged from some tourist agency. The summer camp can't be the social "Revolution", true enough. I suppose it could be called a training-camp for the Uprising, but this sounds too earnest and pretentious. I would prefer simply to point to the desperation felt by many for just a taste of autonomy, in the context of a valid romanticism of Nature. Not everyone can be a neo-nomad -- but why not at least a neo-transhuman? What if the uprising doesn't come? Are we never to regain the land of summer even for a month? Never vanish from the grid even for a

moment? The summer camp is not the war, not even a strategy -- but it is a tactic. And unmediated pleasure, after all, is still its own excuse.

Evil Eye

The Evil Eye -- mal occhio -- truly exists, & modern western culture has so deeply repressed all knowledge of it that its effects overwhelm us -- & are mistaken for something else entirely. Thus it is free to operate unchecked, convulsing society in a paroxysm of Invidia. Invidious Envy -- the active manifestation of passive resentment -- projected outward thru the gaze (i.e. thru the whole language of gestures & physiognomy, to which most moderns are deaf, or rather which they are not aware of hearing).

It's especially when we're unconscious of such magic that it works best -- moreover, it's known that the possessor of the Eye is nearly always unconscious -- not a true black magician, but almost a victim -- yes, but a victim who escapes malignity by passing it on, as if by reflex.

In more traditional worlds (worlds of the "symbolic order" as Benjamin puts it, as opposed to worlds of "history"), I've noticed that people remain much more attuned to the languages of gesture; where there's no TV & "nothing ever happens", people watch people, people read people. Passersby in the street pick up your mood, & according to their temperament they clash with it or harmonize with it or manipulate it. I never knew this till I lived in Asia. Here in America, people

react to you most often on the basis of the idea you project -- thru clothes, position (job), spoken language. In the East one is more often surprised to find the interlocutor reacting to an inner state; perhaps one was not even aware of this state, or perhaps the effect seems like "telepathy". Most often, it is an effect of body language.

I've heard it said that the Mediterranean & Mideast worlds evolved a complex phenomenology of the mal occhio because they are more given to envy than we Notherners. But the Evil Eye is a universal concept, missing not in any space (such as the chill & rational North) but only in time -- to be exact, in historical time, the time of cold Reason. Reason's protection against magic is to disbelieve it, to believe it out of Reason's universe of discourse. "Asia's defense against magic is more magic -- in this case, the blue stone (common from Lebanon to India, maybe even farther East) or else, in the Mediterranean (our own "Asia"), the downpointed bull-sign of the fingers, or the phallic amulet.

But Reason & Magic are both superstitions ("left-over beliefs"). I suggest that the mal occhio "works"; but my analysis is neither rational nor irrational. Who can explain the complex web of signs, symbols, forces & influences that flow & weave between such enigmatic monads as ourselves? We can't explain how we communicate, much less what. If the "symbolic order"

was replaced by "history", & if History itself is somehow now in the process of "disappearing", perhaps we may at last breathe free of the fogs of magic & the smogs of reason. Perhaps we can simply admit that "mysteries" such as the Eye -- or even "telepathy" -- somehow appear in our world, or seem to appear, which means simply that they appear to appear, & thus that they appear.

The proper organ for this kind of knowledge would be the body.

Now Envy is universal. But some societies attempt to keep it under control, while in others it is unleashed by being turned into a social principle. We have no defense against the Evil Eye because our entire social ethic is rooted in Envy. At least the benighted Asians have their amulets & prophylactic gestures. It was not Reason which banned these frail defenses, however. It was Christianity. "Verb. sap.," as English schoolboys used to say.

The two post-Xtian ideologies -- Capitalism & Communism -- are both fueled by Envy. In both systems it is a survival trait -- no, it is an economic trait. "Oeconomy" -- an old word for the totality of all social arrangements. The "Eighties" was not the decade of greed (which at least has the dignity of an active force) but of envy. The minorities envied the majority, the poor the rich, the "addicted" the

healthy, women men, blacks whites...
yes, but the rich envied the poor (for
their idleness), the healthy envied the
"addicted" (for their pleasures), men
envied women (as always), whites
envied blacks (for their living culture, &
for their suffering) & so on.

A crude anthropology (note the
"anthro") claims that "primitive mind"
experiences Envy as a female principle -
- (hence the phallic defense against the
Evil Eye). A very limited view. "Envy"
may be yin when compared with the
yang of "greed", but the Evil Eye, as a
prolongation of Invidia, is pointy &
penetrative, like a dagger -- a death-
dealing phallus -- to which one opposes
the phallus of life, the penis itself. An
Italian savant once told me of the most
horrendous example of the mal occhio
he'd ever encountered, in a withered &
hairy-faced old woman. A healer, a
charismatic Catholic mystic, undertook
the cure of this miserable witch -- &
discovered that, unknown to her, she
was in fact a man (the genitals had
never descended).

A gender-analysis of the Eye will get us
nowhere. The association of the Eye
with women may arise from the
tendency of women to be more
sensitive to body language than men,
& thus to hold on to certain "magics"
even as they begin to vanish from
those worlds which discover history
(which, as everyone knows, is not, by-
&-large, her story).

The Nuer belief that all accident, illness & death are caused by witchcraft. Most Nuer witches are unaware of themselves as witches. They suffer from envy. According to our tribal beliefs, all accidents are accidental - no one is to "blame". We suffer from envy, but we are "innocent". Frankly I can't believe either the Nuer witch-finders or the pundits of our own mechanistic worldview. Both belief-systems are "disappearing" anyway - why should I buy passage on their sinking ships? Things are so much more complex than either worldview can imagine that, in effect, things are much more simple than either of them would have us believe.

I mean: the effect of two human beings on each other occur on so many levels that flat concepts like witchcraft or accident can't begin to do it justice. And yet, matters are not nearly as tangled & dark as the theory of witchcraft would have us believe, nor so brutal, so industrial, as the theory of the mechanistic universe. The body knows much without knowing, the imagination sees much that it does not need to understand. The body & the imagination overstand - they are above mere understanding & its clumsy abstractions.

Blue is the color of the sky & its happiness, air & light against the earth & shadow of Envy. But blue is also the color of death - as with the old Bedu woman who told Lawrence that his blue

eyes reminded her of the sky seen thru the sockets of a bleached skull. The Yezidis, the "devil-worshippers" of Iraqi Kurdistan, refuse to wear blue beads or even clothes because it is the color of their Lord, Satan, the Peacock Angel, & to wear blue to ward him off would deeply offend him. So the blue bead is homeopathic -- a bit of evil used to defend against evil -- perhaps a fragment fallen from the Horned One himself, powerful in its goaty virility against the chthonic negative-Yin- like power of Envy. And yet the stone is also the serenity of azure, turquoise, infinity, the Feminine -- a bit of mosaic from the matrix of the sky, or of water.

Similarly the bull-sign, when seen upright & face on, is undoubtedly a yang- ish sort of symbol -- but pointed down & seen in reverse -- as it is presented to the view of the Evil-Eye-suspect (altho the gesture is made surreptitiously), the sign becomes a Stone age woman-image, two legs & a vulva -- so that potency against the Evil Eye comes from the "horns" which are stabbed down, the virile element -- but within that symbol is embedded the power of the goddess as well.

Even the phallic amulet, which might at first appear all male, is not the penis of the animal-god, but of Priapus, a god of vegetation. It is the penis of fruit & flower -- in some sense, a female penis.

The apotropaic complex is thus to be

seen as neither male nor female nor even, properly speaking, androgynous. The symbols revolve not around gender but engendering, around life or energy itself as a value opposed to the negativity, the vacuum, the deathly cold of envy.

The opposite of the gaze of love is not the gaze of hate, but that of envy, passive, unliving in itself, vampirically attracted to the life in others. A barren woman sees a pretty newborn baby -- she praises it to the skies, but her words mean the opposite of what they say; unknown even to her, her gaze pierces direct to the infant's breath. Are we so certain that the language of gesture is weak, an evolutionary appendix soon to be bred out of the species? -- do we not suspect that it is strong, powerful enough to attract love, or to make sick, even to kill?

Everywhere in our world this deadly gaze is directed at us, as in Bentham's Panopticon. We are described to ourselves as victims, as patients, as passive focal points of misery -- we are shown ourselves deprived of this or that commodity or "right" or quality which we most desire. The ones who tell us this -- are they not the rich, the powerful, the politicians, the corporations? What could we still possess to awaken in them such invidia, & the endless assaults of their mal occhio?? Could it be that unknown to us or to them) we are alive & they are dead? The TV screen can be an

ultimate Evil Eye -- because it is already dead, & the dead (as Homer showed us) are the most envious of all beings. Everything mediated is dead, even this writing -- & the dead yearn for life. I've tried to protect this text against being an Evil Eye, as well as against the Evil Eye itself, by including in it the names of the appropriate charms. But prose alone will never do the trick. There must occur enchantment, a singing that changes (our perception of) reality. Or better, the blue breath of the serene sky, or the hot moment of the thrusting cock.

Envy is an abstraction because it wants to "take away from." The Evil Eye is its weapon in the psychic/physical world. Against it, then, must stand not another abstraction (such as morality) but the solidest of fleshy realities, the over-abundant power of birth, of fucking, of azure breezes. The amulet we fashion against an entire society of the Evil Eye can be no more & no less than our own life, adamant as stone & horn, soft as sky.

SIJIL: The Triple Rose of the Adept Chamber

by Hakim Bey

from The Moorish Science Monitor, Vol
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The H.M.O.C. Adept Chamber (Third
Paradise) had revealed its inner
triplicity in announcing the formation of
THREE ORDERS or degrees within itself,
viz.:

1. The Fatimid Order
2. The Order of Jerusalem
3. The Order of the Paraclete.

Each of these Orders is as
"ecumenical", radically tolerant, and
"inter-faith" as the M.O.C itself; but
each of them possesses -- so to speak --
a speciality. They represent the three
Western Monotheisms in their essential
and esoteric harmony. Aminty of faiths
is achieved thorough "heresy", i.e. non-
canonical interpretations of "doctrine".
These are the Religions as the M.O.C
views and experiences them (in the
light of Noble Drew Ali's Circle Seven
Koran, which makes use of the esoteric
Christian and Rosicrucian apocrypha by
a syncretic principle we have
inherited): -- for us, the Monotheisms
are living mutating entities,

interpenetrant and mutually illuminative. This position has been called (somewhat jocularly) "polyreligiosity". It owes something to "paganism", which is not truly polytheistic but rather a congeries of distinct cults and sects recognizing a universalistic principle of mutual validation. It also owes something to Noble Drew Ali's syncretistic genius; and also to the position of Hazrat Inayet Khan the Chishti Sufi who practiced the Harmony of Faiths and whose teachings were incorporated into the M.O.C in the early 60's, with the permission of certain surviving disciples in Delhi at the shrine of Nizamoddin Aulia.

Thus the FATIMID ORDER is primarily "Islamic"; specifically it deploys a spiritual/initiatic affiliation with revolutionary Ismailism in the transmission of the *Hafeziyya*, whose Imams were the Caliphs of the Fatimid dynasty of Egypt (913-1171). This line supposedly disappeared and is not represented by any "church" in the world today other than the F.O., which owes no allegiance to the Nizaris or Qarmatis or Bohras or other existent Ismaili sects. The Order concerns itself with Hermeticism in the Egyptian/Islamic tradition; and with the practise of "initiatic dreaming" in the Owayssi sufi tradition (in which initiatic visions are sought without any authoritarian "Master" and without *Tariqat*-affiliation); and with the study of revolutionary theory and praxis in

Islamic history. The Order follows a principle which might be called "anarcho-monarchism", and considers each of its devotees as a "Pretender to the throne of an Imaginal Egypt".

The ORDER OF JERUSALEM is "Jewish", but specifically Judeo-Canaanite or Hebraeo-pagan, or Jewish-"Magical", in emphasis. Moreover, Jerusalem is the symbolic capital city of the Three Monotheisms, and thus of special interest to the Adept Chamber. Even as this article is published the O.J. is establishing itself *in Jerusalem*, where it will propagate or foster interest in the Harmony (and Peace) of Faiths; the study of archaic Canaanite and other Holy land religions and cults of the topocosm; popular Cabalism and Magic; the tradition of Sabbatai Sevi the "false" Messiah who converted to Islam in 1666; the Dome of the Rock and the Temple (symbolized by the Buraq, the half-mule/half-angel-beast that Mohammad rode to paradise, launching from the Rock to seventh heaven). The O.J is also a "chivalric" order, in that it awards all its members the title "Chevalier of the Moorish Order of Jerusalem." The purpose of the knights is to foster and protect the Mission in Jerusalem, and to work for Peace through inter-faith harmony.

The ORDER OF THE PARACLETE is "Christian", but since it admits (potentially) any form of Christianity it is infinitely flexible and expansive. The Paraclete, the One Who Is To Come,

has been identified with Mohammad, and also with the "Holy Spirit" in the Millennialism of Joachim of Fiore, who saw an Age of the Father (Law) and an Age of the Son (Church) succeeded by an Age of the Spirit -- the utopian millennium, perfect freedom. As another millennium approaches, the O.P. will function to give an esoteric interpretation and an outward manifestation to this ideal. Beside the "Aquarian Jesus" of the Circle Seven Koran, the following Christian themes play roles in the form of the O.P. -- the Brethren of the Free Spirit, the Adamites, the Beghards and Beguines; the Christian Cabalists, alchemists, and hermeticists; Renaissance Neoplatonism and Magic; the Celtic Church and its links with paganism; certain forms of Gnosticism (the link to "Egypt!"); radical Protestantism, e.g. the Anabaptists, the Family of Love, the Ranters, the Antinomians, the Diggers, William Blake (Christian Druidism); the revolutionary churches of Spence and Weddeburn, the religious cult of Charles Fourier, the New Catholic Pantarchy of Stephen Pearl Andrews, etc.; also, the Wandering Bishops and the autocephalous churches movement, which played a major role in the original formation of the M.O.C. (hence the term "orthodox" and our title of "Metropolitan", for example) -- the emphasis on liturgy as magic defines O.P. praxis. Another major source of inspiration is the "Spiritist" tradition, the syncretism of Christianity and "HooDoo", African and Native ritual,

iconography, magic, etc. -- the single most creative source of spiritual strength in America today.

As if to prove that Christianity is more complicated than Islam or Judaism, the O.P. has already spawned or affiliated with several autocephalous or free churches -- in face, the main purpose of the Order will be to organize "inter-communion" of free Christian churches; and thus it acts, so to speak as the Christian arm of the H.M.O.C Adept Chamber.

In theory both the Fatimid Order and the Order of Jerusalem could carry out similar affiliative conjunctions, but neither has yet done so. Moreover, the Adept Chamber feels a need to add yet more Orders and/or Degrees to its structure, and openly encourages M.O.C. members to form -- for example -- pagan/druidic/shamanic, Buddhist, Taoist, Tantrik, or other orders; furthermore, the Adept Chamber itself welcomes "inter-communion" with all Free Religions and spiritual paths, up to and including exchanges of Orders and Titles (hence for example or Discordian affiliation, or our relations with psychedelic churches in the 60's).

All this may seem overly-complex to anyone unfamiliar with the M.O.C.'s long-established policy of deliberate syncretism, positive "heresy", anti-hierachalism and anti-authoritarianism. The Angels are said to delight in high-sounding and glorious titles, and we

Moors are not less than angelic in this, at least -- but we never believed that one title could ever *rule* another. We take our stand at the nexus where religion becomes aesthetic, festal, ludic, and creative -- a source and power for freedom, for both the individual and the group.

THE INNER LIGHT

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Moorish Mail- Order Mysticism

by Hakim Bey

from The Moorish Science Monitor, Vol
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"Mail-order mysticism" may sound like a joke to the serious, orthodox, traditional, or academic "expert" in religion -- & to the professional gurus whose "Work" consists of personality-monopoly & psychological authoritarianism -- but the Moorish Orthodox Church takes it seriously. There's something magical about the mail -- voices from the Unseen -- *documents as amulets* -- and something very american, democratic & self-reliant -- mysterious urban folklore -- old ad's for AMORC in crumbling yellow magazines -- Hoodoo catalogues, dreambooks -- ancient spirits-of-places intersecting with modern communications networks that are placeless, spooky, & abstract. And the mail itself now seems antique -- a lost modernity, 19th century, sepia, violet ink -- a fitting medium for the transmission of secrets.

Do-it-yourself Enlightenment? Why not? It may not be the best way or the only way but *it is a way*. A genuine vein of initiation runs through the "plane" where one finds Dr Bronner's soap

labels, the lost Books of Moses, the apocryphal grimoires of Marie Laveau, Hollow Earth Theory, old Theosophical journals in your grandmother's attic, "What Did These Great Men Have In Common?", Noble Drew Ali's Moorish health-products, the mail-order courses of Druids and occult Orders, millenarian tracts, mysterious classified ad's, Mexican lithography, & c., & c.

It all adds up to a "New World" religion, a translation of "Wild(er)ness" into the strange lost margins of commodification and "communication" -- both a betrayal & an apotheosis (like *all* religion) -- a playground for the Trickster -- a *mundus imaginalis* of the postal system & the printing press & the poetics of Desire.

Literal belief in one or another of these mail-order revelations would destroy our ability to believe in all of them simultaneously, like a palimpsest of angelic alphabets, a *field* of magical "corespondance(s)", a conceptual transformation-space of mythic energies and mythopoesis. The *eros* of postal mysticism lies in the whole pattern it makes, rather than in one part or another, one "course" or another. Sometimes those who sneer the most ironically at this textual spiritism are secretly drawn by its imaginal sensuality, even while their rational brains reject it all as high weirdness & superstition. However, one can believe (or "believe") *both/and*,

rather than *either/or*. One drifts in a world of reveries, and "rejoice, fellow creature! All is ours!" -- Or, at least: -- an *opening*.

Egyptomania -- the imaginal "Islam" of old cigarette boxes & masonic bric-a-brac -- the HooDoo figure of the "Old Moor", author of almanacs, herb-doctor, Maroon -- the northwest African element in american folklore -- *plus* the Native American component of the great New World HooDoo synthesis -- the Santeria *orisha* called El Spirito Indio -- psychic tribalism, animism, totemism, and the Nature-religion natural to our Wilderness-haunted collective (un?)conscious -- *plus* the psychedelic heritage of the 1950s & 60s, which combined with Moorish Science & the "Wandering bishops" tradition, to produce the Moorish Orthodox Church: -- Sabbatai Sevi & Jacob Frank the "False Messiahs" -- secrets of Cannanite paganism -- Jewish magick & amulets -- Protestant chiliasm, the revolutionary Anabaptists, Ranters, Antinomians -- *plus*, Apostolic high-liturgical gnostic autocephalous Church ritual -- magical Taoism, "Aimless Wandering", tatrik intoxicants, initiation through dreams & contacts with the spirit world -- hemp use in ancient China -- mail-order almanacs of chaos cults form the Seven Finger High Glister of the Great Dismal Swamp -- &c., &c.

All this can now be yours, as you "Send Away For A Split Second Of Eternity" by

joining the MOORISH MAIL ORDER MYSTICISM movement.

Certain airwave preachers tell you to "put you hands on the radio!" to receive a blessing or healing. The modern media are by definition forces for alienation -- *and yet* -- they contain within them hidden & unplanned magical linkages which are IMmediate -- or at least far more direct than reason would allow. No technology can leach itself clean of the residue of magic which lies at its source -- and communication tech is the most "spiritual" of them all. The mail is full of gnostic traces -- even of love. Why not initiation?

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The Information War

Humanity has always invested heavily in any scheme that offers escape from the body. And why not? Material reality is such a mess. Some of the earliest "religious" artefacts, such as Neanderthal ochre burials, already suggest a belief in immortality. All modern (i.e. post-paleolithic) religions contain the "Gnostic trace" of distrust or even outright hostility to the body and the "created" world. Contemporary "primitive" tribes and even peasant-pagans have a concept of immortality and of going-outside-the-body (ecstasy) without necessarily exhibiting any excessive body-hatred. The Gnostic Trace accumulates very gradually (like mercury poisoning) till eventually it turns pathological. Gnostic dualism exemplifies the extreme position of this disgust by shifting all value from body to "spirit". This idea characterizes what we call "civilization". A similar trajectory can be traced through the phenomenon of "war".

Hunter/gatherers practised (and still practise, as amongst the Yanomamo) a kind of ritualized brawl (think of the Plains Indian custom of "counting coup"). "Real" war is a continuation of religion and economics (i.e. politics) by other means, and thus only begins historically with the priestly invention of "scarcity" in the Neolithic, and the emergence of a "warrior caste". (I

categorically reject the theory that "war" is a prolongation of "hunting".) WWII seems to have been the last "real" war. Hyperreal war began in Vietnam, with the involvement of television, and recently reached full obscene revelation in the "Gulf War" of 1991. Hyperreal war is no longer "economic", no longer "the health of the state". The Ritual Brawl is voluntary and non-hierarchical (war chiefs are always temporary); real war is compulsory and hierarchical; hyperreal war is imagistic and psychologically interiorized ("Pure War"). In the first the body is risked; in the second, the body is sacrificed; in the third, the body has disappeared. (See P. Clastres on War, in *Archaeology of Violence*.) Modern science also incorporates an anti-materialist bias, the dialectical outcome of its war against Religion - it has in some sense become Religion. Science as knowledge of material reality paradoxically decomposes the materiality of the real. Science has always been a species of priestcraft, a branch of cosmology; and an ideology, a justification of "the way things are." The deconstruction of the "real" in post-classical physics mirrors the vacuum of irreality which constitutes "the state". Once the image of Heaven on Earth, the state now consists of no more than the management of images. It is no longer a "force" but a disembodied patterning of information. But just as Babylonian cosmology justified Babylonian power, so too does the "finality" of modern science serve the ends of the Terminal State, the post-

nuclear state, the "information state". Or so the New Paradigm would have it. And "everyone" accepts the axiomatic premises of the new paradigm. The new paradigm is very spiritual.

Even the New Age with its gnostic tendencies embraces the New Science and its increasing etherealization as a source of proof-texts for its spiritualist world view. Meditation and cybernetics go hand in hand. Of course the "information state" somehow requires the support of a police force and prison system that would have stunned Nebuchadnezzar and reduced all the priests of Moloch to paroxysms of awe. And "modern science" still can't weasel out of its complicity in the very-nearly-successful "conquest of Nature". Civilization's greatest triumph over the body.

But who cares? It's all "relative" isn't it? I guess we'll just have to "evolve" beyond the body. Maybe we can do it in a "quantum leap." Meanwhile the excessive mediation of the Social, which is carried out through the machinery of the Media, increases the intensity of our alienation from the body by fixating the flow of attention on information rather than direct experience. In this sense the Media serves a religious or priestly role, appearing to offer us a way out of the body by re-defining spirit as information. The essence of information is the Image, the sacral and iconic data-complex which usurps the primacy of the "material bodily principle" as the

vehicle of incarnation, replacing it with a fleshless ecstasis beyond corruption. Consciousness becomes something which can be "down-loaded", excized from the matrix of animality and immortalized as information. No longer "ghost-in-the-machine", but machine-as-ghost, machine as Holy Ghost, ultimate mediator, which will translate us from our mayfly-corpses to a pleroma of Light. Virtual Reality as CyberGnosis. Jack in, leave Mother Earth behind forever. All science proposes a paradigmatic universalism - as in science, so in the social. Classical physics played midwife to Capitalism, Communism, Fascism and other Modern ideologies.

Post-classical science also proposes a set of ideas meant to be applied to the social: Relativity, Quantum "unreality", cybernetics, information theory, etc. With some exceptions, the post-classical tendency is towards ever greater etherealization. Some proponents of Black Hole theory, for example, talk like pure Pauline theologians, while some of the information theorists are beginning to sound like virtual Manichaeans.¹ On the level of the social these paradigms give rise to a rhetoric of bodylessness quite worthy of a third century desert monk or a 17th century New England Puritan - but expressed in a language of post-Industrial post-Modern feel-good consumer frenzy. Our every conversation is infected with certain paradigmatic assumptions which are

really no more than bald assertions, but which we take for the very fabric or urgrund of Reality itself. For instance, since we now assume that computers represent a real step toward "artificial intelligence", we also assume that buying a computer makes us more intelligent. In my own field I've met dozens of writers who sincerely believe that owning a PC has made them better (not "more efficient", but better) writers. This is amusing - but the same feeling about computers when applied to a trillion dollar military budget, churns out Star Wars, killer robots, etc. (See Manuel de Landa's *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* on AI in modern weaponry). An important part of this rhetoric involves the concept of an "information economy". The post-Industrial world is now thought to be giving birth to this new economy. One of the clearest examples of the concept can be found in a recent book by a man who is a Libertarian, the Bishop of a Gnostic Dualist Church in California, and a learned and respected writer for Gnosis magazine:

The industry of the past phase of civilization (sometimes called "low technology") was big industry, and bigness always implies oppressiveness. The new high technology, however, is not big in the same way. While the old technology produced and distributed material resources, the new

technology produces and disseminates information. The resources marketed in high technology are less about matter and more about mind. Under the impact of high technology, the world is moving increasingly from a physical economy into what might be called a "metaphysical economy." We are in the process of recognizing that consciousness rather than raw materials or physical resources constitutes wealth.²

Modern neo-Gnosticism usually plays down the old Manichaeian attack on the body for a gentler greener rhetoric. Bishop Hoeller for instance stresses the importance of ecology and environment (because we don't want to "foul our nest", the Earth) - but in his chapter on Native American spirituality he implies that a cult of the Earth is clearly inferior to the pure Gnostic spirit of bodylessness:

But we must not forget that the nest is not the same as the bird. The exoteric and esoteric traditions declare that earth is not the only home for human beings, that we did not grow like weeds from the soil. While our bodies indeed may have originated on this earth, our

inner essence did not. To think otherwise puts us outside of all of the known spiritual traditions and separates us from the wisdom of the seers and sages of every age. Though wise in their own ways, Native Americans have small connection with this rich spiritual heritage.³

In such terms, (the body = the "savage"), the Bishop's hatred and disdain for the flesh illuminate every page of his book. In his enthusiasm for a truly religious economy, he forgets that one cannot eat "information". "Real wealth" can never become immaterial until humanity achieves the final etherealization of downloaded consciousness. Information in the form of culture can be called wealth metaphorically because it is useful and desirable - but it can never be wealth in precisely the same basic way that oysters and cream, or wheat and water, are wealth in themselves. Information is always only information about some thing. Like money, information is not the thing itself. Over time we can come to think of money as wealth (as in a delightful Taoist ritual which refers to "Water and Money" as the two most vital principles in the universe), but in truth this is sloppy abstract thinking. It has allowed its focus of attention to wander from the bun to the penny which symbolizes the bun.⁴ In effect we've had an "information economy"

ever since we invented money. But we still haven't learned to digest copper. The Aesopian crudity of these truisms embarrasses me, but I must perforce play the stupid lazy yokel plowing a crooked furrow when all the straight thinkers around me appear to be hallucinating.

Americans and other "First World" types seem particularly susceptible to the rhetoric of a "metaphysical economy" because we can no longer see (or feel or smell) around us very much evidence of a physical world. Our architecture has become symbolic, we have enclosed ourselves in the manifestations of abstract thought (cars, apartments, offices, schools), we work at "service" or information-related jobs, helping in our little way to move disembodied symbols of wealth around an abstract grid of Capital, and we spend our leisure largely engrossed in Media rather than in direct experience of material reality. The material world for us has come to symbolize catastrophe, as in our amazingly hysterical reaction to storms and hurricanes (proof that we've failed to "conquer Nature" entirely), or our neo-Puritan fear of sexual otherness, or our taste for bland and denatured (almost abstract) food. And yet, this "First World" economy is not self-sufficient. It depends for its position (top of the pyramid) on a vast substructure of old-fashioned material production. Mexican farm-workers grow and package all that "Natural" food for us so we can devote our time to stocks, insurance, law,

computers, video games. Peons in Taiwan make silicon chips for our PCs. Towel-heads in the Middle East suffer and die for our sins. Life? Oh, our servants do that for us. We have no life, only "lifestyle" - an abstraction of life, based on the sacred symbolism of the Commodity, mediated by the priesthood of the stars, those "larger than life" abstractions who rule our values and people our dreams - the mediarchetypes; or perhaps mediarchs would be a better term. Of course this Baudrillardian dystopia doesn't really exist - yet.⁵ It's surprising however to note how many social radicals consider it a desirable goal, at least as long as it's called the "Information Revolution" or something equally inspiring. Leftists talk about seizing the means of information-production from the data-monopolists.⁶ In truth, information is everywhere - even atom bombs can be constructed on plans available in public libraries. As Noam Chomsky points out, one can always access information - provided one has a private income and a fanaticism bordering on insanity. Universities and "think tanks" make pathetic attempts to monopolize information - they too are dazzled by the notion of an information economy - but their conspiracies are laughable. Information may not always be "free", but there's a great deal more of it available than any one person could ever possibly use. Books on every conceivable subject can actually still be found through inter-library loan.⁷ Meanwhile someone still has to grow

pears and cobble shoes. Or, even if these "industries" can be completely mechanized, someone still has to eat pears and wear shoes. The body is still the basis of wealth. The idea of Images as wealth is a "spectacular delusion". Even a radical critique of "information" can still give rise to an over-valuation of abstraction and data. In a *pro-situ* zine from England called *NO*, the following message was scrawled messily across the back cover of a recent issue:

As you read these words, the Information Age explodes ... inside and around you -with the Misinformation Missiles and Propaganda bombs of outright Information Warfare.

Traditionally, war has been fought for territory/economic gain. Information Wars are fought for the acquisition of territory indigenous to the Information Age, i.e. the humanmind itself ... In particular, it is the faculty of the imagination that is under the direct threat of extinction from the onslaughts of multimedia overload ... DANGER - YOUR IMAGINATION MAY NOT BE YOUR OWN ... As a culture sophisticates, it deepens its reliance on its images, icons and symbols as a way of defining itself and communicating with

other cultures. As the accumulating mix of a culture's images floats around in its collective psyche, certain isomorphic icons coalesce to produce and to project an "illusion" of reality. Fads, fashions, artistic trends. U KNOW THE SCORE. "I can take their images for reality because I believe in the reality of their images (their image of reality)." WHOEVER CONTROLS THE METAPHOR GOVERNS THE MIND. The conditions of total saturation are slowly being realized - a creeping paralysis - from the trivialisation of special/technical knowledge to the specialization of trivia. The INFORMATION WAR is a war we cannot afford to lose. The result is unimaginable.⁸

I find myself very much in sympathy with the author's critique of media here, yet I also feel that a demonization of "information" has been proposed which consists of nothing more than the mirror-image of information-as-salvation. Again Baudrillard's vision of the Commtech Universe is evoked, but this time as Hell rather than as the Gnostic Hereafter. Bishop Hoeller wants everybody jacked-in and down-loaded - the anonymous post-situationist ranter wants you to smash your telly - but

both of them believe in the mystic power of information. One proposes the *pax technologica*, the other declares "war". Both exude a kind of Manichaeic view of Good and Evil, but can't agree on which is which. The critical theorist swims in a sea of facts. We like to imagine it also as our *maquis*, with ourselves as the "guerilla ontologists" of its *datascape*. Since the 19th century the ever-mutating "social sciences" have unearthed a vast hoard of information on everything from shamanism to semiotics. Each "discovery" feeds back into "social science" and changes it. We drift. We fish for poetic facts, data which will intensify and mutate our experience of the real. We invent new hybrid "sciences" as tools for this process: ethnopharmacology, ethnohistory, cognitive studies, history of ideas, subjective anthropology (anthropological poetics or ethno-poetics), "dada epistemology", etc. We look on all this knowledge not as "good" in itself, but valuable only inasmuch as it helps us to seize or to construct our own happiness. In this sense we do know of "information as wealth"; nevertheless we continue to desire wealth itself and not merely its abstract representation as information. At the same time we also know of "information as war;"⁹ nevertheless, we have not decided to embrace ignorance just because "facts" can be used like a poison gas. Ignorance is not even an adequate defense, much less a useful weapon in this war. We attempt neither to fetishize nor demonize "information".

Instead we try to establish a set of values by which information can be measured and assessed. Our standard in this process can only be the body. According to certain mystics, spirit and body are "one". Certainly spirit has lost its ontological solidity (since Nietzsche, anyway), while body's claim to "reality" has been undermined by modern science to the point of vanishing in a cloud of "pure energy". So why not assume that spirit and body are one, after all, and that they are twin (or dyadic) aspects of the same underlying and inexpressible real? No body without spirit, no spirit without body. The Gnostic Dualists are wrong, as are the vulgar "dialectical materialists". Body and spirit together make life. If either pole is missing, the result is death. This constitutes a fairly simple set of values, assuming we prefer life to death. Obviously I'm avoiding any strict definitions of either body or spirit. I'm speaking of "empirical" everyday experiences. We experience "spirit" when we dream or create; we experience "body" when we eat or shit (or maybe vice versa); we experience both at once when we make love. I'm not proposing metaphysical categories here. We're still drifting and these are ad-hoc points of reference, nothing more. We needn't be mystics to propose this version of "one reality". We need only point out that no other reality has yet appeared within the context of our knowable experience. For all practical purposes, the "world" is "one".¹⁰ Historically however, the "body" half of this unity has always

received the insults, bad press, scriptural condemnation, and economic persecution of the "spirit"-half. The self-appointed representatives of the spirit have called almost all the tunes in known history, leaving the body only a pre-history of primitive disappearance, and a few spasms of failed insurrectionary futility.

Spirit has ruled - hence we scarcely even know how to speak the language of the body. When we use the word "information" we reify it because we have always reified abstractions - ever since God appeared as a burning bush. (Information as the catastrophic decorporealization of "brute" matter). We would now like to propose the identification of self with body. We're not denying that "the body is also spirit", but we wish to restore some balance to the historical equation. We calculate all body-hatred and world-slander as our "evil". We insist on the revival (and mutation) of "pagan" values concerning the relation of body and spirit. We fail to feel any great enthusiasm for the "information economy" because we see it as yet another mask for body-hatred. We can't quite believe in the "information war", since it also hypostatizes information but labels it "evil". In this sense, "information" would appear to be neutral. But we also distrust this third position as a lukewarm cop-out and a failure of theoretical vision. Every "fact" takes different meanings as we run it through our dialectical prism¹¹

and study its gleam and shadows. The "fact" is never inert or "neutral", but it can be both "good" and "evil" (or beyond them) in countless variations and combinations. We, finally, are the artists of this immeasurable discourse. We create values. We do this because we are alive. Information is as big a "mess" as the material world it reflects and transforms. We embrace the mess, all of it. It's all life. But within the vast chaos of the alive, certain information and certain material things begin to coalesce into a poetics or a way-of-knowing or a way-of-acting. We can draw certain pro-tem "conclusions," as long as we don't plaster them over and set them up on altars. Neither "information" nor indeed any one "fact" constitutes a thing-in-itself. The very word "information" implies an ideology, or rather a paradigm, rooted in unconscious fear of the "silence" of matter and of the universe. "Information" is a substitute for certainty, a left-over fetish of dogmatics, a *super-stitio*, a spook. "Poetic facts" are not assimilable to the doctrine of "information". "Knowledge is freedom" is true only when freedom is understood as a psycho-kinetic skill. "Information" is a chaos; knowledge is the spontaneous ordering of that chaos; freedom is the surfing of the wave of that spontaneity. These tentative conclusions constitute the shifting and marshy ground of our "theory". The TAZ wants all information and all bodily pleasure in a great complex confusion of sweet data and sweet dates - facts and feasts - wisdom

and wealth. This is our economy - and our war.

Notes

1. The new "life" sciences offer some dialectical opposition here, or could do so if they worked and through certain paradigms. Chaos theory seems to deal with the material world in positive ways, as does Gaia theory, morphogenetic theory, and various other "soft" and "neo-hermetic" disciplines. Elsewhere I've attempted to incorporate these philosophical implications into a "festal" synthesis. The point is not to abandon all thought about the material world, but to realize that all science has philosophical and political implications, and that science is a way of thinking, not a dogmatic structure of incontrovertible Truth. Of course quantum, relativity, and information theory are all "true" in some way and can be given a positive interpretation. I've already done that in several essays. Now I want to explore the negative aspects.

2. *Freedom: Alchemy for a Voluntary Society*, Stephan A. Hoeller (Wheaton, IL: Quest, 1992), 229-230.

3. Ibid., p. 164.

4. Like Pavlov's dogs salivating at the dinner bell rather than the dinner - a perfect illustration of what I mean by

"abstraction".

5. Although some might say that it already "virtually" exists. I just heard from a friend in California of a new scheme for "universal prisons" - offenders will be allowed to live at home and go to work but will be electronically monitored at all times, like Winston Smith in *1984*. The universal panopticon now potentially coincide one-to-one with the whole of reality; life and work will take the place of outdated physical incarceration - the Prison Society will merge with "electronic democracy" to form a Surveillance State or information totality, with all time and space compacted beneath the unsleeping gaze of RoboCop. On the level of pure tech, at least, it would seem that we have at last arrived at "the future". "Honest citizens" of course will have nothing to fear; hence terror will reign unchallenged and Order will triumph like the Universal Ice. Our only hope may lie in the "chaotic perturbation" of massively-linked computers, and in the venal stupidity or boredom of those who program and monitor the system.

6. I will always remember with pleasure being addressed, by a Bulgarian delegate to a conference I once attended, as a "fellow worker in philosophy". Perhaps the capitalist version would be "entrepreneur in philosophy", as if one bought ideas like apples at roadside stands.

7. Of course information may sometimes be "occult", as in Conspiracy Theory. Information may be "disinformation". Spies and propagandists make up a kind of shadow "information economy", to be sure. Hackers who believe in "freedom of information" have my sympathy, especially since they've been picked as the latest enemies of the Spectacular State, and subjected to its spasms of control-by-terror. But hackers have yet to "liberate" a single bit of information useful in our struggle. Their impotence, and their fascination with Imagery, make them ideal victims of the "Information State", which itself is based on pure simulation. One needn't steal data from the post-military-industrial complex to know, in general, what it's up to. We understand enough to form our critique. More information by itself will never take the place of the actions we have failed to carry out; data by itself will never reach critical mass. Despite my loving debt to thinkers like Robert Anton Wilson and T. Leary I cannot agree with their optimistic analysis of the cognitive function of information technology. It is not the neural system alone which will achieve autonomy, but the entire body.

8. Issue #6, *Nothing is True*, Box 175, Liverpool L69 8DX, UK

9. Indeed, the whole "poetic terrorism" project has been proposed only as a strategy in this very war.

10. "The 'World' is 'one'" can be and has been used to justify a totality, a metaphysical ordering of "reality" with a "center" or "apex" : one God, one King, etc., etc. This is the monism of orthodoxy, which naturally opposes Dualism and its other source of power ("evil") - orthodoxy also presupposes that the One occupies a higher ontological position than the Many, that transcendence takes precedence over immanence. What I call radical (or heretical) monism demands unity of one and Many on the level of immanence; hence it is seen by Orthodoxy as a turning-upside-down or saturnalia which proposes that every "one" is equally "divine". Radical monism is "on the side of" the Many - which explains why it seems to lie at the heart of pagan polytheism and shamanism, as well as extreme forms of monotheism such as Ismailism or Ranterism, based on "inner light" teachings. "All is one", therefore, can be spoken by any kind of monist or anti-dualist and can mean many different things.

11. A proposal: the new theory of taoist dialectics. Think of the yin/yang disc, with a spot of black in the white lozenge, and vice versa - separated not by a straight line but an S-curve. Amiri Baraka says that dialectics is just "separating out the good from the bad" - but the taoist is "beyond good and evil". The dialectic is supple, but the taoist dialectic is downright sinuous. For example, making use of the taoist

dialectic, we can re-evaluate Gnosis once again. True, it presents a negative view of the body and of becoming. But also true that it has played the role of the eternal rebel against all orthodoxy, and this makes it interesting. In its libertine and revolutionary manifestations the Gnosis possesses many secrets, some of which are actually worth knowing. The organizational forms of Gnosis - the crackpot cult, the secret society - seem pregnant with possibilities for the TAZ/Immediatist project. Of course, as I've pointed out elsewhere, not all gnosis is Dualistic. There also exists a monist gnostic tradition, which sometimes borrows heavily from Dualism and is often confused with it. Monist gnosis is anti-eschatological, using religious language to describe this world, not Heaven or the Gnostic Pleroma. Shamanism, certain "crazy" forms of Taoism and Tantra and Zen, heterodox sufism and Ismailism, Christian antinomians such as the Ranters, etc. - share a conviction of the holiness of the "inner spirit", and of the actually real, the "world". These are our "spiritual ancestors."

Hakim Bey is best known for his zine-publications that were collected under the title *T.A.Z., The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*, published by Autonomedia, New York, and more recently, *Immediatism* (Edinburgh/San Francisco: AK Press). For Bey there is no disappearance without

reappearance.

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Hakim Bey: The Criminal Bee

Transcribed [by [Ovid](#)] from the Tribal Donut #5 cassette which contains a recording of a performance in San Francisco, Feb. 1993.

Nietzsche says somewhere that the true, free spirit will not wish to see the laws of the herd abolished, lest there exist nothing to struggle against and overcome. Little danger of such an abolishment at this point, one might suppose. Since Nietzsche's time law has perhaps mutated from a complex but many-dimensional tool of the oppressor class to the subtle, fractal, all-pervasive self-image of the spectacle. Law simulates the dictatorship of commonality forever promising & forever withdrawing the utopia of justice. Our founding myths here in America, which take the form of such texts as a *declaration of independence* or a bill of rights etc. prove so infinitely flexible as to become, like all myths, their opposites. The law no longer seems like a dialectical edge as it was for Nietzsche, but rather a viral ooze, infecting the very fabric of language & thought. One can no longer distinguish between cops & cop culture. The media-induced hallucination of a society defined by its lawyers & police. Ten minutes in a video store should convince any impartial observer that we live in a

police state of consciousness, far more pervasive than the Nazis, those crude pioneers of amphetamine television & ballistics. What, for example, would a UFO alien visitor think of a planet whose favorite icon appeared to consist of an angry law enforcement officer pointing a gun at the observer ? Some few subjects may free their minds for brief moments from the flickering omnipresence of this one true axiomatic image of *our moment in time* as Nixon used to call the present. No doubt they will at once begin to wonder about the possibility of overcoming the law, both as a social code which labels our desires as forbidden, and as an ectoplasmic super ego, or cop of the inner landscape suffocating us with the fear of our own passions.

The first step in any real utopia is to look in the mirror and demand to know my true desire, an action which already presupposes at least temporary overcoming of unconditional anxiety, of the fear that a daemon may appear in the glass, or a daemoniac cop. Now what do I see ? The first image to float to the surface of the skry stone, the magick mirror, is the criminal: my desires are illegal. My manias are forbidden in civilization. The moral code, embedded within the legal code defines my appetites as injury. Fourier & Nietzsche both defined the criminal as a natural insurrectionary spirit in revolt against the stifling repression of the social

consensus. The criminal's tragedy , however, lies in being nearly the opposite of the cop: a mirror image, and therefore equally an image, a trap, a definition imposed within the language of control. And in any case, the deeper I look in the glass, the less I see any desires which I myself might label *wrong*, according to my own personal code of ethics. **Wrong** for me means counterproductive and ultimately self-immiserating. I don't want to realize my desires at the expense of other people's misery. Not because such action would be immoral but because it would be psychically self-defeating: misery breeds misery. Those caught in the trap of trying to realize their desires by hurting others are all, in my experience, themselves psychically poor. Crime in this sense of the word pays, but it doesn't pay enough! I reject it for purely selfish reasons -- to realize my desires, I must overcome or even break the law, but I do not to do wrong according to my own light, nor will I accept the consensus label of criminal.

This explains why fascism is not an answer. Fascism is a desiring-machine but only for an amoral elite who achieve their goals through the creation & destruction of enemies and victims, as in Marquis de Sade. Fourier, however, asserts that desire itself remains impossible unless all desires are possible. That passion involves the Other, and therefore defines the only possible or real society. This

realization draws the boundry between Fascism and Anarchism.

Gazing deeper into the mirror, in fact, I begin to see that I am not alone there. That the Self implies others, that we are co-implicated i each other's desires. And here we come to a stage higher, in Nietzsche's view, than mere criminality: the society of free spirits, or as Max Stirner called it **The union of Self-owning Ones**. A form of organization exists which evades the murderous dialectic of institutions, *the paradoxical counter-productivity of institutions* as Ivan Illich calls it. This different kind of group might be identified with Fourier's passionnal series, the psychically linked number of humans needed to express and realize a shared or common pasional goal. Such harmonic associations are prevented from coming into being, Fourier insisted, by civilization itself, which is founded on mass immiseration. He belived that Utopia would first have to be established in order for true series to form spontaneously out of various passions, for sensual & sexual fulfillment, for attractive labor, and for the total physical & psychic realization of the individual in society. In other words, Fourier made an absolute category of society just as Nietzsche & Stirner made an absolute category of the individual. Our task is **not** to follow either of these ideas, but to deconstruct, synthesize & reconstruct. Out of this process, we hope to see

arise not merely another ideology or another no-place (U-topos)- which is what Utopia means - however brilliant or imaginably stimulating; rather, we hope to create a praxis, a mode of action for realizing the series and manifesting its passion here and now or so close to hear and now that we can taste it.

Elsewhere I have considered a number of possible forms for such groups, including the loosest, most temporary and ad hoc organizational agglomerations. Here however, I want to consider only one aspect of such groupings, that is their illegality. I will argue that illegality means more than mere law-breaking. Illegality, as a positive attribute of the Temporary Autonomous Zone implies that the very structure or the deepest motivation of the TAZ group contravenes or necessitates the overcoming of consensus values. And that this is true even when no statute or regulation has been broken. But in order to avoid as much metaphysics as possible here we can discuss some actual existing groups or situations which approximate the TAZ concept to some degree. (And by criticizing their shortcomings perhaps we can arrive at a clearer view of possibilities for the immediate future.)

The web work

Computer hacking has so far turned up nothing that has enhanced my life. Nor can I

detect much enhancement in the lives of the hackers themselves. The goal of liberating all information is noble but ludicrously unobtainable. This should by now be obvious to all those who watched while the state smashed to a pulp a few hapless liberators of a few bits of information. The potential for liberation inherent in the BBS as a tool for social projects has not yet been realized. The BBS Meganet involves untold thousands of e-mail enthusiasts who have so far not sent or received one real good.

Someone please tell me I'm wrong (Audience: You're wrong!) O.K., we can talk about that afterwards. I would like to hear it. I really want to be told I'm wrong. But 99% is idle chatter, 1% maybe interesting information. But no chicken stew, no orgies and no enlightenment (Audience: Orgies ...) Orgies ? Where, on the computer network ? Give me a break. Now at last hackers have begun to experiment with cryptology -- cypherpunks boast that soon secure networks will be available to e-mail users. One might issue the hackers a challenge: deliver to me one thing which is illegal and which I want, and which I could not have obtained so easily or at all without a computer

network. I'd even accept a nice bit of high resolution pornography. Prove that computers can supply, or at least expedite something more than publishing or crepy sounding synthetic music (Laughs). I demand secrets and I'm getting bored with wating, thanks to a lifetime spent reading science fiction.

The Gathering

Considered as a TAZ. The gathering can be called and held without any computer assistance which is indeed fortunate because the gathering is a vital necessity. Now, today. And it is already evolving spontaneously, out of this need. A numer of kind of gatherings aspire to manifest as TAZ: the neo-pagan festivals, the Rainbow camps, collaborative art events, open conspiracies such as Queer Nation or WACK, Raves, anarchist collectives, hypercultural international communities, secret societiesm meeting for risky or illegal or insurrectionary goals etc., drug dealers.

These groups or gatherings constitute the only viable immediate means of realizing passional series in real-time, every day life. In opposition to the forces of dissipation, alienation and suffocation by which the consensus visciates &

dissolves all human aspiration to solidarity & festal values. Any critique leveled at these existing groups or gatherings therefore is meant as constructive in every sense of the word. The problems lie in 2 areas: philosophical & organizational. Some groups fail to realize the full implications of their reaction against the spectacle, which remains instinctual & hence philosophically unsound. For example, the 1960's delusion that we can use the media for our own ends still persists so that many groups are ruined by the very publicity they thought they needed in order to attain their goals. Once such a group allows itself to become recuperated as part of the spectacle of counterculture dissent, the Pnuch & Judy Show, starts.

An understanding of the dialectics of media should enable the group to devise a strategy of organization & praxis based on evasive or nomadic models of resistance rather than the old New Left shibolles of "confrontation & seizing the media." On levels of tactics of organizational detail and specific projects, this philosophical preparedness should result in more effective means for expression, realization, manifestation of desire on the

level of every day life. Publicity is a bad tactic, while tact & virtual clandestinity are good tactics....

Converts attracted by the media are usual summer soldiers & neurotics & if the wrong politician happens to catch your broadcast you may end up as the next bad example. Crushed beneath the boot of history, for all to see, live at 5. "It's your world, get this close," as the ads for PBS so breathlessly express it. "Let Geraldo rattle your cage." Maybe you haven't heard that slogan out here. To give an example of some organizations: NAMBLA & NORML have both had their membership lists seized by the police, the price of 60's media idealism. NAMBLA & NORML have achieved absolutely nothing of their reformist goals & may have done damage to their own causes through their misunderstanding of the media.

This is not the 1960's when the CIA could still lose control to LSD to a bunch of hippie publicists or television inadvertently contribute to anti-war sentiment by neglecting to censor the body bag count. We've had decades of Republican intelligence late capitalist control conspiracy power mongering since then. Communism is dead & now YOU'RE the enemy. Wake up.

Wise up. Most of the world has sunk deep in media trance - they can't wake up and smell the coffee because the coffee has no smell. It's become pure image. Television is the real world. Real thing now. And if you don't believe it you're outside reality. This is far worse than being a criminal. At least the criminal has some relationship with the consensus. One must pity the radicals whose plans of battle always include open boastings about their intransigent opposition to all establishment values, alerting the enemy as if only 5 seconds on the evening news or the "lifestyle report" could possibly validate their revolutionary ideas and their pathetic personalities. Once and for all, insurrection is not a commodity, my desires are not a commodity. And the media cannot reproduce them, much less satisfy them. One doesn't need to be a media ecologist, recommending a media fast to see that all the big media must be understood, criticized & overcome or at least evaded if we're to get anywhere with our project.

The Insurrection.

I'd like to answer those critics who've accused the TAZ of being an evasion or a postponement or a substitute for the insurrection or even for the revolution. In part

these criticisms come from Latin American comrades who seem to be uneasy about the adventurous aspect of the TAZ and from North Americans who called it "anarchist Club Med." Both critiques are important. The TAZ is not an idea or an ideology but something that is happening: as such, it needs good criticism. On the contrary, I've tried to emphasize over & over again: the TAZ is another way of building the kernel of the new society within the shell of the old (as the Wobblies used to say). And that the TAZ should serve as the matrix for the emergence of a Sorelian model of uprising (Georges Sorel, I highly recommend it).

However, it must be also be repeated that the USA, at any rate, can scarcely be described in 1993 as a pre-revolutionary society. The election of a corrupt, venal pseudo-liberal regime which will smooth over the few rough spots in the spectacle while the Republicans reorganize to continue building the New World Order in 1996 makes the possibility of an American uprising even less likely. Are we to postpone all liberatory action until things get worse again? This would scarcely be logical or creditable. Those of us who feel so irrationally unhappy with the

wonderful world of commodities & neo-puritan reaction cannot justly be denied the chance of local & transient experiments of Utopian realization now, or as soon as possible. In our lifetimes, in our lives. And this struggle is not without relevance to those people elsewhere in the world whom we may consider our natural allies, such as indigenous & tribal groups or revolutionary movements. In this sense the Temporary Autonomous Zone is like a pre-echo of the insurrection. A foretaste of its great liberatory energies and can even be seen as a necessary step toward the revolution which will realize the Utopia.

Thus it should be emphasized that the TAZ has not only a festal, celebratory or material bodily principle in view, but also like yang to yin, an inevitable measure of insurrectionary risk and intention to remake the world. The TAZ cannot be realized solely as a hedonic exercise (any more than the revolution can be realized without dancing, as Emma Goldman put it) which would lead to just charges of Club Med-ism or even crypto-fascism. The TAZ goes beyond the merely hedonic because it wants to expand & multiply until it infects or even becomes the social. And

therefore even though the TAZ may be secret & closed & intensely pleasurable for its members, it must be seen as a struggle which opens itself potentially to all kindred spirits & fellow warriors. Most of the TAZ-like groups, gatherings known to me fail to measure up in one or other of these areas. The political groups have still not mastered the pleasure principle, while the lifestyle groups have still not mastered politics. Political praxis of some sort of course addresss to the risk involved in the TAZ, and therefore increases the need for tact. But it also increases the pleasure. The group jouissance, the group coming, within TAZ - this pleasure results from the very sense of overcoming, first mentioned by Nietzsche, when he spoke of the free spirits' joy at evading the law of the herd. And if this sounds elitist, remember, from the anarchist point of view, the herd consists precisely of those who agree to be herded. After the revolution, no doubt, free spirits would find some other sources for overcoming.

However, until then, the law still exists as an edge to sharpen our lives. But revolution in a certain sense can be said not to exist, since it has not happened within the history it wishes to claim as its field of activity. As for the law,

it exists only as spectacle and as a pattern of spasms of terror. But the TAZ is rooted, however evanescently, within the life we live, within the material and imaginal world which WE have our genuine being, however fragmentary and even tragic. And within the celebratory mode of pleasure enhanced by doubling and redoubling which is the only excuse for society we know. Rather than crime, it might make more sense, or better poetry, to speak to sorcery which has all the connotations of secrecy and power we desire for the emerging TAZ. An air of menace, of invisibility & of the realization of desire. As for illegality, well, a quilting bee is not illegal yet it can be a perfect TAZ. Sooner or later, however, even a quilting bee runs the danger of becoming the object of tourism. It will become a banal imitation of itself, unless it can create, at least for a moment, an economy of life capable of persisting even if only briefly outside the prison of work, consume, die. And that economy by its very nature threatens the spoof world of control. Eventually the bee will be illegal, since it's already considered insane. And so the... quilting bee should begin now to act as if it's already illegal, to embrace a philosophy of illegalism. Today quilt, tomorrow,

perhaps the uprising. Our kind of
bee might be devoted to sex, info
exchange, tax evasion, hashish
farming or even to orgies, credit
scams or gun running. It will still
have the structure of the...
quilting bee. And so the ...
quilting bee should already
anticipate a possibility to run
guns or stage orgies. It should be
prepared to act within the cracks
of the monolith of simulation like
a true gang of Johnsons. Like a
swamp of Callahads. Like
conspirators whose purpose is
really to brath together. Like
criminals for the human race.
Like pirate Utopians for peace.
Like guerillas for harmony.

Boundary Violations

There exist historians of the 18th century who refuse to deal with freemasonry. Their "reasoning" seems to run as follows: -- "The Masons believed in mumbojumbo. I do not believe in mumbojumbo. Therefore the Masons are unimportant -- indeed, virtually nonexistent." The eye in the pyramid stares out of everyone's pocket -- and yet still these historians refuse to admit that masonry has any historical significance. Nowadays, thousands are afflicted with alien encounters, UFO sexual molestations by the 100's; countless others are afflicted with memories of Satanic Abuse. But according to serious science, neither Satan nor UFO's exist. "Therefore" the abduction hysteria has no historical significance and can scarcely be said to exist. Right? No, wrong. Obviously UFO's and UFO-hysteria can be considered as two different things, lacking all ontological co-dependency. That is, UFO's may or may not "exist", but they need not exist (except perhaps as an "archetype") in order to arouse the interest of historians in the hysteria and induce them to attempt to interpret it. The hysteria is real and important, "history in the making" as the newsreels used to squawk -- but its significance remains buried because "science" has mistaken the content of

the hysteria for its inner structure.

Now that Freud has been defenestrated -- along with the Unconscious -- modern psychotherapy can offer an all-purpose etiology for all UFO/Satanic "memories": -- child abuse. In a recent statement on the subject the APA cautioned that the falsity of certain "memories" should not be used as an excuse to ignore the underlying trauma -- or deep inner structure of the "memory" -- which is assumed to be "real" abuse. The idea that repressed sexuality in childhood might cause false memories to arise as defense mechanisms in later life has been junked; the "seduction theory" has been revived, and transformed into the "abuse theory." This theory presupposes the non-existence of "infant and childhood sexuality" (in Freudian terms), and in a broader sense, the non-existence of childhood desire. A tendency arises to regard the child as an erotic blank, incapable of any authentic consensuality. Therefore all points of contiguity between the concept "childhood" and the concept "sexuality" can be subsumed into one new and exhaustive concept: -- "abuse".

The APA offers an interesting paraphrase of the abuse-concept when it mentions "conditions that are associated with boundary violations in [the patient's] past." New professional jargon always provides the semanticist/sociologist a golden

opportunity to unpack hidden political and psychological content from tell-tale words and phrases -- and boundary violation is a veritable trick suitcase -- a richness of embarrassments. We'd need a whole monograph to dump all the items jammed into this little portmanteau. The metaphor of nationalism springs to mind first of all -- boundaries are borders, violations are invasions. The individual is hypostatized not as a sovereign monarch (who might after all mingle and mate with other monarchs) but as a closed-off area surrounded by an abstract grid of map-lines, political separations, exclusions. A border-crossing here is a violation, not an act of trade, or love, or harmonious association. The border is not a skin which can be caressed, it is a barrier. In relation to the inviolate body, all "others" are simply potential wetbacks, illegal immigrants, terrorists traveling on forged documents.

The next obvious metaphor is the immune system. In fact, we can mix metaphors already here, like the Iranian scholar M. Rahnema (quoted by P. Feyerabend in *Farewell to Reason*, p. 298) who "has compared the effects of developmental aid with the effect of the illness Aids." The meddling of Capital in the "third" world has a viral effect -- it breaks down immune systems made up of traditionally-scaled economics and values, and replaces them only with diseased "growth". This is true -- but the use of the metaphor is interesting, giving an air of hysteria and

hopelessness to the argument. After all, there's a cure for Capitalism, but it doesn't involve non-contact among peoples; on the contrary. In a sense, Capitalism creates separation -- a vicious parody, if you like, or grotesque exaggeration of the "natural" immune systems of peoples and cultures. It imposes uniformity but denies contact. The other, the "different", is perceived as viral and threatening. The cure for this "condition" might well be to deny uniformity but to make contact. Ultimately it's not the "immune system" which is at stake, but life itself.

The metaphor of AIDS has been a godsend to crypto-ideologues like the APA, who can make use of its semantic effluvia in terms like "boundary violation" to hint obliquely at the underlying agenda of their therapeutic control paradigm -- i.e., to erase the concept "childhood desire" and replace it with the concept "abuse". If all sex is dirty and causes death, then everyone must be "protected". Children here serve as metaphors for "everyone". To "protect children" is to protect the spiritual values of civilization itself against the threat of desire, the otherness of the body. No doubt the APA remains unconscious of these meanings; but then the APA has jettisoned the unconscious, so it's only appropriate that they should be among the first to fall victim to its surreptitious return. The unconscious --

banished safely to the realms of advertising and disinformation, or so we fondly imagined -- has come back to haunt us with Godzilla-like vengeance -- raped by aliens and satanists! Our boundaries are being invaded, and we are urged to "believe the victim." The APA warns us that "abusers come from all walks of life. There is no uniform 'profile' . . . ," etc. Anyone may be an abuser, just as anyone may have been abused. Abuse is universal. There is only abuse. Of course the APA doesn't believe in UFO's -- but it does believe, quite clearly, that pleasure is evil.

Some extremists in the "Deep" Ecology movements joined certain Xtian bigots in hailing AIDS as God's plan (for overpopulation, not immorality), and went on to suggest building a wall between the US and Mexico to keep out the teeming billions of the angry South. Cut down to a few million healthy hetero's America could restore its "wilderness" -- which the Deep Ecolo's seem to envision as something like the Ayatollah Khomeini's idea of heaven: -- clean, pure, aryan . . . well, maybe more like the SS's ide a of heaven. Ethnic cleansing is yet another panic reaction to the sensation of "boundary violation". Abusers are, above all, aliens -- even though (as the APA palpitatingly insinuates) they might look like you and me! The other is the locus of all forbidden desire which we ourselves must deny and hence project onto the unknown. But of course, that's Freudianism -- or even

Reichianism! We have no desires. We are the victims of abuse. Q.E.D.

j The new catchphrase "multiculturalism" simply hides a form of ethnic cultural cleansing under a semantic mask of liberal pluralism. Multiculturalism is a means of separating one culture from another, for avoiding all possibility of cross-cultural synergy or mutuality or communicativeness. At best multiculturalism provides the Consensus with an excuse to commit a bit of cultural pillaging -- "appropriation" -- to add some sanitized version of otherness to its own dreary uniform boredom -- through tourism , or vapid academic curricula based on "respect and dignity". But the underlying deep structure of multiculturalism is fear of penetration, of infection, of mutation, of inextricable involvement with otherness -- of becoming the other. Again, there's a cure for tourism -- but it doesn't involve everyone staying home and watching TV. It necessitates a simultaneous attack on uniformity, and a breaking down of borders -- it demands both a genuine pluralism and a genuine comradery or solidarity -- it demands conviviality.

Knowledge itself can be seen as a kind of virus. On the psychological level this perception manifested recently as a panic about "computer viruses", and more generally about computer hacking -- boundary violations in

cyberspace, so to speak. The government wants access to all computer cypher-codes in order to control the "Net", the InterNet, which might otherwise spread everywhere, transmitting secrets, even secrets about "abuse" and kiddy porn -- as if the Net were a disease, rather than simply a free exchange of information. America's immune system can't take "too much knowing" (or whatever T.S. Eliot's lame-ass phrase was); America must be "protected" from penetration by foreign chaos cabals of evil hackers (who might look just like you and me) -- b orders must be imposed.

Cyberspace itself however involves a curious form of disembodiment in which each participant becomes a perceptual monad, a concept rather than a physical presence. Cyberspace parodies the gnostic demand for transcendence of the body, which is literally "left behind" like a prison of meat as one enters the pleroma of conceptual space. Ultimately one wishes to "download the consciousness" and achieve purity, cleanliness, immortality. Cyberspace proposes that life is not "in" the body, but in the Spirit. And the spirit is . . . inviolate.

A preview of this paradise can be attained through phone-sex. Video-phones were never "invented" because too many people hate their own faces (i.e., bodies) and don't want others to see them (too much boundary

violation). So, until cybersex is perfected, the uv-cyberspace of telephone-land -- a soundscape of bodiless voices -- must be invested with all the sexuality we cannot share with other bodies, or with "real-time" persons with real personalities and desires. The deep purpose of phone-sex is probably not really the client's masturbation or his credit card number, but the actual ectoplasmic meeting of two ghosts in the "other" world of sheer nothingness -- a poor parodic rendering of the phone company's slogan, "Reach out and touch someone!" -- which is so sadly so finally what we cannot do in cyberspace.

Of course the phone company, and everyone else, knows very well that you cannot reach out and touch someone over a phone. What the slogan really says is: -- Don't reach out and touch someone -- that's a boundary violation! -- pay us instead to mediate between you and the very sense of touch itself. The phone will save you from being touched.

Why then use the slogan, "Reach out and touch"? Ah, there's the secret of desire, Benjamin's "Utopian trace" still embedded in the commodity. We want to reach out and touch, but we also fear the invasion of sensation it would entail; by using the phone we scratch an itch that we secretly know will never heal. We'll never be "satisfied" by all this spookiness -- but at least we shall

be distracted.

Protectionism becomes the one true philosophy of any culture based on mass anxiety about border violation; "safely" and "survival" become its shibboleths and highest values. The "security state" emerges like an abstract constellation figured against a random patterning of stars -- each star representing a threatened job, "dysfunctional" family, "crime-ridden" neighborhood, black hole of boredom Power in the security state emerges out of fear, and depends on fear for its rule. In the society of Safety, all jobs are threatened, all families are dysfunctional, crime is universal, and boredom is god. You may read the signs of this power not only in the texts of the media which define it, but even more clearly in the very landscape which "embodies" it. The PoMo architecture of paranoid urbanism complements the already-picturesque decay of the Modern, the haunted emptiness of industrial ruins and abandoned farms. The aesthetic history of Capitalism maps out a process of retreat, a withdrawal into the psychic fortress, the "drug-free-zone", the Mall, the planned community, the electronic highway. We design for a life without immunity, believing that only Capital can save us from infection. As we watch "History" unfold for us in the media, including the media of cultural and political representation, we become voluntary trance-victims of "terrorism" (the secret inner structure of

"protectionism"); -- in consequence, our political acts (such as architecture) can express no higher vision than fear. The design of private space is based on the easiest antidote to fear, which is boredom.

Ideally, Capital would like to disincorporate entirely and retreat into the cyberspace of electronic wealth (and electronics as wealth) -- of pure speed, pure representation. The infinite "growth" which is Capital's concept of immortality will indeed exceed all limits once economics becomes a matter of digitalized data, or spiritualized knowledge, or "gnosis". Not long ago, the glaciers of Capital covered the whole landscape -- now the "ice" (William Gibson's SciFi slang for "data") is withdrawing from physical space and retreating toward the pole, the mathematical point of abstraction, where a new and spiritualized topology of pure informational space will open up for us, like that "heaven of glass" with which the Gnostic Demiurge attempted to conquer the Angels of the Lord. And we shall be saved -- safe at last -- beyond all corruption -- gone beyond.

Of course, as you know, very few will actually be taken up in this Rapture. Actually, you've probably already been disqualified. As Capital withdraws (like an army fleeing from phantoms, or phantoms fleeing an army), a great deal of social triage will have to be practised. As the No Go Zones are

created and the wounded are left behind, entire new populations of outsiders will be created. Too bad you'll have to miss that last helicopter out of town. "Homelessness" constitutes such a Zone, a kind of anti-architecture, a shell from which all services and utilities have been withdrawn, leaving only a television blaring in a bare and empty room, broadcasting cop-shows and messages of multiculturalism and dignity. That is, the spectacle of Power remains, while the "advantages" of control have been disappeared. Any overt symptoms of autonomy amongst the "victims" can be crushed by the last interface between Power and nothingness: -- Robocop, M. de Landau's "artificial intelligence" or war-automaton, the violence of a society turned against itself.

As the map is infolded, certain privileged zones vanish into the "higher" topology of virtual reality, while certain other spaces are sacrificed to the world of decay, P. K. Dick's *Ubik*, the universal greyness of social and biological melt-down. In such a scenario how can we play any role other than victim? We've already lost, because we've defined ourselves in relation to a situation of loss, and to a space of disappearance. In our fear of all boundary invasions we discover that we ourselves have been reclassified and categorized as viral. This time the Abuser/Terrorist doesn't just look like you and me -- it is you and me. The "homeless are criminal"; those who are not "taken up" have

clearly "sinned".

Of course, it remains entirely within our power to construct an altogether different interpretation of "homelessness" and the No Go Zone. We could use terms like psychic nomadism and even nomadosophy to fortify ourselves for a revaluation of values in which our chances of autonomy would seem to increase in proportion to the actual withdrawal of Power into the Simulo-Spectacle of too-Late Capitalism. We could try to envision situations in which the "value" of homelessness would mutate into the value of "aimless wandering" (as Chuang Tzu expressed it) -- situations in which we could organize everyday life into a de facto field of struggle for "empirical" freedoms, palpable pleasures, festal arrangements.

For the "utopian socialist" Charles Fourier, "God is the enemy of Uniformity." The true blight of Civilization is uniformity -- not union. The individual is realized not as the mass-produced monad of Civilization's alienating social atomism, but as a living star in a constellation of sexualized stars. In fact, the Planansterian orgy is -- for Fourier -- the ultimate emblem of the social, its heraldic device, so to speak, as well as its clearest manifestation. Think of those pornographic 18th century engravings showing dozens and dozens of naked randy aristo's, a bit of flagellation, a bowl of flaming punch,

an aesthetic dance of multiple and ambiguous copulations -- this is Fourier's political program, template for the ideal society -- Harmonial Association. The body has not disappeared, nor has it become the body without organs. But it has become the infinitely penetrable body.

Physicist Nick Herbert likes to point out that for life here in the mesosphere (i.e. between stars and quarks), here where we actually live, juice and slime play an indispensable biospheric morphic role. Juice and slime are the ultimate freeform connective and penetrative tissues of living systems. Life clearly has no interest in the antibiotic hermetism implied in such phrases as "boundary violations". Life uses borders and life violates borders and life constructs media of its own to fill up the extra spaces. The amoeba and the fertilized egg are both sacs of juice and slime -- one grows by splitting itself, the other by being split. Viral-like DNA is "freely exchanged" in gushes of juice and slime -- liquid with paradoxical form -- the very liminality of form itself -- secret secretions -- the viscous slippery in-betweenness of the organic -- the placental wetness of becoming.

The appropriate architectural form for a society based on radical conviviality might best be characterized as grotesque -- that is, in the original sense of the word: -- the cave. Since the Paleolithic, ritual space has always

been envisioned as a hollow earth -- and in Mao Shan Taoism, for example, heaven itself is honeycombed with countless grottos of faeries and Immortals, dripping with cinnabar and sprouting with magic mushrooms. As an aesthetic term grotesque refers to the organic-looking forms of stalactites and stalagmites, to the curving spiralling line of flesh and vegetation, which re-appears underground and is transformed into the crystal of architectural space -- without losing its snaky flowery curviness, or even its matrix-like slick wetness, or even its colors. For the Gothic and the Baroque, "grotesque" serves as a term of aesthetic appreciation; for the Neo-Classical and the proto-Industrial with their mania for straight lines, "grotesque" becomes an insult.

The grotto serves to house the "grotesque body", as Bakhtin calls it.

"In his writings on carnival, Bakhtin maintains that one of its most salient characteristics is its use of imagery involving what he calls the "grotesque body."

Contrary to modern canons, the grotesque body is not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the

body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world. This means that the emphasis is on the apertures or the convexities, or on various ramifications and offshoots: the open mouth, the genital organs, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose. The body discloses its essence as a principle of growth which exceeds its own limits only in copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, the throes of death, eating, drinking, or defecation. This is the ever unfinished, ever creating body, the link in the chain of genetic development, or more correctly speaking, two links shown at the point where they enter into each other."

This describes what has been called Bakhtin's "principle of permeable boundaries."

Folklore is permeated with the carnivalesque/grotesque, with the Rabelaisian/utopian landscape of Rock Candy Mountains, houses of cream and bacon, seas of lemonade -- a geography of excess which found its theorist in Fourier (who actually predicted that the oceans would turn to "something like lemonade" once humanity had converted itself into Passional Series) as well as in Rabelais, who drew more directly on the folkloric sea of story. But folklore itself appears as a phenomenon of permeable boundaries. Stories go everywhere, arriving long before anyone "notices" them, and embed themselves at a level

of culture which -- perhaps more than any other human project -- represents the possibility of unity without uniformity. The Omnivorous Ogre and the Giant's Bride exercise an almost universal "archetypal" appeal because they express certain basics of the body - and the social body. But in each culture the Dragon-slayer and the Ash-girl find new names, costumes, dialects -- even different meanings -- without losing their recognizable selves and invariable fates. The worldwide dispersion of folklore is the most striking accomplishment of the grotesque social body and its principle of permeable boundaries: -- the creation of a carnivalesque narrative which resonates in every land, uniting humanity on the level of shared pleasure even while it expresses the infinitude of archetypal variations. The motifs of folklore act in a sense as memes and bundles of memes, which in turn, have been compared with viruses -- they carry meanings from one society to another. The transportation of a folktale is a movement of meaning - but the meaning is never assigned (by an author[ity] or "tradition") -- the meaning is given and received. Imagination here acquires the function of morphogenetic mutuality, or social "co-creation". This definition serves us better than the term virus with its connotations of disease and terror. But let's be clear: -- If we're forced to choose between "the viral" and the civilization of safety, we'll choose the viral. If we must be crude about it, we'll have to declare in favor of

"boundary violations." We're not just describing the "grotesque social body" -- we're buying it.

Invariably however this rather existentialist commitment involves a caveat: -- that the proposal here is not directed by some sort of "high risk" nihilism or armageddonism. The real Doom-sayers are the proponents of Order and Progress, whose world view reduces them to a hysteresis of rigidity and body-slander. But the proponents of a Feyerabendian "chaos" (an anti-theory) are in fact the true biophiles, the party of celebration. We suggest that the grotesque body is at one and the same time the magical individual, the freespirit, the fully realized self of the fairytale's denouement -- and also the infinitely permeable body, the body of Fourier's "Museum Orgy" -- the body which is desired. This paradox can only be resolved in the festal body; thus it is the festival (with its ZeroWork and "promiscuity") that functions as the crucial insurrectionary praxis or principle of social mutability -- the creation of festal space, the creation of carnival to fill the festal space -- the creation of the temporary autonomous zone within the NoGo Zone -- festival as resistance and as uprising, perhaps in a single form, in a single hour of pleasure -- festival as the very meaning or deep inner structure of our autonomy.

Who will give us an architecture based on the slime mold, the bedouin tent,

the baroque grotto, and the street festival of (say) an Afro-Brazilian spirit-cult? The answer is: -- no one but ourselves. The Supreme Architect is dead; long live architectur e. The Border Artists have already begun to assemble -- the bricoleurs, DPs, smugglers and Poetic Terrorists of the permeable interface -- drawn to the borders, where monoliths rub and creak against each other, whole continents adrift, scraping, shooting sparks, filling the air with ozone and orgone, shifting with millennial dreams, hot, tropically hot, and notoriously unhygienic. This is the region of boundary violations -- border raids -- penetrations -- some pleasurable, others catastrophic -- of cro ss-cultural synergies, ritual brawls, everyday life raised ("sublimed") to a degree of intensity approaching full presence, full embodiment -- and yet still indistinct, romantic as a reverie, an erotic dream of a utopian landscape -- at once a wilderness and a "pleasaunce", a chaos and a ritual space -- the democracy of the mingling of bodily fluids, of divine invasions, of polymorphous sensuality -- sharing the break-down of boundaries -- -- the infinitude of Passion -- the shaping power of desire.

[References: For the text of the APA report, *The Lower East Side Rose* (vol. 2, no. 12 [51], April 1, 1994); Paul Feyerabend's definitive *Farewell to Reason* (Verso, 1987); and J. Wafer's excellent Bakhtinian study of "Spirit Possession in Brazilian Candomblé", *The Taste of Blood* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991).]

The Occult Assault on Institutions

The levels of Immediatist organization:

- 1) The gathering. Could be anything from a party to a riot. Can be planned or unplanned but depends on spontaneity to "really happen".
Examples: anarchist gathering, neo-pagan celebration, Rave, brief urban riot or spontaneous demo. Of course the best gatherings become TAZ's such as some of the Be-Ins of the 60's, the early Rainbow tribe gatherings, or the Stonewall Riot.
- 2) The horizontal potlach. A one-time meeting of a group of friends to exchange gifts. A planned orgy might fall into this category, the gift being sexual pleasure -- or a banquet, the gift being food.
- 3) The Bee. Like a quilting bee, the Immediatist Bee consists of a group of friends meeting regularly to collaborate on a specific project. The Bee might serve as an organizing committee for a gathering or potlach, or as a creative collaborative, an affinity group for direct action, etc. The Bee is like a Passional Series in Fourier's system, a group united by a shared passion which can only be realized by a group.

4) When the Bee acquires a more-or-less permanent membership and a purpose larger than just a single project -- an on-going project, let's say -- it can either become a "club" or Gesellschaft organized non-hierarchically for open activity, or else a "Tong" organized non-hierarchically but clandestinely for secret activity. The Tong is of more immediate interest to us now for tactical reasons, and also because the club operates in danger of "institutionalization" and hence (in Ivan Illich's phrase), "paradoxical counter-productivity". (That is, as the institution approaches rigidity and monopoly it begins to have the opposite effect from its original purpose. Societies founded for "freedom" become authoritarian, etc.) The traditional Tong is also subject to this trajectory, but the Immediatist Tong is built, so to speak, to auto-destruct when no longer capable of serving its purpose.

5) The TAZ can arise out of any or all of the above forms singly, in sequence, or in complex patterning. Altho I've said the TAZ can last as briefly as one night or as long as a couple of years, this is only a rough rule, and probably most examples fall in between. A TAZ is more than any of the first four forms, however, in that while it lasts it fills the horizon of attention of all its participants; it becomes (however briefly) a whole society.

6) Finally, in the uprising, the TAZ

breaks its own borders and flows (or wants to flow) out into the "whole world", the entire immediate time/space available. While the uprising lasts, and has not been terminated by defeat or by changing into "Revolution" (which aspires to permanence), the Insurrection keeps the consciousness of most of its adherents spontaneously tuned in to that elusive other mode of intensity, clarity, attention, individual and group realization, and (to be blunt) that happiness so characteristic of great social upheavals such as the Commune, or 1968. From the existential point of view (and here we invoke Stirner, Nietzsche, and Camus), this happiness is actually the purpose of the uprising.

The goals of the Immediatist organization are:

1) Conviviality: the coming together in physical closeness of the group for the synergistic enhancement of its membership's pleasures.

2) Creation: the collaborative production, direct and unmediated, of necessary beauty, outside all structures of hypermediation, alienation, commodification.¹ We've long since grown weary of quibbling over terms, and if you don't know what we mean by "necessary beauty" you may as well stop reading here. "Art" is only a possible sub-category of this mystery and not necessarily the most

vital.

3) Destruction: We'd go farther than Bakunin, and say that there is no creation without destruction. The very notion of bringing some new beauty into being implies that an old ugliness has been swept away or blown up. Beauty defines itself in part (but precisely) by destroying the ugliness which is not itself. In our version of the Sorelian myth of social violence, we suggest that no Immediatist act is completely authentic and effective without both creation and destruction: the whole Immediatist dialectic is implied in any immediatist "direct action", both the creation-in-destruction and the destruction-in-creation. Hence "poetic terrorism", for example; and hence the real goal or telos of all our organizational forms is:

4) the construction of values. The Maslovian "peak experience" is value-formative on the individual level; the existential factuality of the Bee, Tong, TAZ or uprising permits a "reevaluation of values" to flow from its collective intensity. Another way of putting it: -- the transformation of everyday life.

The link between the organization and the goal is the tactic. In simple terms, what does the Immediatist organization do? Our "strategy" is to optimize conditions for the emergence of the TAZ (or even the Insurrection) -- but what specific actions might be carried out to construct this strategy?

Without tactics, the Immediatist organization might as well disperse at once. "Direct action" should further the "cause" but also must itself hold all the potential for the flowering of the cause within itself. In fact, each act must be in potentia both aimed at the goal and identical with the goal. We cannot use tactics which are limited to mediation; each action must immediately realize the goal, at least in some respect, lest we find ourselves working for abstractions and even simulations of our purpose. And yet the many different tactics and actions should also add up to more than the sum of their parts, and should give birth to the TAZ or the Uprising. Just as ordinary organizations cannot provide the structures we need, so ordinary tactics cannot satisfy our demand for both immediate and insurrectionary "situations".

Conviviality is both a tactic and a goal. Noble in itself, it may serve as both form and content for such organizational modes as the gathering, the potlach, the banquet. But conviviality by itself lacks the transformative energy that generally arises only out of a complex of actions which includes what we've called "destruction" as well as "creation". The ideal Immediatist organization aims at this more complex goal, and gains conviviality as a necessary structure along with it. In other words, gathering together in a group to plan a potential TAZ for an even larger group is already

an Immediatist act involving conviviality -- like the kingdom of heaven, is "added unto" all sincere striving for more exalted breakthroughs. It would seem that the quintessential immediatist act or tactic however will involve simultaneous creation and destruction rather than just conviviality -- hence the Bee and Tong are "higher" organizational forms than the gathering and potlach.

In the Bee the emphasis is on creation - - the quilt, so to speak -- the collaborative art project, the group's act of generosity toward itself and toward reality rather than toward an "audience" of mediated consumers. Of course the Bee can also consider and undertake destructive or "criminal" actions. But when it does so it has perhaps already taken the first step toward becoming a secret society or Immediatist Tong. Hence I think that the Tong is the most complex (or "highest") form of immediatist organization which can be predetermined to a significant degree. The TAZ and the uprising depend finally on many factors for the "organization" process to achieve without "luck". As I've said, we can maximize possibilities for the TAZ or the insurrection but we cannot really "organize" them or make them happen. The Tong however can be clearly defined and organized and can carry out complex actions, both material and symbolic, both creative and destructive. The Tong cannot guarantee the TAZ, much less the

insurrection, but it can surely gratify many or most immediate desires of lesser complexity -- and after all it might succeed in precipitating the grand event of the TAZ, the Commune, the "restoration of the Ming" as Great Festival of Consciousness, the objective correlative of all desire.

Keeping all this in mind let us try to imagine -- and then criticize -- possible tactics for the Immediatist group, and ideally for the well-organized semi-permanent Tong or virtually clandestine action group or affinity web, capable of attempting fully-evolved complex direct actions in an articulated strategy. Each such action must simultaneously damage or destroy some real and or imaginal time/space of "the enemy", even as it simultaneously creates for its perpetrators the strong chance of peak experience or "adventure": each tactic thus in a sense moves to appropriate and detourner the enemy's space, and eventually to occupy and transform it. Each tactic or action is already potentially the whole "Path" of autonomy in itself, just as each invocation of the Real already contains the entirety of the spiritual path (according to the "gnosis" of Ismailism and heterodox sufism).

But wait! First: -- who is "The Enemy"? It's all very well to mutter about conspiracies of the Establishment or the networks of psychic control. We're talking about real-time direct actions

which must be carried out "against" identifiable nodes of real-time power. Discussion of abstract enemies such as "the state" will get us nowhere. I am not oppressed (or alienated) directly by any concrete entity called the state, but by specific groups such as teachers, police, bosses, etc. A "Revolution": may aim at overthrowing a "state". But the Insurrection and all its Immediatist action-groups will have to discover some target which is not an idea, a piece of paper, a "spook" that enchains us with our own bad dreams about power and impotence. We'll play at the war of images, yes. But images arise from or flow through specific nexuses. The spectacle has a structure, and the structure has joints, crossings, patterns, levels. The Spectacle even has an address -- sometimes -- maybe. It's not real in the same way the TAZ is real. But it's real enough for an assault.

Because the Immediatist texts have largely been addressed to "artists" as well as "non-authoritarians" and because Immediatism is not a political movement but a game, even an aesthetic game, it would seem inescapably obvious that we should look for the enemy in the media, especially in those media we find to be directly oppressive. For example for the student the oppressive and alienating medium is "education", and the nexus (the pressure point) must therefore be the school. For the artist the direct source of alienation would

seem to be the complex we usually call the Media, which has usurped the time and the space of art as we wish to practice it -- which has redefined all creative communicativeness as an exchange of commodities or of alienating images -- which has poisoned "discourse". In the past the alienating medium was the church and the insurrection was expressed in the language of heretical spirituality vs. organized religion. Now the Media plays the role of the Church in the circulation of images. As the Church once concocted a false scarcity of sanctity or salvation, so the Media constructs a false scarcity of values, or "meaning". As the Church once tried to impose its monopoly on the spirit, the Media wants to re-make language itself as pure mind, divorced from the body. The media denies meaning to corporeality, to everyday life, just as the Church once defined the body as evil and everyday life as sin. The Media defines itself, or its discourse, as the real universe. We mere consumers live in a skull-world of illusion, with TVs as eyes-sockets through which we peer at the world of the living, the "rich & famous", the real . Just so did religion define the world as illusion and heaven only as real -- real, but so far away. If insurrection once spoke to the Church as heresy, so it must speak now to the Media. Once, the revolting peasants burned churches. But what exactly are the churches of the Media?

It's easy to feel nostalgia for such a

once-magnificent enemy as the Roman Catholic Church. I've even tried to convince myself that today's washed-out sex-hating charade is still worth conspiring against. Infiltrate the church; fill up the tractate shelf with beautiful porno flyers labelled "This is the Face of God"; hide dada/voodoo objects under the pews and behind the altar; send occult manifestos to the Bishop and clergy; leak satanic scares to the idiot press; leave evidence incriminating the Illuminati. An even more satisfying target might be the Mormons, who are completely enthralled by hypermediated CommTech and yet intensely sensitive to "black magic".² Televangelism offers an especially tempting mix of media and bad religion. But when it comes to real power, the churches feel quite empty. The god has abandoned them. The god has his own talk-show now, his own corporate sponsors, his own network. The real target is the Media.

The "magical assault" however still holds promise as a tactic against this new church and "new inquisition" -- precisely because the Media, like the church, does its work thru "magic", the manipulation of images. In fact our biggest problem in assaulting the Media will be to invent a tactic which cannot be recuperated by Babylon and turned to its own power-advantage. A breathless "live-news" report that CBS had been attacked by radical sorcerers would simply become part of the "spectacle of dissidence", the sub-

manichaen drama of the discourse of simulation. The best tactical defense against this co-optation will be the subtle complexity and aesthetic depth of our symbolism, which must contain fractal dimensions untranslatable into the flat image-language of the tube. Even if "they" try to appropriate our imagery, in other words, it will carry an unexpected "viral" subtext which will infect all attempts at recuperation with a nauseating malaise of uncertainty -- a "poetic terror".

One simple idea would be to blow up a TV transmission tower and then take credit for the action in the name of the American Poetry Society (who ought to be blowing up TV towers); but such a purely destructive act lacks the creative aspect of the truly immediatist tactic. Each act of destruction should ideally also be an act of creation. Suppose we could blank TV transmission in one neighborhood and at the same time stage a miraculous festival, liberating and transforming the local mall into a one-night TAZ -- then our action would combine destruction and creation in a truly Immediatist "direct action" of beauty and terror -- Bakuninesque, situationistic, real dada at last. The media might try to distort it and appropriate its power for itself, but even so it could never erase the experience of the liberated neighborhood and its people -- and chances are the Media would after all remain silent, since the whole event

would seem too complex for it to digest and shit out as "news".

Such an immensely complicated action would lie beyond the capabilities of all but the richest and most fully-developed Immediatist Tong. But the principle can be applied at lower levels of complexity. For example, imagine that a group of students wish to protest the stupifying effect of the education-medium by disrupting or shutting down school for some time. Easily done, as many bold high school saboteurs have discovered. Carried out as a purely negative action, however, the gesture can be interpreted by authority as "delinquency" and thus its energy can be recuperated to the benefit of Control. The saboteurs should make a point of simultaneously providing valuable information, beauty, a sense of adventure. At the very least anonymous leaflets about anarchism, home schooling, media critique or something of the sort can be "left at the scene" or distributed to other students, faculty, even press. At best, an alternative to school itself should be suggested, through conviviality, festival, liberated learning, shared creativity.

* (Possible insert here, see *, end of footnotes, end of article)

Getting back to the project of a "magical assault" on the Media, or media-hex:: -- it too should combine in one gesture (more or less) both the

creative and destructive elements of the effective Immediatist artwork or work of poetic terrorism. In this way it will (we hope) prove too complex for the usual recuperation-process. For example, it would be futile to bombard the Media-target with images of horror, bloodshed, serial murder, alien sex abuse, S&M splatter and the like, since the Media itself is the chief purveyor of all such imagery. Guignol demi-satanism fits right into the spectrum of horror-as-control where most broadcasting occurs. You can't compete with the "News" for images of disgust, repulsion, atavistic panic, or gore. The Media (if we can personify it for a moment) might at first be surprised that anyone would bother to mirror this crap back at the Media -- but it would have no occult effect.⁴

Let us imagine (another "thought-experiment!") that an Immediatist cabal of some size and seriousness has somehow gotten hold of the addresses (including fax, phone, E-mail, or whatever) of the executive and creative staff of a TV show we might feel represented a nadir of alienation and psychic poison (say "NYPD Blue"). In "The Malay Black Djinn Curse" I suggested sending packages of dada/voodoo objects to such people, along with warnings that their place of work had been cursed. At that time I was reluctant to recommend curses against individuals. I would now however recommend even worse. Moreover, for these media moghuls I

might well favor the kind of creepy Moslem/heretic jungle reptile imagery I outlined in the "Black Djinn" operation - - since the Media show such fear of "Moslem" terror and such bigotry against Moslems -- but I would now make the whole scenario and imagery far more complex. The TV exec's and writers should be sent objects as exquisite and disturbing as surrealist "boxes", containing beautiful but "illegal" images of sexual pleasure⁵, and intricate spiritual symbolism, evocative images of autonomy and pleasure in self-realization, all very subtle, convoluted, mysterious; these objects must be made with real artistic fervor and the highest inspiration, but each one meant only for one person -- the victim of the hex.

The recipients may well be disturbed by these anonymous "gifts" but will probably neither destroy them nor even discuss them at once. No harm to our scheme if they do. But these objects may well look too fine, too "expensive" to destroy -- and too "dirty" to show to anyone else. Next day, the victims each receive a letter explaining that their receipt of the objects effected the delivery of a curse. The hex will cause them to come to know their true desires, symbolized by the magical objects. They will also now begin to realize they are acting as enemies of the human race by commodifying desire and working as the agents of soul-Control. The magic art-objects will weave into their

dreams and desires, making their jobs now seem not only poisonously boring but also morally destructive. Their desires so magically awakened will ruin them for work in the Media -- unless they turn to subversion and sabotage. At best they can quit. This might save their sanity at the expense of their meaningless "careers". If they remain in Media they will waste away with unsatisfied desire, shame, and guilt. Or else become rebels, and learn to fight against the Eye of Babylon from within the idol's belly. Meanwhile their "show" has been picked for total black magic assault by a group of Shiite terrorist sorcerers, or the Libyan Voodoo Hit squad, or something of the sort. Of course it would be nice to have an inside agent to plant "clues" and to spy out information, but some variation on this scheme can be carried out without active infiltration of the institution. The initial assault might perhaps be followed up with mailings of anti-Media propaganda, and even Immediatist tracts. If possible, of course, some bad luck could be produced for the victims or for their institution. Pranks, you know. But again, this is not necessary, and may even get in the way of our pure experiment in mind-fuck and image-manipulation. Let the bastards produce their own bad luck out of their inner sadness at being such evil assholes, out of their atavistic superstition (without which they wouldn't be such media-wizards), out of their fear of otherness, out of their repressed sexuality. You can be sure

they will -- or at least, that they'll remember the "curse" every time something bad happens to them.

The general principle can be applied to media other than television. A computer company for example might be cursed thru its computers by a talented hacker, altho one would have to avoid SciFi scenarios such as William Gibson's haunted cyberspace -- too baroque. Advertising companies run on pure magic, film-makers, PR firms, art galleries, lawyers, even politicians.⁶ Any oppressor who works through the image is susceptible to the power of the image.

It should be stressed that we are not describing the Revolution here, or revolutionary political action, or even the Uprising. This is merely a new kind of neo-hermetic agit-prop, a proposal for a new kind of "political art", a project for a Tong of rebel artists, an experiment in the game of Immediatism. Others will struggle against oppression in their own fields of expertise, work, discourse, life. As artists we choose to struggle within "art", within the world of the Media, against the alienation which oppresses us most directly. We choose to battle where we live, rather than theorize about oppression elsewhere. I've tried to suggest a strategy and imagine certain tactics which would further it. No other claims are made and no further details should be divulged. The rest is for the Tong.

I'll admit that my own taste might run toward an even more violent approach to Media than proposed here in this text. People talk about "taking over" TV stations, but not one of them has succeeded. It might make more sense to shoot TV sets in electronic shop windows, ludicrous as it seems, than to dream of taking over the studios. But I draw the line at suggesting attentats against News fascists, or even killing Geraldo's dog, for several reasons which still seem sufficient to me. For one, I have taken to heart Nietzsche's remarks on the inferiority and futility of revengism as a political doctrine. Mere reaction is never a sufficient response -- much less a noble path. Moreover, it wouldn't work. It would be seen as an "attack on free speech". The project proposed here includes within its structure the possibility of actually changing something -- even if it's only a few "minds". In other words it has a constructive aspect integrally bound up with a destructive aspect, so that the two cannot be separated. Our dada/voodoo object is both an attack and a seduction in one, and both motives will be thoroughly explained in the accompanying flyers or letters. After all, there's the chance we might convert someone. Of course, we may easily fail here too. All our efforts could end up in the trash, forgotten by minds too well armored even to feel a moment's unease. This is, after all, merely a thought experiment, or an experiment in thought. If you like you could even call it merely a form of

aesthetic criticism directed at the perpetrators rather than the consumers of bad art. The time for real violence is not yet, if only because the production of violence remains the monopoly of the Institutions. There's no point in sticking one's head up and waving a gun if one is facing a star war death beam satellite.⁷ Our task is to enlarge the cracks in the pseudo monolith of social discourse, gradually uncovering bits of empty spectacle, labeling subtle forms of mind-control, charting escape routes, chipping away at crystallizations of image suffocation, banging on pots and pans to wake a few citizens from media trance, using the intimate media⁸ to orchestrate our assaults on Big Media and its Big Lies, learning again how to breathe together, how to live in our bodies, how to resist the image-heroin of "information". Actually what I've called "direct action" here might better be known as indirect action, symbolic, viral, occult and subtle rather than actual, wounding, militant, and open. If we and our natural allies enjoy even a little success, however, the superstructure may eventually lose so much coherence and assurance that its power will start to slip as well. The day may come (who would've thought that one morning in 1989 Communism would evaporate?), the day may come when even too-late Capitalism begins to melt down -- after all it's only outlasted Marxism and fascism because it's even more stupid -- one day the very fabric of the consensus may start

to unravel, along with the economy and the environment. One day the colossus may tremble and teeter, like an old statue of Stalin in some provincial town square. And on that day perhaps a TV station will be blown up and will stay blown up. Until then: -- one, ten, a thousand occult assaults on the institutions.

NOTES:

1I'm not using the term hypermedia here in the sense assigned to it by our comrades at Xexoxial Endarchy, who call hypermedia simply the appropriation of all creative media to single effect (i.e., the next stage beyond "mixed Media") . . . I'm using "hypermediation" to mean representation exacerbated to the point of an immiserating alienation, as in the image of the commodity.

2Mormonism was founded by rogue Freemason occultists, and Mormon leaders remain extremely susceptible to hints of a buried past coming back to haunt them. The Roman Catholic Church might treat a "magical assault" with a millennial shrug of Italiante sophistication -- but Mormons would go for their guns.

3It's important not to get caught, as this neutralizes any power we might have gained or sought to express, and even turns our own power against us. A good Immediatist action should be relatively impeccable, to coin an

oxymoron. Getting expelled from High-school might spoil the effect. Immediatism wants to be a martial art, not a road to martyrdom.

4The trouble with most "transgressive" art is that it transgresses none of the Consensus values -- it merely exaggerates them, or at best exacerbates them. Aesthetic obsession with "Death" makes a perfect commodity (image-without-substance), since the delivery of the meaning of the image would actually put an end to the consumer. To buy death is to buy either failure or fascism -- a brink upon which Bataille himself teetered with sickening lack of balance. I say this despite admiration for Bataille.

5This will prevent the images from ever appearing on TV or in news photos. It will also, coincidentally, make a statement about the relation between "beauty" and "obscenity", and between "art" and "censorship". etc., etc.

6Generally not worth attacking as "politicians", since they are after all mere "paper tigers" -- but perhaps worth attacking as paper tigers.

7All praise to the activists who destroyed such a satellite in California with axes. Unfortunately they were caught, and punished by having their salaries seized to pay off the cost of destruction. Not good.

8The intimate media by definition don't reach the mass unconscious like TV, movies, newspapers. They can still "speak" to the individual. FM radio, cable public access video, small press, CDs and cassette tapes, software and other CommTech can be used as intimate media. Here the Xexoxial Endarchy's idea of "hypermedia" as a tool for insurrection finds its true role. There exist two contending factions within non-authoritarian theory at present: -- the anti-tech primitivists (Fifth Estate, Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed, John Zerzan) and the pro-Tech futurologists (including both left-wing anarcho-syndicalists and right-wing anarcho-libertarians). I find all the arguments vastly informative and inspiring. In TAZ and elsewhere I've attempted to reconcile both positions in my own thinking. I would now suggest that the question proposed by these arguments cannot be answered except in the process-of-becoming of an active praxis (or politique) of desire. Let us imagine that "the Revolution" has taken place. We're free to decide our level of technology, in a spectrum ranging from pre-Ice-Age primitive to post-industrial SciFi. Will the neo-paleolithics force the futurists to give up their tech? Will the space cadets force the Zerzanites to buy VR rigs? Piously, one hopes not. The question will rather be: how much do we desire the hunting/gathering life? or the CyberEvolutionary life? Do we desire computers enough to forge the silicon chips ourselves? Because after the

Revolution no one will accept alienated work. On this, all non-authoritarian tendencies agree. You want a forest full of game? You are responsible for its fecundity and wildness. You want a spaceship? You are responsible for its manufacture, from mining the ore to black smithing the nose cone. By all means form a commune or net-work. By all means demand that my level of tech doesn't interfere with yours. Other than these few ground-rules for avoiding civil war, non-authoritarian society can depend on nothing but desire to shape its techne'. As Fourier would put it, the level of economic complexity of utopian society will be in harmony with the totality of all Passions. I can't predict what exactly might emerge. All I can imagine is what I'm capable of desiring to the point of willing its realization.

Personally (as a matter of taste) I envision something very like bolo'bolo: -- infinite variety with in the basic revolutionary context of positive freedom. By definition there could be no such thing as a NASA-bolo or a Wall Street-bolo, because NASA and Wall Street depend on alienation to exist. I would expect something like low-tech or "appropriate" tech (envisioned by 60's theorists such as Illich) to become the Utopian average, with extreme wings occupying a restored Wild(er)ness on the one hand, and the Moon on the other . . . In any case, it's all science fiction. In my writing I try to envision tactics which can be used now

by any non-authoritarian tendency. Both the "Tong" and the assault on Media should appeal to both the primitivists and the techies. And I discuss the use of both magic and computers because both exist in the world I inhabit, and both will be used in the liberating struggle. Not only the future but even the present holds too much possibility, too many resources, a superabundant-redundant excess of potentials, to be limited by ideology. A theory of technology is too constraining. Immediatism offers instead an aesthetics of technology, and prefers praxis to theory.

*A Note on the Architecture of the TAZ
Obviously the TAZ usually leaves not a wrack behind. Building isn't its top priority. And yet all lived space is architecture -- built space, made space -- and the TAZ by definition has presence in real time and space. The nomad encampment should perhaps serve as the primordial prototype. Tents, trailers, RV's, houseboats. The old travelling tent circus or carnival might offer a model for TAZ architecture. In an urban setting the squat becomes the commonest possible space for our purposes, but in America at any rate the law of property makes the squat almost by definition a poor space. The TAZ wants rich space, not so much rich in articulation (as in the space of control, the official building of capital, religion, state) but rich in expression. The temporary playful spaces proposed by situationist

and urbanist radicals in the 60's had some potential but finally proved too expensive and too planned. The ur-TAZ architecture is that of the Paris Commune. The microneighborhood is closed off by barricades. The identical houses of the poor are then connected by driving passageways thru all connecting walls on the ground floor. These passageways remind us of Fourier's arcades, by which the Planasterians would circulate thru their communal palace, from private to public space and back again. The Commune city-block became a fortified TAZ with public military space on ground level (and roofs) and private space on upper stories, with the enclosed streets as festival-space. This plan influences the architecture of "P.M."s bolo'bolo where the commune-block becomes a more permanent urban utopian commune. As for the TAZ, it is effected by a kind of closure, but one paradoxically shot through with openings. It escapes the asphyxiating enclosure of Capital, and the tragic ugliness of industrial space. Its architecture is smooth, not striated - - hence the tent not the prison, the passageway not the portal, the barricade, not Haussman's boulevards.

The Palimpsest

Nietzsche was so sane it drove him mad -- Charles Fourier was so mad he attained a kind of perfect sanity.

Nietzsche exalted the overhuman as individual ("radical aristocratism") -- his society of freespirits would indeed consist of a "union of self-owning ones". Fourier exalted the Passional Series -- for him the individual failed to exist except in Harmonial Association. Polar opposites, these views -- how is it then that I see them as complementary, mutually illuminative, and both entirely feasible?

One answer would be "dialectics". Even more accurately -- "taoist dialectics", not so much a waltz as a shimmy -- subtle, snaky and fractal. Another answer would be "surrealism" -- like a bicycle made out of hearts and thunderbolts. "Ideology" is NOT an answer -- that zombie jamboree, that triumphalism of spooks on parade. "Theory" cannot be identified with ideology nor even with ideology-in-process, because theory has set itself adrift from all categories -- because theory is nothing if not situation(al)ist -- because theory has not abandoned desire to "History".

So theory drifts like one of Ibn Khaldun's nomads, while ideology remains rigid and stays put to build cities and moral imperatives; theory

may be violent, but ideology is cruel. "Civilization" cannot exist without ideology (the calendar is probably the first ideology) because civilization emerges from the concretization of abstract categories rather than from "natural" or "organic" impulses. Thus paradoxically ideology has no object but itself. Ideology justifies all and any blood-atonement or cannibalism -- it sacrifices the organic precisely in order to attain the inorganic -- the "goal" of History -- which in fact turns out to be . . . ideology. Theory by contrast refuses to abandon desire and thereby attains to genuine objectivity, a movement outside itself, which is organic and "material" and cognitively opposed to civilization's false altruism and alienation. (On this, Fourier and Nietzsche quite agree.)

Finally however I would propose what I call the palimpsestic theory of theory.

A palimpsest is a manuscript that has been re-used by writing over the original writing, often at right angles to it, and sometimes more than once. Frequently it's impossible to say which layer was first inscribed; and in any case any "development" (except in orthography) from layer to layer would be sheer accident. The connections between layers are not sequential in time but juxtapositional in space. Letters of layer B might blot out letters in layer A, or vice versa, or might leave blank areas with no markings at all, but one cannot say that layer A "developed" into layer B (we're not

even sure which came first). And yet the juxtapositions may not be purely "random" or "meaningless". One possible connection might lie in the realm of surrealist bibliomancy, or "synchronicities" (and as the oldtime Cabalists said, the blank spaces between letters may "mean" more than the letters themselves). Even "development" can provide a possible model for reading -- diachronicities can be hypothesized, a "history" can be composed for the manuscript, layers can be dated as in archeological digs. So long as we don't worship "development" we can still use it as one possible structure for our theorizing.

The difference between a manuscript palimpsest and a theory-palimpsest is that the latter remains unfixed. It can be re-written -- re-inscribed -- with each new layer of accretion. And all the layers are transparent, translucent, except where clusters of inscription block the cabalistic light -- (sort of like a stack of animation gels). All the layers are "present" on the surface of the palimpsest -- but their development (including dialectical development) has become "invisible" and perhaps "meaningless".

It would appear impossible to excuse this palimpsestic theory of theory from the charge of a subjective and magpie-like appropriationism -- a bit of critique here, a utopian proposal there -- but our excuse would have to consist of the claim that we're not looking for

delicious ironies, but for bursts of light.
If you're thirsting for PoMo
Deconstruction or smirking
hyperconformism, go back to school,
get a job -- we've got other fish to fry.

Thus we construct an epistemological system -- a way of learning and knowing based on the juxtaposition of theoretical elements rather than their ideological development; in a sense, an a-historical system. We also avoid other forms of linearity, such as logical sequence and logical exclusion. If we admit history into this scheme we can use it as simply one more form of juxtaposition, without fetishizing it as an absolute -- the same holds true for logic, etc.

This ludic approach to theory should not be confused with "moral relativism" (the devaluation of values), from which it is rescued by our "subjective teleology". That is, we (and not "history") are searching for purposes, goals, objects-of-desire (the revaluation of values). The playful nature of this action arises from the deployment of imagination (or the "Creative Imagination" as H. Corbin and the sufis call it) -- and also from the visionary discipline of "paranoia criticism" (S. Dali), the subjective revaluation of aesthetic categories. "The personal is the political."

Juxtaposition, superimposition, and complex patterning thus produce a malleable unity (like the hidden

monism of polytheism, rather than the hidden dualism of monotheism) -- paradoxology as epistemic method -- somewhat akin to 'pataphysics or the "anarcho-dada epistemology" of Feyerabend (Against Method). "Badges? We don't need no stinking badges!"

Here I'd like to "read into the record" so to speak the entire theoretico-historic debate about "Art" as a separate category (a museum of fetishes), and as a source for the reproduction of misery and alienation by the exclusion of non-"artists" from the pleasure of creativity (or "attractive labor", as Fourier called it). I want to mention the situationist proposal for the "suppression and realization of Art", i.e., its revolutionary suppression as a category, and its realization on the level of "everyday life" (that is to say, of life rather than the spectacle). This proposal in turn is based on the assumption that Art finally failed to function as an "avantgarde" (read: "vanguard") somewhere around the time the Surrealists entered the Communist Party -- and simultaneously, the gallery/museum "Artworld" of commodity fetishism -- thus embracing spurious ideology and elitism in one spectacular flop. At this point, the remnants of the avantgarde began a process of attempted withdrawal from ideology and commodification (more or less carrying on from Berlin dada) as Lettrism, Situationism, No-Art, Fluxus, mail art, neoism, etc -- in which the emphasis

shifted from vanguardism to a radical decentering of the creative impulse, away from the galleries and museums and enclaves of boho privilege -- toward the disappearance of "Art" and the re-appearance of the creative in the social. Of course, museums are now buying up these "movements" as well, as if to prove that anything (even "anti-Art") can be commodified. Each of these post-avantgarde movements has at some point fallen prey to confusion or temptation and tried to behave like one of the classic avant-gardes, and each has failed, as surrealism failed, to liberate the artwork from its role as commodity.

Consequently the Artworld has eaten and interiorized art-theory which should -- if taken seriously -- cause it to self-destruct. Galleries thrive (or at least survive) on a nihilism which can only be contained by irony, and which would otherwise corrode and melt down the very walls of the museums. This essay, for example, will be printed in the catalog of a gallery exhibition, thus perpetrating the irony of calling for the suppression and realization of art from within the very structure that perpetuates the alienation of the non-artist and the fetishization of the artwork. Well, fuck irony. One can only hope that each compromise will be the last.

Those who fail to see this situation as a malaise will read no further -- theory has enough to do without explaining its

own nausea -- ad nauseam.

The 20th century fascination with the "primitive" and the "naive" serves as a measure, first, of the exhaustion of "Art History"; and second, of the utopian desire for an art which would not be a separate category but congruent with life. No irony. Art as serious play. Artists have mimicked the forms of the primitive and naive without realizing that the whole production of these forms depends on the structural absence of alienation in the social (as in "tribal art") or individual artist. It is this lack of a split, of doubleness, in the art of Africa, of Java, or the lunatic asylum, that moved such sensitive souls as Klee to envy.

In a society without "malaise" (at least, in tragic proportions) one might expect to see that "the artist is not a special kind of person, but each person is a special kind of artist." Coomaraswamy was thinking of Indonesia when he coined this slogan, and I myself was told in Java that "Everyone must be an artist" -- a kind of mystical version of the suppression-and-realization theory. It's not precisely "specialization" (of labor or of cognition) that causes the nausea, by this reading, but rather separation -- fetishization, alienation. As each person is a special kind of artist, some artists will specialize in the grand integrative powers of creativity -- telling the central stories of the tribe so to speak -- the creation of value and "meaning" -- which can be called the "bardic function". In certain tribes this

function is spread out among many individuals, but is always associated with a concentration of mana. In high "barbarian" cultures (such as the Celts) the function is institutionalized to some degree -- the bard is the "acknowledged legislator" of a society of artists. The Bardic function focalizes and integrates.

If we sought for a symbolic moment at which the "break" occurred and the malaise began to set in, we might choose the passage in Plato's Republic where poets are banned from Utopia as "liars" -- as if the Law itself (as abstract category) were the only possible integrative function, excluding the nomadic imagination as opposition, as anti-Truth, as social chaos. The rational grid is now imposed on the organicity of life -- all good is seen in natura naturata and "being", while all becoming (natura naturans) is now associated with "evil".

In the Renaissance the artist again begins to express "self" at the expense of the integrative function. This moment marks the opening of the "Romantic" trajectory, the artist's disappearance from the Social, the artwork's disappearance from life. The artist as promethean ego, the artwork as "fine" (i.e. useless) -- these measure the gap that has opened between an aesthetic elite, and the masses doomed to sterility and kitsch. And yet there seems to be something noble and courageous about this process, which is

reflected in the bohemian freedom of the artist, and also in the artist's critique of civilization and its cruel dullness -- for the artist will now become the "unacknowledged legislator", the prophet without honor -- the romantic hero, inspired and doomed by one and the same divine insight. The artist yearns once again to fulfill the bardic function, to create aesthetic meaning for and with the tribe. In anger at being refused this role, the artist spirals out of control into ever greater alienation -- then into open rebellion -- and finally into silence. The romantic trajectory is played out.

The Renaissance also witnesses the first modern attempt to recreate the integral ("the order of intimacy") through the combined power of art and magic -- which are in fact seen as naturally related by the deep structure of both -- which is essentially linguistic. The unifying element is "action-at-a-distance", and the synthesis of all its ramifications is the Emblem Book which combines, according to a hieroglyphic science, the image, the word, and sometimes even music (as in M. Maier's *Atlanta Fugiens*), to bring about "moral" (i.e. spiritual) changes in the reader AND in the real world. The goal of the Renaissance Hermeticist/artist was utopian -- as in the paradise scenes of Hieronymous Bosch or the landscapes of the *Hypnerotomachia* -- and in this ambition can be seen the desire to reanimate the bardic function, to give meaning to the experience of

the "tribe", to influence the consensual reality-paradigm, to change the world by art. Ultimate romantic project of Gaugin, Rimbaud, Wagner, Artaud, the Surrealists -- the artist as wizard-prophet of revolutionary desire.

For all its failures, and all its sleazy accommodations with the Artworld of commodity capitalism, this magical tradition is our heritage, and in some crude way we still "believe" in it. Even to believe in the "suppression" of art is still to believe that art is important and effectual, at least by its disappearance. Moreover, the "freedom" of the artist would seem well worth protecting -- and sharing -- if only it were freedom for something and not just freedom from something. Despite the poverty, loneliness, and feelings of futility, we're only out here on the margin by and large because we like it, and because risk is good for our art. In these matters we are still Romantics.

Nevertheless we are forced to admit that this magical-revolutionary project has failed -- once too often. Commodity fetishism is a negative feedback loop -- and as for the the hieroglyphic science, it has fallen into the hands of advertisers, spin-doctors, the "creative managers" of the post-spectacular "discourse" (or "simulacrum" as Baudrillard calls it), the real but hidden legislators of our all-too-virtual reality. The proposal for the suppression and realization of art is the culminating statement of the romantic-hermetic

tradition of opposition, the last possible "development" in a dialectical progression that leads to our present impasse or blockage. If we look at "Art History" from this diachronic perspective we seem to find ourselves in a cul-de-sac, caught in an impossible paradox whereby the "purpose" of art must be to destroy art, so that "everyone" may be an artist. For us -- as artists -- this constitutes a dead end. What can we do? History has betrayed us.

What happens however if we abandon the diachronic perspective? What if we superimpose all the "stages of development" in a palimpsest which can only be read as a synchronicity? What if we treat them as theories, all visible on a single surface, potentially related not in time but in space?

Again, we should insist that our palimpsestic survey is not to be confused with some ironic PoMo vacation cruise through a watery graveyard of aesthetic categories. We're looking for values -- or for the imaginal power to create values (by knowing our "true desires", as the occultists say), and our search is not cool and detached but passionate by definition -- not frivolous but serious -- not sober but playful -- for, to the bards, nothing is as serious as our intoxication with the ludic act of creativity.

So we take the whole development

discussed above and accordion it into a "manuscript" where every theory is written over every other theory. Like augurs studying clouds or the eleven kinds of lightning, like wizards with an obsidian mirror for the scrying of angelic alphabets, we now study "Art History" as if it had no history, as if all possibilities were eternally present and infinitely fluid. Seeming contradictions merely hide occult harmonies, "correspondences" -- all and any juxtapositions may prove fortuitous. "Palimpsestomancy."

Assuming that the theories we discussed diachronically are now arranged synchronically upon the page of our palimpsest, let's try a trial reading and look for unexpected but revealing coincidences. Fourier's theory of attractive labor, for example, could be superimposed on Hesiod's cosmology, wherein the first three principles of becoming are Chaos, Eros, and Earth. Now desire can be seen as the force which draws the pure spontaneity of Imagination into the forms of Nature, or the "material bodily principle" -- desire as organizing principle of creativity -- desire as the only possible source of the social.

"Action at a distance", the mainstay of the Hermetic paradigm, was supposed to be banished from the mechanistic philosophy which prevailed and conquered science in the 17th century; but it kept sneaking back into the discourse, first as an "explanation" for gravity ("attraction"), and now in a

hundred places -- the four forces in quantum physics, the influence of the "strange attractor" on disorganized matter, etc. Although magic failed to "work" for the Renaissance Hermeticists in the same measurable and predictable way that the experimental method, for instance, worked for Bacon and Newton, nevertheless the hieroglyphic science can be revived as an epistemological tool in our study of certain non-quantifiable (or ambiguous) phenomena such as language and other semantic codes which -- quite literally -- influence us "at a distance". The Hermeticists believed in ray-like emanations which could transfer the "moral power" of an image (its influence boosted by the appropriate colors, smells, sounds, words, astral fluids, etc.) to human consciousness "at a distance." Sight, or reflection, and sound, or inflection, create polyvalent memes, bits and clusters of "meaning", in the observer/listener's "soul". By a process of "mutability" wherein everything symbolizes both itself and its opposite simultaneously, the hieroglyphic scientist weaves spells in a dark forest of ambiguity which is precisely the realm of the artist -- and in fact alchemists were known as "artists" of the "spagyric Art". Just as the alchemist changes the world (of metals), so does the maker of an Emblembook or a public monument (such as an obelisk) change the world of cognition and of "moral" interpretation by the deployment of images and symbols. Leaving aside the question of "emanations", we arrive at

an occult theory of art which was passed on (via Blake, for instance) to the Romantics and to us.

Now, as Italo Calvino points out somewhere, all art is "political" -- invariably and inescapably -- since every artwork reflects the artist's assumptions about the "proper sort" of cognition, the "proper" relation of individual consciousness to group consciousness (aesthetic theory), etc., etc. In a sense all art is Utopian to the extent that it makes a statement (however vague) about the way things should be. The artist however may refuse to admit or even become conscious of this "political" dimension -- in which case, certain distortions may occur. Those artists who have abandoned the hermetic/romantic idea of "moral influence" frequently reveal their political unconscious to the savvy semiotician or dialectician. "Pure entertainment" turns out to be freighted with an ectoplasm of sheer reaction, and "pure art" is frequently even worse. By contrast, this artistic unconscious can inadvertently reveal what W. Benjamin called the "Utopian trace" -- a sort of Gnostic fragment of desire embedded in every human production, no matter how reproduced it may be. Advertising, for example, makes use of the Utopian trace to sell the image of a reproduction which promises (on the unconscious level) to change one's world, to make one's life better. Of course the commodity cannot deliver this change -- otherwise your

desire would be satisfied and you would stop spending money on cheap imitations of desire. Tantalus can smell the meat and see the wine, but never taste -- he is the perfect "consumer" therefore, who pays (eternally) for pure image. In this sense advertising is the most Hermetic of all modern arts.

The Utopian Trace can also be analyzed in another "damned" art-form, pornography -- which acts directly to bring unconsciousness to conscious cognition in the (measurable!) form of erotic arousal. It is Desire which draws out ("educates") this appearance of the utopian trace (however distorted) and organizes chaos toward action around a vision of "the way things ought to be". Masturbation is an epiphenomenon -- the real effect of pornography is to inspire seduction (as in Dante, where the lovers sin after reading Arthurian romances in the garden together). Right-wing bigots are correct when they accuse erotic arts of influencing and even changing the world, and leftish liberals are wrong when they imply that porn should be allowed because it's "harmless" -- because it's "only" art. Pornography is agitprop for the body politic, and inasmuch as it is "perverse" it agitates and propagandizes for a revolutionary liberation of desire -- which explains exactly why certain kinds of porn are outlawed and censored in every "democracy" of the world today. Since most commercial porn is produced on an unconscious and reactionary level, its proposed "revolution" is ambiguous

indeed; but there's no theoretical reason why erotica cannot be used according to the hieroglyphic science for directly utopian ends.

This brings us to the question of a utopian poetics. Nietzsche and Fourier would have agreed that art is not merely the reflection of reality but rather a new reality that seeks to impose itself in the world of thought and action by "occult" means, through "dionysan" powers and hermetic "correspondences" (hence their shared fascination with opera as the "complete artwork" and the ideal means of propagating their "philosophy"). Our "crazy" synthesis of Nietzsche and Fourier will reveal them both as neighbors of the Renaissance Hermeticists, who also pursued utopian political programs through action on the level of aesthetic perception, and through the very pleasure of creativity which in fact constitutes both the means and the goal of the utopian project. In Fourier, however, we find the truly divine notion that this aesthetic realization will manifest as collective action -- that society will re-constitute itself as a work of art. Each individual, with powers now augmented by Harmonial Association with the appropriate Passional Series, will become "a special kind of artist". Having realized their "true desires", all their desire becomes productive in a world given over to veritable orgies of creativity, eroticism, "gastrosophy", and aesthetic brilliance. Just as shamanism is "democratized" in certain

tribes where everyone is a visionary, Fourier elevates every member of the Phalanx to the status of a "great artist". Naturally some will be greater (i.e. more passionate) than others, but none will be excluded -- the "utopian minimum" guarantees creative power. Nietzsche speaks of "the will to Power as Art"; Fourier made it the principle of an anarchist utopia in which the sole organizing force is desire.

There appear, on the face of our palimpsest, two apparently contradictory images: -- first, that of the artist as "bard", and as romantic rebel in a world that has denied the bardic function; and second, that of the suppression-and-realization-of-art, in which "artist" disappears as a privileged category in order to reappear (like Joyce's "Here Comes Everybody") in a shamanic democratization of Art.

Would it be possible to intuit -- based on our anti-diachronic palimpsestic theorizing -- that this paradox may be merely apparent, a false dichotomy? Or that, even if it's a real paradox, we can construct a paradoxicalism capable of reconciling opposites on a "higher level" (coincidentia oppositorum)? Or that, like Alice, we can entertain several (or even six) conflicting contradictory notions "before breakfast"? Can we "save" ART from the imputation of failure, and the artist from the stain of elitism and vanguardism, while at the same time upholding the "revolution of everyday life" and the utopia of desire?

In order to attempt an answer to these question I'd prefer to drop the problem or "plight" of Art and the artist, and concentrate instead on the plight of the artwork. After all, what can we say about the predicament of the artist, who (despite all "tragedy") is still the only free spirit in the world of commodities, the only one who knows how to pay attention, the only one blessed with obsession, and the only practitioner of attractive labor? [Note: of course I'm defining "artist" here as anyone freespirted and obsessive and able to pay attention, whether or not they are involved in "the arts" or belong to the boho counterculture, etc., etc.] Compared with this good fortune, the real tragedy seems to involve not the artist but the work of art. The artwork is alienated as commodity both from the producer and from the consumer. Either it is removed from "everyday life" as a unique fetish, or else it is robbed of its "aura" through reproduction. In the economy of simulacra, the image is cut loose and floats free of all referents -- hence all images can be "recuperated", even (or especially) the most "transgressive" or subversive images, as commodities in themselves, items with price but no value. The gallery is the terminal and the museum is the terminus of this process of alienation. The museum represents the final fixation of price and price as the meaning of the image. Forget the question of "saving" the artist; is it possible to "save" the work of art?

In order to "justify" and "redeem" the artwork it would be necessary to remove it from the economy of the commodity. The only other economy capable of sustaining the artwork would be the "economy of the gift", of reciprocity. This concept was systematized by the anthropologist M. Mauss in his masterpiece *The Gift*, and exercised great influence on thinkers diverse as Bataille and Levi Strauss. It was exemplified in the potlach ceremonies of the Northwest coastal Amer-indian societies, but it can be hypothesized as a universal. Before the emergence of "money" and "contract", all human society is based on the Gift, and the return of the Gift. Before the conceptualization of "surplus" and "scarcity" there prevails an apprehension of the "excessive" generosity of nature and society, which must be expended (or "expressed" as Nietzsche put it) in cultural production, aesthetic exchange, or -- especially -- in the festival.

In the context of the Gift economy, the festival is the focussing power of the social -- the nexus of exchange -- actually a kind of "government". As the Gift economy gives way to a money economy however, the festival begins to take on a "dark" aspect. It becomes the periodic saturnalia or turning-upside-down of the social order, a permitted burst of excess which will purge the people of their natural resentment against alienation and hierarchy, a disorder which

paradoxically restores order.

But as the money economy gives way to the commodity economy, the festival undergoes yet another shift of meaning. By preserving the Gift within the total matrix of a system which is hostile to the Gift, the festival in its saturnalian mode has become a genuine focus of opposition to the economic consensus. This opposition remains largely unconscious, and the spectacle can recuperate most of its energies (think of Christmas!) -- but the spontaneous festival remains a real source of utopian energy nevertheless. The "Be-In", the gathering, and the Rave, have all appeared to modern authority as dangerous nodes of total disorder precisely because they attempt to remove the energy of the Gift from the economy of the commodity. The post-surrealist post-Situationist art movements that have carried on the project of suppression-and-realization have all developed festal theories. Jacques Attali's *Noise*, which explores suppression-and- realization in terms of music (he calls it "the stage of composition") is based on an analysis of a painting by Breughel of a festival. Indeed, the festival is an inescapable component of any theory which offers to restore the Gift to the center of the creative project.

Is the work of art "saved"? It would be better to ask if the work of art possesses a soteriological dimension or function. Is the artwork salvific? Can it redeem me? And how can it do so

unless it is liberated from alienation in a festal economy? Art was born free and everywhere finds itself in chains -- obviously the "revolutionary task" of the artist consists not so much in making art but in liberating the artwork. In fact, it appears that if we desire to work for suppression-and-realization we must (paradoxically?) revive that most dangerously romantic view of the artist as rebel, as creator-destroyer -- as occultist revolutionary. If creative life (including value-creation) can be called "freedom", then the artist is a prophet (vates or bard/seer) of this freedom -- just as Blake believed. By means of the hieroglyphic science the artist embeds, codes, englobes, educts, expresses, beckons. The work of art as seduction asks to be superceded and seduced in turn by the brilliance of each and all -- it demands reciprocity . Not life as ART (which would be an intolerable form of dandyism) -- but art as Life.

In the end, can anything be done about all this within the context of the gallery, the museum, the economy of the commodity? Is there a way to avoid or subvert the process of recuperation? Possibly. First, because the gallery-world has been so devalued (largely because it grows ever more boring) and hence becomes desperate to try anything. Second, because the artwork, despite everything, retains a touch of magic.

If we artists are forced (by penury for

example) to work within the gallery-world, we can still ask ourselves how best to "advance the struggle" and make real spiritual agitprop for the cause of creative chaos. NOT through ever-more-arcane elitism, obviously. NOT by crude Socialist Realism and overtly "political" art. NOT by ever-more-morbid deathkult "transgression" and hip armageddonism. NOT by ironic hyperconformity.

There may exist many possible strategies for "boring from within" the Artworld -- but I can think of only one that doesn't involve crude physical destruction. Simply this: -- Every artwork can be made in the most transparent possible way according to the (ever-unfolding) principles of utopian poetics and the hieroglyphic science. Each artwork would be a consciously-devised "seduction machine" or magical engine meant to awaken true desires, anger at the repression of those desires, belief in the non-impossibility of those desires. Some artworks would consist of settings for the realization of desire, others would evoke and articulate the object/subject of desire, others would shroud everything in mystery, still others would render themselves completely translucent. The artwork should shift attention away from itself as the privileged icon or fetish or desirable thing, and instead focus attention on liberatory energies. The works of certain "earth-artists" for example, which transmute landscape (with the simplest and most

painstaking gestures) into utopian settings or erotic dreamscapes; the works of certain "installation-artists" whose micro-realities concern memory, desire, play, all the revery-energies of Bachelard's "imagination" and his "psychoanalysis of space" -- art of this sort can be shown or documented within the Artworld context, in galleries or museums, even though its purpose and effect would be to dissolve those structures and "leak out" into everyday life, where it would leave a trace of the marvelous, and a thirst for more.

Similar strategies could be evolved for other artforms -- printed books, music, or even the festival as collective creation. In every case I believe that the most effective work can be done outside the institutions of aesthetic discourse, and even as attacks on those institutions. However, we should take advantage of our access to Artworld and its privileges to use it as a launching pad for an assault on its own exclusivity, its professionalist elitism, its irrelevance, its ennui -- and its power.

The specific tactics of this insurrectionary strategy remain in the hands of individual artists and the vertu or power of their creations. The point is an insane generosity, a donation larger than any commodity-transaction can recuperate, a free gift over and beyond all computation. The artwork becomes a virus of excess, an instigation to utopian desire -- a soteriological

device. Nothing makes better sense than the attempts of the ArtWorld to demolish itself. The purpose however is not to destroy the space of creativity but to open it up -- not to depopulate it but to invite "everyone" inside. We don't want to leave; we want (finally) to arrive. To declare the Jubilee.

Manifesto of the BLACK THORN LEAGUE

1. According to orally-transmitted teachings of Noble Drew Ali, founder & Prophet of the Moorish Science Temple of America: -- Ireland was once part of the Moorish Empire; that is, the celts were Moslems, & there were black moors from N. Africa also present in Ireland. But the moors were expelled by militant Christianity -- this event is disguised in the legend of St. Patrick's expelling the snakes - for which reason the MST celebrates St. Patrick's Day, in a mood of irony perhaps, in expectation of an eventual Return.
2. In Noble Drew Ali's system, celts are considered an "Asiatic race", & thus potential converts to Moorish Science. We consider NDA's theories to be racial but not racist, because (again according to oral tradition) they were based (at least in part) on spiritual affinity. "Europeans" who wished to Join the MST (including some of the later founders of the Moorish Orthodox Church) were declared to be really celts or "Persians" -- (which may have something to do with the oft-remarked similarity of Eiran and Iran).

3. NDA's hidden history of Ireland may be taken as an esoteric metaphor -but it is supported in some surprising ways by archaeology & even "official" history. In the first place, the celts are an Asiatic race, or at least the most recent arrivals in the west from the mysterious "Hyperborean" heartland of the Aryans -- last of those nomadic migrations which settled India, Persia & Greece.

4. Second: What is one to make of those early Celtic crosses inscribed with the bismillah ("In the Name of God", opening words of the Koran) in kufic Arabic, found in Ireland? The Celtic Church, before its destruction by the Roman hierarchy, maintained a close connection with the desert hermit-monks of Egypt. Is it possible this connection persisted past the 7th/8th centuries, & that the role of the monks was taken up by Moslems? by Sufis? in contact with a still-surviving underground Celtic Church, now become completely heretical, & willing to syncretize Islamic esotericism with its own Nature-oriented & poetic Faith?

5. Such a syncretism was certainly performed centuries later by the Templars & the Assassins (Nizari Ismailis). When the Temple was suppressed by Rome & its leaders

burned at the stake, Ireland provided refuge for many incognito Templars. According to The Temple & The Lodge, these Templars later reorganized as a rogue Irish branch of Freemasonry, which (in the early 18th century) would resist amalgamation with the London Grand Lodge. The Islamic connection with masonry is quite clear, both in the Templar & the Rosicrucian traditions, but Irish masonry may have inherited an even earlier Islamic link -- memorialized in those enigmatic crosses!

6. It's interesting to note that Noble Drew Ali's Masonic initiations may not have been limited to Prince Hall or black Shriner transmissions, but may also have included some hidden lines connected to Irish masonry, & dating back to Revolutionary days in American history. It is known that many common soldiers in the British Colonial Army were masons affiliated with the Irish rather than the London Grand Lodge. This "class" difference - was reflected in the American Revolutionary Army, whose officers were "official" masons but whose private ranks tended to be "Irish".
7. Historians sometimes forget that in the 18th century, in America,

the Irish were generally considered "no better than Negroes". In 1741 on St. Patrick's Day in New York a riot broke out, involving a conspiracy which included Irish, African, & Native American men & women -- naturally "of the meanest sort." Some Irish conspirators were overheard to swear they'd kill as many "white people" as possible. The uprising failed & the plotters were executed. As the bodies of two hanged in the open air decayed in an Iron gibbet, "observers noticed a gruesome, yet instructive, transformation. The corpse of an Irishman turned black & his hair curly while the corpse of Caesar the African, bleached white. It was accounted a 'wondrous phenomenon'" (Linebaugh & Rediker, "The Many-Headed Hydra").

8. Clearly the Celt & African were linked not only in the gaze of the oppressor class, but also in their own world-view -- as comrades, as somehow the same -- in a solidarity which extended to Indians & to other "Europeans" who fell beneath the level of the "respectable poor" into the category of slaves & outcasts. Racist feelings did not divide the 18th century poor & marginalized - - as would become the case under later Capitalism. Rather the marginalized of all races constituted an underclass &

moreover, an underclass with some awareness of itself, hence with a certain power (the power of the "strong victim"). This consciousness might well have been developed in part by Irish-black "masonry" of some sort. And Noble Drew Ali might have known of this tradition, which he masked (or perhaps unveiled) in his parable of the snakes - & celebration of March 17th.

9. In another interpretation of St. Patrick's anti-reptilism, the "snakes" he banished were in fact "druids", i.e. Celtic pagans. The snake may have been an emblem of the Old Faith, as it is for many forms of paganism, including African (Damballah) & Indian (the Nagas) -- & even for the Ophite Christianity of Egypt (Christ himself depicted as a crucified snake).

10. Celtic pagan lore was embedded in the Romance traditions especially in the Arthurian material -- & here once again. we find ourselves in the world of the Arabo-Celtic crosses. For the romances are permeated with "Islamic" consciousness. In Malory's Morte dArthur & Eschenbach's Parzifal many Saracen (i.e. Moslem/Moorish) knights are depicted not as enemies but allies of the Celts -- & in the latter book the entire

story is attributed to Moorish sources (which are now lost). Saracens, Christians, & crypto-pagans are united in a mystical cult of chivalry which transcends outward religious forms, & is emblemized not only in pagan symbols like the Grail & the Questing Beast, but even in such cultural borrowings as the lute (al-'ud in Arabic), or indeed the cult of romantic/chivalric love, transmitted from Islam to the west by Sufis in Spain.

11. Ireland's contacts with Spain certainly extend back into the Islamic period, & the so-called "Black Irish" may have as many Moorish as castillian genes. Medieval Irish monks probably absorbed Sufism & Islamic philosophy along with the art of the illuminated manuscript -- witness the extraordinary stylistic resonance between the Book of Eells & the Kufic Korans of Omayyad Spain. If St. Francis could visit N. Africa & come back to Italy wearing a Sufi's patched cloak, so the Irish might easily borrow from Egypt & al-Andalus.
12. All speculation aside, the Moorish Orthodox Church entertains its own esoteric interpretation of NDA's teachings on these matters. We heartily endorse his "elective affinity" theory of affiliation with a greater spiritual Celto-Asiatic

"race". DNA counts for something, but soul for a great deal more. "Every man & woman their own vine & fig tree" (one of NDA's slogans) is not a matter of fate but of character, not of birth but of choice.

13. In our historical/imaginative exegesis & unfolding of NDA's parable, we have uncovered a complex of heretical Islamic & Moorish cultural strands linking Celtic neo-paganism, esoteric Christianity, & the Arthurian cycle, thru Sufism & masonry, to the perennial libertarian struggle of the marginalized & oppressed peoples of the "Atlantic" world.
14. We propose to embody this poetic complex in a popular chivalric order, devoted symbolically to the cause of "bringing the snakes back to Ireland" - that is, of uniting all these mystical strands into one patterned weave, which will restore the power of its synergistic or syncretistic power to the hearts of those who respond to the particular "taste" of its mix. We have borrowed this slogan from contemporary neo-pagans in order to symbolize the special mission our order will undertake toward Celtic-Moorish friendship. The BLACK THORN LEAGUE will be open to all, regardless of whether they are MOC members or not, providing

only that they support this particular goal.

15. "Black" in our title signifies not only the black banners of the moors but also the black flag of anarchy. "Blackthorn", because the tree symbolizes druid Irelands & is used to make cudgels. "League", in honor of the various Irish rebel groups which have organized as such. Other organizational models include such Masonic-revolutionary groups as the Carbonari, or Proudhon's anarchist "Holy Vehm", or Bakunin's Revolutionary Brotherhood. We also emulate certain anarcho-Taoist Chinese tongs (such as the Chaos Society) ~ ~ & hope to evolve the kind of informal mutual aid webworks they developed.

16. The League will bestow the Order of the Black Thorn as title & honor, & will hold an annual conclave & banquet on St. Patrick's Day in memory both of Noble Drew Ali's vision, & of those rioters of 1741 who conspired in low taverns to overthrow the State.

Bring The Snakes Back To Ireland!

Primitives and Extropians

The anarcho-primitivists have backed themselves into a situation where they can never be satisfied without the total dissolution of the totality. Luddism as a tactic has much to recommend it: -- on the local level, machine-smashing can actually accomplish something. Even one or two nuclear reactors have been shut down by "sabotage" (legal, political, or actual) -- and one can always gain at least a moment of satisfaction with a wooden shoe or a monkey wrench. On a "global" level however -- the "strategic" level -- the totality of the neo-primitive critique of the totality itself begins to take on a disturbing air of -- totalitarianism. This can be seen most clearly in certain strains of "deep" ecology and "ecofascism", but it remains an inherent problem even in the most "left-wing" strains of primitivism. The puritan impulse -- purification, the realization of purity -- imparts a certain rigidity and aggression to all possible actions on behalf of such a total critique. This must seem especially the case when the critique extends beyond, say, urban civilization (or "History") into the "prehistoric" realm of art, music, techné, language, and symbolic mediation itself. Short of some hypothetically "natural" evolution (or devolution) of the very species, how precisely is such purity to be

attained? Primitivism in effect has proposed an absolute category -- the "primitive" itself -- which assumes the function of a metaphysical principle. Of course the primitive in its "true essence" remains beyond definition (beyond symbolic mediation), but until mediation itself is abolished, the primitive must assume (in relation to all other possible totalities) the philosophical trappings of an imperative, and even of "doctrine". This brings us perilously close to the notorious violence of the sacred. The deepest of this violence is directed at the self, since the reification of the eschaton (either in the future or the past) precisely devalues the present, the "place" where we are actually living our everyday lives. But invariably the violence must be directed outwardly as well. Fine, you say: -- let the shit come down. Yet the successful resolution of the violence (i.e., the total abolition of symbolic mediation) can logically be defined only by a presumptive vanguard of the "pure". The principle of hierarchy has thus reappeared -- but hierarchy contradicts the initial premises of primitivism. This, I believe, can be called a tragic contradiction. On the level of the individual and of everyday life such a contradiction can only manifest as ineffectuality and bitterness.

By contrast, the anarcho-Extropian or futurians are also forced to reify the eschaton -- since the present is

obviously not the utopia of techné they envision -- by placing perfection in a future where symbolic mediation has abolished hierarchy, rather than in a past where such mediation has not yet appeared (the ideal Paleolithic of the primitivists). Obviously for the Extropians, mediation per se cannot be defined as "impurity" or as the invariable source of separation, alienation, and hierarchy.

Nevertheless, it remains obvious that such separation does in fact occur, that it amounts to immiseration, that it is bound up in some way with techné and mediation, that not all technology is "liberating" according to any anarchist definition of the term, and that some of it is downright oppressive. The Extropian therefore lacks and needs a critique of technology, and of the incredibly complex relation between the social and the technical. No one with any intelligence can any longer accept the notion of technology as "morally neutral", with control of the means of production the only criteria for valuation. The social and the technological are somehow bound in a complex relation of co-creation (or "co-evolution"), such that techné shapes cognition even as cognition shapes techné. If the extropian vision of the future is viable it cannot depend on "machine evolution" alone to achieve realization. But unless anarcho-futurism can develop a critique of technology, it is relegated precisely to this passive role. Invariably a dialectic

of "good" machines and "evil" machines is developed, or rather of good and evil modes of social-technological relations. This rather manichaeian world view however fails to eliminate or even plaster over the contradictions which arise from such premises, and which revolve around the "bad-fit" between human values and machine "logic", human autonomy and machine autonomy. As M. de Landa points out, the autonomous machine derives from and defines the war machine (Taylor developed "Taylorism" while working in an arsenal). Extropianism has marked "cyberspace" as the area of struggle for "good" human/machine relations (e.g. the InterNet), and this struggle has taken on the aspect of a resistance against the "militarization" of cyberspace, its hierarchization as an "Information Highway" under centralized management. But what if cyberspace itself is by definition a mode of separation and a manifestation of "machine logic"? What if the disembodiment inherent in any appearance within cyberspace amounts to an alienation from precisely that sphere of everyday life which extropianism hopes to transform and purge of its miseries? If this were so, the results might very well resemble the dystopian situations envisioned by P. K. Dick and W. Gibson; -- turned inward, this violent sense of contradiction would evoke the kind of futility and melancholia these writers depict. Directed outward, the

violence would conjure up other SciFi models such as those of R. Heinlein or F. Herbert, which equate "freedom" with the culture of a technological elite.

Now, when I talk about "the return of the Paleolithic" I find myself leaning toward the primitivist position -- and have consequently been criticized by extropians for luddoid reaction, nostalgia, and technophobia. However, when I talk about (say) the potential use of the InterNet in organizing a TAZ, I begin to tilt a little toward my old SciFi enthusiasms and sound a bit like an extropian -- and have consequently been criticized by primitivists for being "soft on technology" (like some sort of melting watch by Dali), seduced by techno-optimism, by the illusion that separation can overcome separation. Both these criticisms are correct to some degree, inasmuch as my inconsistency results from an attempt to think about techné and society without any recourse to an inviolate system of absolute categories. On the one hand, most of my thinking about technology was shaped by the radical ad-hoc-ism and briocolage theory of the 60's and 70's, the "appropriate tech" movement, which accepts the de facto link between techné and human society, but looks for appropriate ways to shape situations toward low-cost/maximal-pleasure tendencies. In fiction a model is attempted by B. Sterling in his short-story "Green Days

in Brunei", a brilliant imagining of low-tech non-authoritarian solutions to "3rd world" over-population and poverty. In "real" life a smaller but most exquisite model is provided by the New Alchemy Institute, which turns polluted sinkholes into arcadian springs with low green technologies in cheap installations which are aesthetically beautiful. On the other hand, I prefer the burden of inconsistency (even "foolish" inconsistency) to the burden of the Absolute.

Only an impure theory can do justice to the impunity of the present -- which, as everyone knows, is only a psychological impossibility caught between a lost past and a nonexistent future. "Everyday life" is not a category -- even "the body" is not a category. Life -- and the body -- are "full of holes", permeable, grotesque -- ad hoc constructions already compromised with an impure empiricism, fated to "drift", to "relativism", and to the sheer messiness of the organic. And yet it is "precisely" here, in this imprecise area of contradiction and "vulgar existentialism", that the creative act of autonomy and self-actualization must be accomplished. Critiques can be directed at the past or future, but praxis can only occur in the impure and ontologically unstable here-and-now. I don't want to abandon the critique of past-and-future -- in fact I need it, in the form of a utopian

poetics, in order to situate praxis in the context of a tradition (of festivity and of resistance) and of an anti-tradition (of utopian "hope"). But I cannot allow this critique to harden into an eschatology. I ask of theory that it remain flexible in regard to situations, and able to define values in terms of "the struggle for empirical freedoms" (as one modern-day Zapatista put it). "Revolution" no less than Religion has been guilty of promising "pie in the sky" (as Joe Hill put it) -- but the real problem of theory is (as Alice put it) "jam today." The concept of the TAZ was never intended as an abandonment of past or future - the TAZ existed, and will exist -- but rather as a means to maximize autonomy and pleasure for as many individuals and groups as possible as soon as possible -- even here and now. The TAZ exists -- the purpose of the theory has been simply to notice it, help it to define itself, become "politically conscious". The past and future help us to know our "true" (revolutionary) desires -- but only the present can realize them -- only the living body, for all its grotesque imperfection.

Suppose we were to ask -- as anarchists -- what should be done about the problem of technology "after the revolution". This exercise in utopian poetics may help us to clarify the question of desire, and of praxis in the "present". The primitivist might argue that there can be no revolution

without the abolition of symbolic mediation, or at least of the technological imperative; extropians might say that no revolution can occur without technological transcendence. But both parties must perforce admit a transitional stage, when de facto power has been seized by the "Revolution", but the full unfolding of revolutionary society has yet to occur. Let's imagine that the one rough principle agreed upon by "everyone" is the freedom of the individual from coercion by the group, and the freedom of the (self-organized) group from coercion by all other groups. The only "price" of this freedom is that it damage no other free and autonomous interests. This would seem to be a minimalistic but adequate definition of basic anarchism. At this point the primitivist may hold that the dialectic of freedom moves irrevocably toward the re-appearance of the Paleolithic, albeit at a "higher" and more conscious level than the first time around, since this re-appearance will have been announced by revolution, by consciousness. Similarly at this point the extropian may argue that the further unfolding of freedom can only be envisioned as self-directed evolution through the co-creation of humanity and its technology. Fine and dandy. But now what? Are these two anarchist tendencies going to become armies and fight it out to the last recalcitrant computer jock or neo-wild-man? Are they going to force their visions of the future on each other?

Would such action be consistent with the basic anarchist premise of -- mutual non-coercion? Or would it reveal each of these tendencies to be flawed by destructive and tragic contradictions? I've said before that in such a situation, the problem of technology can be solved only by the principle of revolutionary desire. Since we've "ruled out" coercion of all those who accept the premise of mutual non-coercion, all competing models of utopia are submitted to the crucible of desire. How much do I want a computer? I can't force Taiwanese and Mexican women to make silicon chips for slave wages. I can't pollute other peoples' air with some outrageous plastic factory to make consoles. I'm free to have a computer, but I must meet the price" mutual non-coercion. Or -- how much do I want the wilderness? I can't force people to get out of "my" forest now because it's also "their" forest. I can do what I want with "my share" of the forest, but only at the agreed-upon price. If my neighbors desire to plant wheat, or hand-craft fine computers, so long as they respect my "Nature" I must respect their "Culture". Of course we may wrangle about "acceptable emission standards" or forest preservation -- about the appropriateness of a given technological or non-technological "solution" in a given situation -- but we will accept the price of mutual non-coercion in the form of mess and compromise, impurity and imperfection

-- because "empirical freedoms" are worth more to us than categorical imperatives.

Of course, everyone is free to play this game of utopian poetics with different "rules", and different results. After all, the future does not exist. However, I would like to push the implications of my thought-experiment a bit further. I suspect that this "utopia" would prove disappointing to both the primitives and the extropians. I suspect that a workable utopia would adhere more closely to the "messy" model than to either of the "pure" models of the pro-tech/anti-tech theorists. Like bolo'bolo, I imagine a complex multiplicity of social models co-existing under the voluntary aegis of the social "price" of mutual non-coercion. In effect the primitivists will get less wilderness than they demand, and the extropians will get less tech. Nevertheless, all but the most fanatical extremists on either side will be reconciled to the messy utopia of desire -- or so I predict -- because it will be organized around pleasure and surplus, rather than the denial and scarcity expressed by the totality. The desire for wilderness will be gratified at a level undreamed since the early Neolithic, and the desire for creativity and even co-creation will be gratified at a level undreamed by the wildest science fiction. In both cases the means for this enjoyment can only be called appropriate techné -- green, low energy, high information. I don't believe in the abolition of symbolic

mediation, and I don't believe that separation can overcome separation. But I do hypothesize the possibility of a much more immediate and satisfactory experience of creation and conviviality through the human (animal/animate) scaling of economy and technology -- and this, however untidy, I would call utopia.

If I have disagreed with both primitives and extropians here, it was not to reject them as allies. The only useful purpose served by our "after the Revolution" game is to shed light on our present situation, and our possible options for concrete action here and now (more or less). It seems to me that both the P's and E's are quite capable of grasping the theory of "messiness" and the "impure" model of the TAZ. A night, a week, a month of relative autonomy, relative satisfaction, relative realization, would be worth far more to most anarchists than a whole lifetime of absolute bitterness, resentment, and nostalgia for the past or future. The most enthusiastic cyberpunk can still embrace the "festal body", and the most savage primitives have been known to succumb to civilized impurities such as beer, or art. I fear that a few diehards in both camps will still sneer at our enjoyment -- of the impure TAZ or the impure uprising -- because it falls short of the perfect revolution. But realization arises only from direct experience, from participation. They themselves admit

this. And yet action is always impure, always incomplete. Are they too fastidious? Will nothing suit them both the void -- wither of wilderness, or of cyberspace? Are they dandies of the Absolute?

The TAZ project is one of indiscriminate syncretism, not of exclusion. By disagreeing with both parties we are attempting to reconcile them -- at least pro tem -- to a sort of "united front" or ad hoc tendency, determined to experiment now with various modes of contestation as well as enjoyment, of struggle as well as celebration. The palimpsest of all utopian theories and desires -- including all redundancies and repetitions -- forms the matrix of an anti-authoritarian movement capable of "lumping together" the mess of anarchist, libertarian, syndicalist, council communist, post-situationist, primitivist, extropian and other "free" tendencies. This "union"-without-uniformity will not be driven (or riven) by ideology, but by a kind of insurrectionary "noise" or chaos of TAZ's, uprisings, refusals, and epiphanies. Into the "final" totality of global capital it will release a hundred blooming flowers, a thousand, a million memes of resistance, of difference, of non-ordinary consciousness -- the will to power as "strangeness". And as capital retreats deeper and deeper into cyberspace, or into disembodiment, leaving behind itself the empty shells of spectacular control, our complexity

of anti-authoritarian and autonomist tendencies will begin to see the re-appearance of the Social.

But at this present moment the TAZ (in its broadest possible sense) seems to be the only manifestation of the possibility of radical conviviality. Every non-authoritarian tendency should support the TAZ because only there (aside from the imagination) can an authentic taste of life without oppression be experienced. The vital question now concerns the "technology" of the TAZ, i.e., the means for potentiating and manifesting it most clearly and strongly. Compared to this question, the problems of technology (or of zero-technology) take on an air of theological debate -- a ghostly and querulous other-worldliness. My critics have a point -- but it's aimed somewhere about 10,000 years in the past, or "five minutes into the future", and misses the mark.

I must admit that my own taste inclines neither toward Wilderness World nor spaceship Earth as exclusive categories. I actually spend far more time defending wildness than "civilization", because it is far more threatened. I yearn for the re-appearance of Nature out of Culture -- but not for the eradication of all symbolic mediation. The word "choice" has been so devalued lately. Let's say I'd prefer a world of indeterminacy, of rich ambiguity, of complex impurities.

My critics, apparently, do not. I find much to admire and desire in both their models, but can't for even a moment believe in either of them as totalities. Their futurity or eschatology bores me, unless I can mix it into the stew of the TAZ -- or use it to magic the TAZ into active existence -- to tease the TAZ into action. The TAZ is "broad-minded" enough to entertain more than two, or even six, impossible ideas "before breakfast". The TAZ is always "bigger" than the mere ideas which inspire it. Even at its smallest and most intimate the TAZ englobes all "totalities", and packs them into the same kaleidoscope conceptual space, the "imaginal world" which is always so closely related to the TAZ, and which burns with the same fire. My brain may not be able to reconcile the wilderness and cyberspace, but the TAZ can do so -- in fact, has already done so. And yet the TAZ is no totality, but merely a leaky sieve -- which, in the fairy tale, can carry milk or even become a boat. For the TAZ, technology is like that paper fan in the Zen story, which first becomes a "fan", then a device for scooping cake, and finally a silent breeze.

Tong Aesthetics

"The lodge was symbolically named 'The City of Willows' (mu-yang ch'eng). (It) contained an inner sanctum called 'The Red Flower Pavilion' (Hung Hua T'ing), in which the essential part of the initiation took place, and where the secrets of the society were revealed to the recruit . . . "

"In a full-scale ceremony, the ritual appears to be divided into three main stages. The first stage consisted of the recitation and dramatization of the Myth of Origin in the main hall of the lodge. This was called 'performing the play (tso-hsi) and 'watching the play' (k'an-hsi) depending on whether one was an active or passive participant; or 'releasing the horses' (fang-ma), ('Horses' = recruits, or new recruits; hsin-ting, 'new tops', was another name for new recruits.) The second part of the ritual consisted of the oath-taking ceremony in the Red Flower Pavilion, the issuing of the certificates of membership, and the exhibition of secret documents, furniture and objects of the lodge to the members. The feast and theatricals of celebration which followed after a few days formed the third and final part of the initiation."

"All brethren who are brought hither are faithful and loyal: they all are iron-galled and copper-livered. From the inexhaustible metamorphoses are born

millions of men, who are all of one mind and one will. All these of one affection in the two capitals and thirteen provinces have now come together to petition Father Heaven and Mother Earth; the three lights, sun, moon (and stars); all the Gods, Saints, Spirits and Buddhas, and all the Star Princes, to help all present to enlightenment. This night we pledge ourselves, and vow this before Heaven, that the brethren in the whole universe shall be as from one womb; as if born of one father, as if nourished by one mother; as if of one root and origin; that we will obey heaven and act according to its ways; that our loyal hearts shall not change, and never alter. If the august Heaven will protect and assist in the restoration of the Ming, then happiness will have a place to which to return."

[NOTE: Fei-Ling Davis, Primitive Revolutionaries of China: A Study of Secret Societies of the Late Nineteenth Century (Honolulu 1971), pp., 129, 135. see index under "City of Willows"]

The City of Willows is the imaginal space of the traditional Chinese Tong or secret society, (especially the Hung Triads), its "Temple of Initiation".

[NOTE: see Henry Corbin, Temple and Contemplation (London 1986)]

The space itself, visionary or oneiric, contains within it (like a hermetic "memory palace") the details of the

political myth of the Triads, based on conspiracy to overthrow the Manchu dynasty and achieve the "restoration of the Ming", i.e., of Chinese rule. G. Sorel would have understood this mythopoesis, this passionate reading of a set of symbols which is like a place but not a place, like a text but not a text; which prescribes a "general strike" or uprising in the language of legend; which points to the future by pointing to the past, and to the "Sea of Images."

[NOTE: The myth is made in a language of symbols -- a word which originally meant the two halves of a token which must be fitted together in order to provide identification or meaning -- like two spies with halves of a dollar bill, recognizing each other by the exact fit of the torn edges. Every myth, we might say, has at least two symbols, which are in effect halves or opposites of each other. Hence the total ambiguity of myth: -- depending on which half is "up", so to speak, a myth's meaning can be seen to "turn into" its opposite. Sorel's myth is no exception (indeed it seems odd that no one appears to have thought of analyzing it according to the techniques of the history of spirituality) -- it appealed as much to fascism as to anarchism. Consider for example the Myth of Progress, propagated by all the major ideologies of the 19th century, from monarchism to anarchism: all idolized Progress, a myth which would make the 20th century hell for millions.

And the Sorelian Myths of the General Strike, and of Social Violence, were appropriated by Marinetti (the ambiguous pivot between anarchism and fascism) and eventually by Mussolini. Myth-mongering has its dangers. Unfortunately, myth remains one of the few effective ways of talking about "reality", which is itself far more ambiguous than any myth.]

Elsewhere we have proposed the Tong as a possible model of organization for realizing immediatist goals, including the TAZ itself; now belatedly we should consider the importance of style or aesthetics in the emergence of a successful contemporary occidental Tong. In building a Tong, style may not be "everything", but it certainly cannot be considered merely secondary or inessential. The Tong must be "a work of art" in itself, like all Immediatist game-structures. A legend such as the City of Willows provides this essential aesthetic shape.

We might think of the "Bee" as a temporary immediatist group organized for one project (like a quilt). But even the Bee must both be and produce a "work of art". The Tong by comparison can be defined as a more long-lasting group, theoretically "permanent", devoted not to one project but to an on-going "cause". But what makes a Tong different from an open group, like a sect or political party? The members of an Immediatist Tong or TAZ core-group may not be held together by strong

class, ethnic, geographical, or economic motives; moreover, the collaborative production of non-commodifiable art cannot be considered by itself a sufficient cause for the formation of a secret society. "Illegalism" per se may add cohesiveness to the group structure, but still cannot serve as the only *raison d'etre* of a real Tong. Insurrectionary action or "social sabotage" provide even stronger motivation for a clandestine "order" -- but not yet enough, perhaps, for a full-scale "invisible collage". Without "Tong aesthetics" -- no Tong.

The two essential aesthetic elements of a Tong are: -- (1) a cause; and (2) a legend. Both cause and legend can be classed as aesthetic or "mythic" systems, rather than as ideologies -- since they are based on symbols, which are real but ambiguous, rather than on "ideals", which are much more clear, but relatively un-real. When Sorel proposed a "social myth" (specifically the syndicat and the General Strike) he did not mean "myth" in the modern sense of the word -- as an empty story, a palliative and illusory narration. "Myth" in the Sorelian sense can be called a story which is not only about "real life" but also wants to manifest as real life. A cause, one may argue, is not a "real thing" because it has not yet appeared. It is an aesthetic construct -- but it is also an Image-complex which intends to impose its pattern on "reality", like the hermetic

spells of Renaissance magi or the ceremonies of tribal shamans. It expresses this intention in the the form of a legend about a cause, a symbolic narrative of highly-charged images arranged to augment a dynamic potential ("conversion", "initiation", "enlightenment", "action"), in the group which adopts and adapts it. The cause, therefore, is the public Sorelian myth, the legend, its private propaganda within the Tong.

The "poesis" of the City of Willows, for example, reveals its workings in the imagery of the visionary journey of the "Vanguard", who sees: -- The Tong initiates like taoist sages or spiritual nomads, "far off at the horizon (yet) near before my eyes. They roam about the world without a fixed residence "white herons flying past a fan, a pear-shaped censer, a sword, a flute, two jade castanets, a scepter, a floating bridge the daughter of the Dragon King "gathering mulberry flowers" (a password) caves of drizzle, summer showers, hoarfrost a volcano and so on (Davis, op. cit., 132-134). These images may seem merely decorative or arbitrary to us, but they were charged with cultural memes for the Hung adepts, and were built into a system which cohered not only as a "poem" but also as a multiplexed evocation of their cause. This poem of potential action becomes even more vital in our immediatist Tong, since the text must serve to provide some of the cohesion lacking in such a variegated group as

ours may be. A mere political program will not suffice, nor will a mere poem. Cause and legend must point beyond (or even away from) ideology and abstraction; the "Utopian Imagination" and "Utopian Poetics" must be used to construct something more than a mere daydream. [NOTE: Not that I share the usual disdain for "reverie" as opposed to "imagination". Like Guston Bachelard I believe that poesis begins with daydreaming, and that "idle fancy" is as sacred as "genuine vision". Nevertheless, in order to inspire action, the daydream must first become a "poem", then a "legend", finally a cause".]

"Poetic language" here serves as a guarantee of the genuineness of the experience which is evoked, for in matters concerning desire only the "language of the birds" can attain some degree of accuracy. "Revolution" has certainly served as a poetic image strong enough to provide the cause for numerous secret societies, from Marx's flirtation with the Carbonari to Proudhon's anarchist "Holy Vehm", Bakunin's "Brotherhood", Durutti's "Wanderers", etc. "Insurrection" is a term which might be better suited to the post-existentialist requirements of an Immediatist Tong, however. The uprising possesses the spiritual prestige of both apocalypse and millenium, and yet remains a genuine historical possibility -- remote but verifiable.

[NOTE: Consider, for example, Dublin 1916, Munich 1919, Tijuana 1911, Paris 1871 and 1968, the Ukraine 1920's Barcelona 1930's. None of these gave rise to "the Revolution", but all were noble and well worth the risk -- at least in retrospect!]

The TAZ, however, presents itself as an immediate possibility: -- both as a tactic on behalf of the Cause, and as a taste or foretaste of the cause itself. We cannot say that the TAZ "is" the Cause, because the TAZ remains spontaneous, evanescent, impossible to pin down. The Insurrection is the Cause; the TAZ is a tactic for the cause, but also an "inner" *raison d'etre* of the Tong. Thus when the Hung triad repeated the ritual of the City of Willows it not only validated its eternal attachment to the cause (the anti-Manchu uprising), but also virtually created the "paradisaal space" of the anti-Manchu world within the Temple of the society. This ritual Time/Space might be experienced and valued as a TAZ; and when combined with a banquet (the necessary "material bodily principle" of the TAZ) no doubt the adepts did experience and value it as such. The immediatist Tong therefore would not be "founded" in order to create TAZ's but rather to potentiate their manifestations as prefigurations or evocations of the Uprising and the "anti-Consensus" reality it envisions. Ritual and conviviality do not necessarily combine to produce the TAZ -- spontaneous

orderings of fractal complexities must fall into place to produce such a "magic Moment". One can maximize the conditions for such "luck", but one cannot force the Muses. As in archery, one shoots at a point above the target in order to hit it. Here that lofty point at which we aim must be the Insurrection, but by shooting at its distance we may yet strike the proximity of the TAZ -- (like those adepts who are seen both far on the horizon and yet near to the gaze).

The legend is the story the secret society tells itself about the cause. In some cases, such as Freemasonry, the legend is remembered even when the cause is forgotten, so that the legend can be re-interpreted or re-deciphered or re-read -- and the Cause re-invented -- again and again. The legend, in effect, becomes the Cause: the two texts are conflated into an illegible but powerful palimpsest. A good legend may come to act more potently even than a good cause, since it taps the archetypes more directly, and owes less to time than to Eternity.

Therefore the poesis of a legend for our Tong is no petty business. It concerns the surface but is far from being "superficial". Taste here assumes a "life-or-death" seriousness, as when one speaks of the "style" of a martial artist. Our legend cannot simply consist of a text about the cause; rather, it must arise from our passionate reading of the cause, our psychic experience of its

inner structure. It must have an "objective" aspect, in other words, like that possessed by "scripture" or "spirit writing" in the eyes of religious believers.

Moreover, while the cause of the uprising is one which can be served in many ways, our legend must be specific to our Tong; it must contain a special message in a special language meant to form a cognitive bond amongst precisely our own group. In other words the legend serves as the exact act of poesis without which our Tong simply will not come into focus. Where are we rootless cosmopolitans to find a language in which such a text could be composed, much less the text itself? The Surrealists experimented with automatic writing, a technique also used by Taoists and other spirit mediums. In fact, "religion" provides a possible language for the Tong legend -- provided that one speaks the tongue in heretical sentences. The City of Willows combines millenarian Buddhism and the imaginal aesthetics of Taoism with its revolutionary politics. In our occidental world the image-complexes of many religious phenomena retain great power -- and are thus susceptible to refiguration, or "subversion", as heretical revolutionary texts. Imagine, for example, a secret society devoted to the "sabotage" of reactionary Christian dogma and policy, based on an "Anabaptist" legend espousing the cause of radical millenialism, or even inspired by some syncretive brand of

neo-paganism. Does this sound serious and risky enough, in today's climate of shit-kicking moralism and recrudescant "religious conservatism", to justify both the passion and the clandestinity of our hypothetical secret society?

A viable legend might be manifested by one person, or it might arise, so to speak, out of "group-dreaming" -- but in any case it will not be produced by the rational lineal process of fictional narrative. One does not write scripture; scripture is written. Or better: the legend pre-exists its realization as text, so that the "writer" acts rather as a "treasure finder" than an "author" -- oneiric and visionary texts partake in their extreme subjectivity of the "objectivity" of that "subconscious" wherein (according to Taoism) the Gods reside, and which hypostatizes in the most gripping and inspiring ritual art. Such art may not meet the aesthetic criteria of the academic critic, for whom it will appear either as mumbojumbo or as agitprop. But it will light fire in the minds of certain hearers, precisely those for whom the legend crystallized out of the noosphere in the first place. The Tong will be nothing without the actions which it will carry out. But before the actions come the intentions. The link between the intentions and the actions is the text, the legend and the cause it represents. The text draws out the actions from the sea of potential energy and gives them their specific shape, their "style" -- just as the Moon

was once thought to shape, color, and draw up pearls from the ocean by its attractive rays.

These legends will be the greatest poems of the most unknown poets of our age. Like magic incantations they will sing new realities into being, as the shaman sings rain, or health, or abundant game from potentiality to actuality. These poems will be meaningless without the actions they invoke, and will therefore achieve either the highest goal of poetry, or else nothing at all. The City of Willows is not merely an "imaginary city" but an Imaginal City, a dream-space which will be manifested more and more clearly until finally the Ming is restored - and yet the City of Willows is also a poem. The legend of our Tong is nothing but a text, true -- but it will call a world into being -- even if only for a few moments -- in which our desires are not only articulated but satisfied.

The Utopian Blues

Why is the spirituality of the musician in "High" cultures so often a low-down spirituality?

In India, for example, the musician belongs to a caste so low it hovers on the verge of untouchability. This lowness relates, in popular attitudes, to the musician's invariable use of forbidden intoxicants. After the "invasion" of Islam many musicians converted in order to escape the caste system. (The Dagar Brothers of Calcutta, famous for their performance of sacred Hindu music, explained proudly to me that their family had not converted in Mughal times -- for worldly advantage -- but only much later, and then as Shiites; this proved that their conversion was sincere.) In Ireland the musician shared the same Indo-European reputation for lowness. The bards or poets ranked with aristocrats and even royalty, but musicians were merely the servants of the bards. In Dumézil's tripartite structure of Indo-European society, as reflected in Ireland, music seems to occupy an ambiguous fourth zone, symbolized by the fourth province of Munster, the "south". Music is thus associated with "dark" druidism, sexual license, gluttony, nomadry and other outsider phenomena.

Islam is popularly believed to "ban" music; obviously this is not the case,

since so many Indian musicians converted. Islam expresses grave reservations about art in general because all art potentially involves us in multiplicity (extension in time and space) rather than in the unity (tawhid) by which Islam defines its entire spiritual project. The Prophet criticized worldly poetry; he criticized realism in art; and he relegated music to social occasions like marriages. (In Islamic societies the minstrels who supply such festal music are often Jews, or otherwise "outside" Islam.) In response to these critiques, Islamic culture developed "rectified" forms of art: -- sufi poetry (which sublimates worldly pleasure as mystical ecstasy); non-representative art (falsely dismissed as "decorative" by western art-history); and sufi music, which utilizes multiplicity to return the listener to Unity, to induce "mystical states". But this restitution of the arts has never entirely succeeded as an uplifting of the musician. In Tehran in the 1970's, one of the more decadent sufi orders (Safi-Ali-Shahi) had enrolled the majority of professional musicians, and their sessions were devoted to opium smoking.

Other musicians were known as hearty drinkers or otherwise louche and bohemian types -- the few exceptions were pious Sufis in other, more disciplined orders, such as the Nematollahiyya or Ahl-i Haqq. In the Levant, Turkish sufi music leaked out of the tekkes and into the taverns, mixed with Greek and other Mediterranean

influences, and produced the wonderful genre of Rembetica, with its witty odes to whores, hashish, wine and cocaine.

In the rituals of Afro-American religions, such as Santeria, Voudoun, and Candomblé, the all-important drummers and musicians are often non-initiates, professionals hired by the congregation -- this is no doubt a reflection of the quasi-nomadic "minstrel" status of musicians in the highly evolved pastoral-agricultural societies of West Africa.

Traditional Christianity places a high value on music but a low value on musicians. Some branches of Protestantism tried to exclude professional musicians altogether, but Lutheranism and Anglicanism made use of them. Church musicians used to be considered an ungodly class of beings, a perception that survives in the reputation for naughtiness of choristers, choir-masters and organists. Thomas Weelkes (1576 - 1623) represents the archetype: brilliant but erratic (praised justly by Ezra Pound for his wonderful arrhythmic settings of "cadenced prose"), Weelkes was fired from his job at Chichester Cathedral as a "notorious swearer and blasphemer" and drunk, who (according to oral tradition) broke the camel's back by pissing over the organ-screen onto the Dean's head.

Christianity and Afro-American spirituality combined to produce the

"Spiritist" churches where music forms the structure of worship and the congregation attains "professional" artistry. The ambiguity of this relation is revealed in the powerful links between sacred "gospel" and worldly "blues", the outcaste music of taverns, and "jazz", the music of the bordello (the very word evokes pure sexuality). The musical forms are very close -- the difference lies in the musician, who, as usual, hovers on the very edge of the clearing, the in-between space of the uncanny, and of shamanic intoxication.

In all these cases the music itself represents the highest spirituality of the culture. Music itself being "bodiless" and metalinguistic (or metasemantic) is always (metaphorically or actually) the supreme expression of pure imagination as vehicle for the spirit. The lowness of the musician is connected to the perceived danger of music, its ambiguity, its elusive quality, its manifestation as lowness as well as highness -- as pleasure.

Music as pleasure is not connected to the mind (or purified elements of spirit) but to the body. Music rises from the (inarticulate) body and is received by the body (as vibration, as sexuality).

The logos itself must be given musical expression (in chant, e.g. Koran, plainsong, etc.) for precisely the same somatic reason -- the influence of body on spirit (through "soul" or psyche -- imagination). Chant is music which

sublimates the body.

Paradox: -- that which is "holy" is "forbidden" (as in the Arabic word haram which means either holy or forbidden, depending on context). As Bataille points out, sanctity and transgression both arise from the fracturing of the "order of intimacy", the separation of the "human" from "nature". The "original" expression of this violent break is undoubtedly musical -- as with the Mbutu Pygmies, who produce as a collectivity the music of the "Forest" as an expression of their closeness to (yet separatedness from) the wild(er)ness. Subsequent to this "first" expression, a further separation begins to appear: -- the musician remains involved in the "violence" of the break with the intimate order in a special way, and so is seen as an uncanny person (like the witch, or the metallurgist). The musician emerges as a specialist within a still non-hierarchic society of hunter/gatherers, and the musician begins to take on the sign of the taboo to the extent that the tribe's undivided culture or "collective self" is affronted by this separation or transformation. The undivided culture (like the Mbutu) knows no "musician" in this sense, but only music. As division, and then hierarchy, begin to appear in society, the position of the musician becomes problematic. Like "primitive" society, these hierarchic "traditional" societies also wish to preserve something unbroken at the heart of their culture. If society is "many", culture will preserve a counter-

balancing cohesiveness which is the sign of the original sacred order of intimacy, prolonged into the deepest spiritual meanings of the society, and thus preserved. So much for music -- but what about the musician?

Hierarchic society permits itself to remain relatively undivided by sacralizing the specializations. Music, inasmuch as it is bodiless, can be the sign of the upper caste (its "spirituality") -- but inasmuch as music arises from the body (it is sublimed -- it "rises"), the musician (originator/origin of the music) must be symbolized by the body and hence must be "low". Music is spiritual -- the musician is corporeal. The spirituality of the musician is low but also ambiguous in its production of highness. (Drugs substitute for the priest's ritual highness to make the musician high enough to produce aesthetic highness.) The musician is not just low but uncanny -- not just low but "outside". The power of the musician in society is like the power of the magician -- the excluded shaman -- in its relation to wildness. And yet it is precisely these hierarchic societies which create "seamless" cultures -- including music. This is true even after the break -- in the western tradition -- between the "oneness" of melody and the "doubleness" of harmony. And note the reciprocal relation between high and low music -- the various Masses on the "Western Wynde", set to a popular tune; the influence of melismatics on

the madrigal; the pop influences on Rumi and other Sufis. The ambiguity of music allows it to drift between high and low and yet remain undivided. This is "tradition". It includes the subversive by excluding the musician (and the artist generally) and yet granting them power.

Thus for example the lowly musician Tansen attained the equivalent of aristocratic status in the art-intoxicated Mughal court; and Zeami (the great dramatist of the Noh theater of Japan, a form of opera), although he belonged to the untouchable caste of actors and musicians, rose to great heights of refinement because the Shogun fell in love with him when he was 13; to the Court's horror, the Shogun shared food with Zeami and granted courtly status to the Noh. For the musician the power of inspiration can be transmuted into the power of power. Consider for example the Turkish Janisseries, the Ottoman Imperial Guard, who all belonged to the heterodox (wine-drinking) Bektashi Sufi Order, and who invented military marching bands. Judging by European accounts of Janissery bands, which always speak of the sheer terror they induced, these musicians discovered a kind of psychological warfare which certainly bestowed prestige on this very ambiguous group, made up of slaves of the Sultan.

Traditional music always remains satisfactory (even when not "inspired") because it remains unbroken -- both

the high tradition and the low are the same "thing". Indian brass bands -- Mozart -- the same universe. In Mozart's own character (reflected in his "servant" characters like Leparello) we again discern the figure of the outsider, the gypsy-wunderkind, the toy of aristocrats, with a strong link to the low culture of beer-gardens and peasant clog-dances, and a fondness for bohemian excess. The musician is a kind of "grotesque" -- disobedient servant, drunk, nomadic, brilliant. For the musician the perfect moment is that of the festival, the world turned upside down, the saturnalia, when servants and masters change places for a day. The festival is nothing without the musician, who presides over the momentary reversal -- and thus the reconciliation -- of all separated functions and forces in traditional society. Music is the perfect sign of the festal, and thereby of the "material bodily principle" celebrated by Bakhtin. In the intoxication of conviviality in the carneval, music emerges as a kind of utopian structure or shaping force -- music becomes the very "order of intimacy".

Next morning, however, the broken order resumes its sway. Dialectics alone (if not "History") demonstrate that undivided culture is not an unmixed "good", in that it rests on a divided society. Where hierarchy has not appeared there is no music separate from the rest of experience. Once music becomes a category (along

with the categorization of society), it has already begun to be alienated -- hence the appearance of the specialist, the musician, and the taboo on the musician. Since it is impossible to tell whether the musician is sacred or profane (this being the perceived nature of the social split) this taboo serves to fill up the crack (and preserve the "unbrokenness" of tradition) by considering the musician as both sacred and profane. In effect the hierarchical society metes out punishments to all castes/classes for their shared guilt in the violation of the order of intimacy. Priests and kings are surrounded by taboos -- chastity, or the sacrifice of the (vegetal) king, etc. The artist's punishment is to be a kind of outcaste paradoxically attached to the highest functions in society. [Note that the poet is not an "artist" in this sense and can retain caste because poetry is logos, akin to revelation. Poetry pertains to the "aristocratic" in traditional societies (e.g. Ireland). Interestingly the modern world has reversed this polarity in terms of money, so that the "low-caste" painter and musician are now wealthy and thus "higher" than the unrewarded poet.]

The "injustice" of the categorization of music is its separation from "the tribe", the whole people, including each and every individual. For inasmuch as the musician is excluded, music is excluded, inaccessible. But this injustice does not become apparent until the separations and alienations within society itself become so

exacerbated and exaggerated that a split is perceived in culture. High and low are now out of touch -- no reciprocity. The aristos never hear the music of the folk, and vice versa. Reciprocity of high and low traditions ceases -- and thus cross-fertilization and cultural renewal within the "unbroken" tradition. In the western world this exacerbation of separation occurs roughly with industrialization and commodity capitalism -- but it has "pre-echoes" in the cultural sphere. Bach adapted a "rational" mathematical form of well-temperedness over the older more "organic" systems of tuning. In a subtle sense a break has occurred within the unbroken tradition -- others will follow. Powerful "inspiration" is released by this "break with tradition", titanic genius, touched to some extent with morbidity.

For the "first time" so to speak the question arises: -- whether one says yes or no to life itself. Bach's anguished spirituality (the "paranoia" of the Pietist gambling on Faith alone) was sometimes resolved with a "romantic" effusion of darkness. These impulses are "revolutionary" in respect to a tradition which suffers almost-unbearable contradictions. Their very nay-saying opens up the possibility of a whole new "yes". Despite its tremendous inner tension, Bach's music is "healing" because he had to heal himself in order to create it in the first place. Healing -- but not un-wounded. Bach as wounded healer.

It's not surprising that people preferred Telemann. Telemann was also a genius - as in his "Water Music" -- but his genius remained at home within the unbroken tradition. If Bach is the first modern, he is the last ancient. If Bach is healing, Telemann is healed, already whole. His yes is the unspoken yes of sacred custom -- naturally, of course, one has never thought otherwise. Telemann is still -- supremely -- our servant. This kind of "health" is exemplified in only a few composers after Telemann -- Mendelsohn, for instance. One might call it "Pindaric", and one might defend it even against "intelligence".

The bohemian life of the modern artist, so "alienated from society", is nothing but the old low-down spirituality of the musician and artisan castes, recontextualized in an economy of commodities. Baudelaire (as Benjamin argued) had no economic function in the 19th century society -- his low-down spirituality turned inward and became self-destructive, because it had lost its functionality in the social. Villon was just as much a bohemian, but at least he still had a role in the economy - as a thief! The artist's privilege -- to be drunk, to be insouciant -- has now become the artist's curse. The artist is no longer a servant -- refuses to serve - except as unacknowledged legislator. As revolutionary. The artist now claims, like Beethoven, either a vanguard position, or -- like Baudelaire -- complete exile. The musician no longer

accepts low caste, but must be either Brahmin or untouchable.

Wagner -- and Nietzsche, when he was propagandizing for Wagner -- conceived of a musical revolution against the broken order in the cause of a new and higher (conscious) form of the order of intimacy: -- integral Dionysian culture viewed as the revolutionary goal of romanticism. The outsider as king. Opera is the utopia of music (as Charles Fourier also realized). In opera music appropriates the logos and thus challenges revelation's monopoly on meaning.

If opera failed as revolution -- as Nietzsche came to realize -- it was because the audience had refused to go away. The opera of Wagner or Fourier can only succeed as the social if it becomes the social -- by eliminating the category of art, of music, as anything separate from life. The audience must become the opera. Instead -- the opera became . . . just another commodity. A public ritual celebrating post-sacred social values of consumption and sentiment -- the sacralization of the secular. A step along the road to the spectacle.

The commodification of music measures precisely the failure of the romantic revolution of music -- its mummification in the repertoire, the Canon -- the recuperation of its dissidence as the rhetoric of liberalism, "culture and taste". Wave after wave of

the "avant-garde" attempted to transcend civilization -- a process which is only now coming to an end in the apotheosis of commodification, its "final ecstasy."

As Bloch and Benjamin maintained, all art which escapes the category of mere kitsch contains what may be called the utopian trace -- and this is certainly true of music (and even "more" true, given music's metasemantic immediacy). Finally it is this trace which must serve to counter the otherwise-incisive arguments against music made by J. Zerzan in "The Tonality and the Totality" -- i.e. that all alienated forms of music serve ultimately as control. To argue that music itself, like language, is a form of alienation, however, would seem to demand an "impossible" return to a Paleolithic that is nearly pre-"human". But perhaps the stone Age is not somewhere else, distant and nearly inaccessible, but rather (in some sense) present. Perhaps we shall experience not a return to the Stone Age, but a return of the Stone Age (symbolized, in fact, by the very discovery of the Paleolithic, which occurred only recently). A few decades ago civilized ears literally could not hear "primitive" music except as noise; Europeans could not even hear the non-harmonic traditional classical music of India or China except as meaningless rubbish. The same held true for Paleolithic art, for instance -- no one noticed the cave paintings till the late 19th century, even though they'd been "discovered"

many times already. Civilization was defined by rational consciousness, rationality was defined as civilized consciousness -- outside this totality only chaos and sheer unintelligibility could exist. But now things have changed -- suddenly, just as the "primitive" and the "traditional" seem on the verge of disappearance, we can hear them. How? Why?

If the utopian trace in all music can now be heard, it can only be because the "broken order" is now somehow coming to an end. The long Babylonian con is finally wearing thin to the point of translucency, if not transparency. The reign of the commodity is threatened by a mass arousal from the media-trance of inattention. A taste for the authentic appears, suffers a million tricks and co-optations, a million empty promises -- but it refuses to evaporate. Instead it condenses -- it even coagulates. Neo-shamanic modes of awareness occupy lost or fractal unfoldings of the map of consensus and control. Psychedelics and oriental mysticism sharpen ears, masses of ears, to a taste for the unbroken, the order of intimacy, and its festal embodiment.

Is there actually a problem with the commodification of music? Why should we assume an "elitist" position now, even as new technology makes possible a "mass" participation in music through the virtual infinity of choice, and the "electric democracy" of musical

synthesis? Why complain about the degradation of the aura of the "work of art" in the age of mechanical reproduction, as if art could or should still be defended as a category of high value?

But it's not "Western Civilization" we're defending here, and it's not the sanctity of aesthetic production either. We maintain that participation in the commodity can only amount to a commodification of participation, a simulation of aesthetic democracy. A higher synthesis of the Old Con, promising "The Real Thing now" but delivering only another betrayal of hope. The problem of music remains the same problem -- that of alienation, of the separation of consumers from producers. Despite positive possibilities brought into being by the sheer multiplication of resources made accessible through reproduction technology, the overwhelming complex of alienation outweighs all subversive counterforces working for utopian ends. The discovery of "3rd world" music (i.e. primitive and traditional) leads to appropriation and dilution rather than to cross-cultural synergy and mutual enrichment. The proliferation of cheap music-synthesis tech at first opens up new and genuinely folkish/democratic possibilities, like Dub and Rap; but the "Industry" knows very well how to fetishize and alienate these insurrectionary energies: -- use them to sell junkfood and shoes!

As we reach out to touch music it

recedes from our grasp like a mirage. Everywhere, in every restaurant, shop, public space, we undergo the "noise pollution" of music -- its very ubiquity measures our impotence, our lack of participation, of "choice".

And what music! A venal and venial counterfeit of all the "revolutionary" music of the past, the throbbing sexualized music that once sounded like the death knell of Western Civilization, now becomes the sonic wallpaper hiding a facade of cracks, rifts, absences, fears, the anodyne for despair and anomie -- elevator music, waiting room music, pulsing to the 4/4 beat, the old "square" rhythm of European rationalism, flavored with a homeopathic tinge of African heat or Asian spirituality -- the utopian trace -- memories of youth betrayed and transformed into the aural equivalent of Prozac and Colt 45. And still each new generation of youth claims this "revolution" as its own, adding or subtracting a note or beat here or there, pushing the "transgressive" envelope a bit further, and calling it "new music" -- and each generation in turn becomes simply a statistical mass of consumers busily creating the airport music of its own future, mourning the "sell-outs", wondering what went wrong.

Western classical music has become the sign of bourgeois power -- but it is an empty sign inasmuch as its period of primary production is over. There are

no more symphonies to be written in C major. Serialism, 12-tone, and all the 20th century avant-garde carried out a revolution but failed to inflame anyone except a small elite, and certainly failed to deconstruct the Canon. In fact, the very failure of this "Modern" music is somewhat endearing, since it permitted the music to retain some of the innocent fervor of insurrectionary desire, untainted by "success" -- Harry Parch for example. But I still remember with horror a scene I once observed in Shiraz (Iran), where the Festival of Arts had invited K. Stockhausen to present his music to "the people" of the city rather than solely to the Tehran aristo's and international kulturvultures of the Festival audience. What an embarrassment! And the revolution which swept through town a few years later owed nothing to such "generosity" -- except hatred of "decadent" Western music -- which it banned. As for "Mozart" (to pick an archetype), how can he be "saved" from the Industry and the Institutions, from CDs and radio, from Lincoln Center and Kennedy Center, from Hollywood and MUZAK? I recall a passage from a Carson McCullers story, in which a poor little girl listens entranced, for the first time, to a 78 of Mozart, through the screen door of a wealthy neighbor -- a quintessentially utopian moment. Even the technology of alienation can be "magical" -- but only inadvertently, serendipitously, by distortion. A distant radio on a lonely night in a tropical town in Java, say, playing some endless Ramayana-drama till dawn --

or for that matter choose your own favorite (perhaps erotic) moment of memory, marked by some overheard fragment of music. (You'd just better hope that LITE-FM never finds out which fragment, because they'll turn it into nostalgia and use it to sell your own desire back to you, and taint your sweet memory forever with hucksterish greed.)

. . . . So we admit it -- there is a problem. All is not necessarily for the best in the world of too-Late Capitalism -- Music reminds us of one of those cinematic-vampire-victims, already so drained of life as to be almost one of the Undead -- shall we abandon her?

Does any "solution" exist to this problem, any cure which is not a form of reaction, of bombing ourselves back into some ideal past? Is it even valid to base our critique on the assumption that music was or will be "better" at some point in time? Is "degeneration" any better a model than "progress"?

In the first place, is "music itself" in question here, or should we be focused instead on the production of music, and on the social structure which informs that production? In other words, perhaps music (short of sheer kitsch) should be considered "innocent", at least by comparison with the constellation of alienation and betrayal and monopolization sometimes called the Industry -- the musical arm of the Spectacle, as it were. By comparison,

Music is the victim, not the cause of the "problem". And what about musicians? Are they part of the Industry, or are they too (like their Muse) mere victims? Part of the problem, or part of the solution? Or is the whole concept of "blame" here no more than the ideology of a subtler Reaction -- an incipient Puritanism -- another false totality?

If we want to escape any vicious circles of retributive resentment (or musical revanchism) we need a wholly different approach -- and if our approach (our strategy) is not to be based on "History" -- either of music itself or of production -- then perhaps it must be rooted instead in a utopian poetics. In this sense, we should not adopt any one utopian system as a model -- which would mire us in nostalgia for some lost future -- but rather take the idea of utopia itself, or even the emotion of utopia, for a starting point. Music, after all, addresses the emotions more immediately than other arts, filtered as they are through logos or image. (This explains in part why Islam distrusts music.) Music is the most border-permeating of all arts -- perhaps not the "universal language", but only because it is in fact not a language at all, unless perhaps a "language of the birds". The "universal" appeal of music lies in its direct link to utopian emotion, or desire, and beyond that to the utopian imagination. By its interpenetration of time and pleasure, music expresses and evokes a "perfect" time (purged of boredom and fear) and

"perfect" pleasure (purged of all regret). Music is bodiless, yet it is from the body and it is for the body -- and this too makes it utopian in nature. For utopia is "no place", and yet utopia concerns the body above all.

As an example (not as a model), we might return to Fourier's concept of the opera as it "will be" practiced in utopia, or the societal stage of Harmony as he called it. As a "complete art-work" the opera will involve music and words, dance, painting, poetry -- in a system based on "analogies" or occult correspondences between the senses and their objects. For instance, the 12 tones in music correspond to the 12 Passions (desires or emotions), the 12 colors, and the 12 basic Series of the Phalanx or utopian community, etc. By orchestrating these correspondences, Harmonian operas will far exceed the paltry music-dramas of Civilization in beauty, luxury, inspiration, not to mention sheer scope. They will utilize the hieroglyphic science of Harmonian art to provide education, propaganda, entertainment, artistic transcendence, and erotic fulfillment -- all at once. Sound, sight, intellect, all the senses will respond to the complex multi-dimensional emblems of the opera, made up of words and music, reason and emotion, and perhaps even touch and smell. These emblems will create a direct "moral" effect in audience and actors alike (somewhat as Brecht envisioned for "Epic Theater") -- and in fact, the tendency in Harmony will be

for the audience to disappear, to become part of the Opera (at least potentially) so that the separation between "artist" and "audience" -- the proscenium, so to speak -- will be broken down, permeated, eventually erased. All Harmonians will be touched with genius in the Opera -- this is the purpose of the hieroglyphs, this is their "moral effect". (I'm putting the word in quotes because Fourier hated moralism as much as Nietzsche. Perhaps "spiritual" might be a better term.) This "harmonial association" in the production and experience of the Opera is (for Fourier) a model of the very structure of the utopian community. The phalanx will be spontaneously what the opera is by art. In effect Fourier has rediscovered the primal ritual, the dance/music/story/mask/sacrifice which is the tribe in the form of art, the tribe's co-creation of itself in the aesthetic imagination. Fourier had healed the rift (in his writings, at least -- in his imagination) -- but not by a return to some paradisaical perfection of the past. In fact, for Fourier himself, Harmony was not even a state of futurity so much as one of potential presence. He believed that if one group (of exactly 1620 people) were to construct a single phalanstery and begin to live by Passional attraction, the whole world would be converted within two years. Unlike More, Bacon, Campanella and other utopians, Fourier's plans were not meant as ironies nor as critiques nor as science fiction, but as blueprints (for non-violent) and immediate revolution. In

this sense he resembles his (hated) contemporaries Owen and St. Simon -- but unlike them he was not interested in the regulation of desire but in its total liberation -- and in this he more greatly resembles Blake -- or (as Fourier's followers liked to claim) Beethoven, than any of the socialists, whether "utopian" or "scientific".

The disappearance of the audience in Fourier's opera reminds us of nothing so much as the Situationalist program for the "Suppression and Realization of Art." Harmonian opera suppresses itself as a separate category of artistic production, with all the consequent commodification and consumption, only to realize itself precisely as "everyday life." But it is an everyday life transformed and systematically informed by the "marvelous" (as the Surrealists put it). It is a communal and individual desiring machine. It is the field of pleasure. It is a luxury -- a form of "excess" (as Bataille put it). It is the generosity of the social to itself -- like a festival, only more formal, celebration as ritual rather than as orgy. (Of course the orgy is the other great organizing principle of phalansterian life!) The opera in this sense includes us. From our point of view we can now say that the music is ours -- not someone else's -- not the musician's, not the record company's, not the radio station's, not the shopkeeper's, not the MUZAK company's not the devil's -- but ours. In *Noise: the Political Economy of Music* (1977), Jacques Attali proposes that

this "stage" in music's possible future be called the stage of "Composition" -- "a noise of Festival and Freedom", as "essential element in a strategy for the emergence of a truly new society". Composition calls for "the destruction of all simulacra in accumulation"-- i.e., it avoids representation and commodification, and mechanical reproduction as "the silence of repetition". "The emergence of the free act, self-transcendence, pleasure in being instead of having" is (violently) opposed to alienation, by which the "musician lost possession of music". In Composition, "to listen to music is to re-write it, 'to put music into operation, to draw it toward an unknown praxis' (Barthes)." Attali warns that "blasphemy is not a plan, any more than noise is a code. Representation and repetition, heralds of lack, are always able to recuperate the energy of the liberatory festival." True composition demands "a truly different system of organization . . . outside of meaning, usage, and exchange", i.e. marked in part by "the Return of the Jongleurs", by "a reappearance of very ancient forms of production", as well as by the invention of new instruments and recycled technologies (as in Dub). Music is separated from Work, and becomes a form of "idleness". "The field of the commodity has been shattered." "Participation in collective play," and "immediate communication", aim to "locate liberation not in a faraway future . . . but in the present, in production and in one's own enjoyment." In this sense, then, "music

emerges as a relation to the body and as transcendence": -- an erotic relation. In Composition, "production melds with consumption . . . in the development of the imaginary through the planing of personal gardens." "Composition liberates time so that it can be lived, not stockpiled . . . in commodities." Because of the anarchic nature of Composition and the consequent danger of cacophony, "tolerance and autonomy" must be presupposed as conditions.

Attali also worries about "the impossibility of improvisation", and the lack of musical ability in some persons; nevertheless, these objections are not absolutes -- and besides, if we recall the model of Fourier's Opera, we will note that non-musical talents count for as much as musical talents in Harmonial Association. "Composition thus leads to a staggering conception of history, a history that is open, unstable . . . in which music effects a re-appropriation of time and space." "It is also the only utopia that is not a mask for pessimism."

Does the disappearance of the audience already necessitate and predict a stage "beyond" that of Composition and the Utopian Poetics -- a stage of the disappearance of the musician? Not according to Fourier. The Passion for music is precisely not the Passion for, say, horticulture -- although many Harmonians will be masters of both. But obviously the Opera will still have

its "stars", even if these luminaries will also be adept at dozens of other arts and skills. Moreover, thanks to the liberation of all Passions to follow their Attractions "talent" will increase by stupendous degrees, such that (for instance) "the globe will contain thirty-seven millions of poets equal to Homer" (Theory of the Four Movements, p. 81) - and untold millions of "stars".

In effect however every Harmonian is a star at something; and the opera is only one possible combination or constellation. Thus "the musician" may disappear as a professional, as a separate category or fetish, as a focus of separation -- only to re-appear as a kind of shamanic function. Even Fourier, who expected everyone to master at least 12 different metiers, understood that utopia must make places for monomaniacs and specialists in ecstasy. Far from disappearing, only now can the "minstrels" (and the "bards") make their re-appearance -- as aspects of an integral and creative "personality" of the social. Because nothing can be commodified, the musician is at last free to "play", and to be rewarded for play.

Under such conditions, what would become of the low-down spirituality of the musician? Utopia is a unity, not a uniformity -- and it contains antinomies. Utopian desire never comes to an end, even -- or especially! - in utopia. And music will always be the last veil (of 70,000 veils of light and darkness) that separates us from the

"order of intimacy". Music will never lose its holy unholiness; it will always contain the trace of the violence of sacrifice. How then could the "blues" ever come to an end -- that orgone indigo utopian melancholy caress of sound, that little-bit-too-much, that difference? The low caste of the musician will of course be dissolved in utopia -- but somehow a certain untouchability will linger, a certain dandyism, a pride. The one tragedy that this Harmonian Blues will never lament is the loss of the blues of itself, its appropriation, its alienation, its betrayal, its demonic possession. This is the "utopian minimum", the money-back guarantee, the sine qua non -- the music is ours. At this point a grand dialectical synthesis occurs -- the unbroken order and the broken order are both "overcome" in the moment of the emergence of a new thing, the low-down utopian blues, the Passional Opera, Composition, the music of utopia dreaming about itself and waking to itself. In heaven itself the harpists will be drunk and disorderly. "And the Angels knock at tavern doors" (Hafez.).

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obscure & mysterious *grottoes* into which they enter, imitating serpents -- spaces of return to an intimacy that "once upon a time" was shattered by memory -- by the simultaneous reiteration & belatedness of memory -- that faculty of human consciousness "closet to the divine". But don't they say that "to forgive is human, to forget is divine" ? In the ritual reiteration or "remembrance" (*dhikr*) of the sufis one forgets the "self" precisely in order to recall the Self; -- thus to re-member is to erase separation, & this erasure is a species of forgetfulness. (In certain key Islamic buildings like the Alhambra the reiteration of *dhikr* as calligrammatic text becomes the very definition of built space as mnemonic device or "Memory Palace" -- not ornament but the very basis or crystal-precipitation-principle of architecture.)

"Since we *are* Jesus Christ," as one of the Brethren of the free Spirit boasted, "the only issue is that what is already perfect in us should be reiterated ..." This process however leads to a paradoxical un-learning -- hence to a loss of *fear* -- so that one can "let oneself be led by one's natural senses, like a little child". Now, the cave stands for unconsciousness; -- the goal however is not to lose

unconsciousness but to recapture that which unconsciousness separated us from, that which consciousness "spoiled". Thus within the dark grotto itself memory must be paradoxically inscribed -- key images are reiterated (literally repeated in some cases by a palimpsestic or incisive over-drawing) -- images which represent out lost intimacy as a pantheon of *animals* ("good to think with") -- each animal a special joy or "divine" function. Thus the the cave becomes the first intentional architectural space, the intersection of unconsciousness (the bliss of "Nature") & consciousness (memory , reiteration).

Ever since Plato we've been taught to revere *anamnesis* -- but let's descend to the pre-Platonic cave, the paleolithic grotto, to recover the positive dialectic of *amnesia* -- without which memory becomes simply a curse, coagulating at last as History (the degree of zero of memory as suffocation): the first city (Çatalk Hüyük) is already arranged as a *gridwork*, the very antithesis of the grotto's aesthetic shapelessness, it's meandering & amazing spaces, it's melted stalagmites & stalactites -- its organicity (which is never the less expressed as *mineral life*). The cities of Sumer & Harappa were likewise laid out as severe grids, cruel abstractions of linearity. To draw a line is to separate, to create spatial hierarchy (between priest & people, rich & poor, surplus & scarcity) and to define the *topia* of memory against the dark unconscious of the tribe, the u-topian cave, the organic wild(er)ness. The *tertium quid* or *coincidentia oppositorium* here (between "grotto" & Babylon) might appear in the medieval city (which still survives in a few places in the Islamic world) where the excessive cruelty of the grid is mollified -- not erased but softened - - by a recording of a space according to the tree or the river-delta model (chaotic

bifurcation ranging to complexity based on intra-dimensional "strange attractors") -- an urbanism of the organic, the aesthetic, & the complex or plural (as opposed to the inorganic, the ideological, & the simple or total).

The medieval city is an extruded grotto Some of these cities introduced allegorical pageants or parades in which huge emblem-complexes (composite hieroglyphs) were built & set up or carried around the labyrinth of streets. Myths & legends were acted out: -- sometimes the Lord Mayor played the role of "Lord Mayor", wandering thru a street-theater of encounters with symbolic characters (like Bloom in Nighthtown), thus re-newing the City as its elected Hero undergoing the initiation of ritual marriage with the urban goddess.

Here the Free City comes to a synchronic & ludic consciousness of itself *hic et nunc*, rather than succumb to the miserabilist diachronism of power's violence. In this Hermetic City we find the background or womb-space of the alchemical Emblem Books, and the narrativity of a Bosch or Breughel. Memory loses its heaviness here & takes on a folkloric air, carnivalesque (the festival as reiteration of pleasure) with built shapes that appropriate (thru design or thru the accidents of decay & accretion) the forms of breasts, phalluses, wombs, rocks & water, moss & flowers, even of wind & light.

The Babylonian grid-city wants memory to persist thru time -- smooth & empty time -- but as Dali showed, memory *persists* only in the deliquescence of measured time. The medieval-hermetic city (like Blake's Green Jerusalem) preserves memory but in a "disordered" way -- like akashic marmalade -- time which is textured & full. "Babylon" preserves order (or *else!*) -- but what happens to memory there ? Isn't it transmuted into the poison formaldehyde of History, the re-iterated tale of *our* poverty & *their* power,

taxonomic myth of the ruling class ? Who can blame us for harboring both a nostalgia & an insurrectionary desire for the narrow winding alleys, shadowy steps, covered ways & tunnels, middens & cellars of a city which has designed *itself* -- organically, unconsciously -- within an aesthetic of festive & secret conviviality, & of the curvaciuous negentropic mutability of memory itself ?

The psychic urbanism of the 1960's constituted yet another attempt to reclaim *built memory* for this "Romantic" project -- rus in urbe, as F. Law Olmstead put it -- "The country in the city" -- reintroduction of the eternal "baroque" (as in "baroque pearl") or spontaneous form -- (like the miraculous fungoid cinnabar grottoes of Mao Shan Taoism, created by the Imaginal potency of the Adept) -- which is also the "divine" spontaneity, unconsciousness & *forgetting*, of Nature. A project for the builders of some near-future No Go Zone: -- the city of psychogeographic resistance, the anti-grid, architectonality of driftwork, festal space -- and the Cave of Fluid Memory. Rock & water -- the reverie of the bard, the forgetfulness of the gods.

The Obelisk

by Hakim Bey

1. Dans la merde

No systematic ideation seems able to measure the universe—a one-to-one map even of the subjective world can probably only be achieved in non-ideational states. Nothing can be posited—"nevertheless, *it moves.*" Something comes into cognition, and consciousness attempts to structure it. This structure is then taken for the bedrock of reality, and applied as a *mappa mundi*—first as language, then as ideology inherent in language. These language/ideology complexes tend to become orthodoxies. For example, since the Enlightenment it has been considered indisputable that only one mode of consciousness is fully real; we might call it the consciousness that "falsifies"—*i.e.*, that verifies science as true. Before the Enlightenment other orthodoxies held sway and valued other forms of consciousness or cognition. We could sum up these earlier orthodoxies under the rubrics of God and Nature, and perhaps associate them with the Neolithic and Paleolithic, respectively. Although these worldviews retain some adherents they have been archaeologically submerged, so to speak, by "Universal Reason". The Enlightenment coincides with the first determined breakthrough into scientific

instrumentality and the "conquest of Nature"; God survives the onslaught for another century but finally (after a deathbed scene of positively operatic length) succumbs around 1899. Nature is silent; God is dead. Ideology is rational and scientific; the dark ages are over. If we can say that the 18th century brought us the betrayal of Nature, and the 19th century the betrayal of God, then the 20th century has certainly produced the betrayal of (and by) ideology. Enlightenment Rationalism and its offshoot/rival Dialectical Materialism have expired and gone to heaven and left us "*dans la merde*" (as the dying Gurdjieff told his disciples), stuck in the mire of a material world reduced to the cruel abstraction of exchange and dedicated only to its own self-defacement and disappearance.

The fact is that any map will fit any territory...given sufficient violence. Every ideology is complicit with every other ideology—given enough time (and rope). These complexes are nothing but unreal estate, properties to be stripped of assets, vampirized for imagery, propped up to keep the marks in line, manipulated for profit—but not taken seriously by grown-ups. For the adult of the species there remains nothing but the atomized sell of exchange, and the unlikely consolations of greed and power.

2. Hermes Revivodus

But there appear to exist other consciousnesses, and perhaps even kinds of cognition that remain uninvolved in consciousness in any ordinary sense. Aside from all scientific or religious definitions of these other forms, they persist in appearing, and are therefore potentially interesting. Without ideologizing these forms, can we still say anything useful about them? Language is still traditionally deemed ineffective in this regard. But *theoria*, originally in the sense of "vision" or insight, possesses a sudden and drifting nature, akin to poetry. In such terms could we speak of a kind of *hermetic criticism* (on the model of Dali's "paranoia criticism") capable of dealing with these other forms, however obliquely and glancingly?

It is Hermes who bridges the gap between the metalinguistic and the sublinguistic in the form of the message, language itself, the medium; he is the trickster who leads in misleading, the tremendum that echoes through the broken word. Hermes is therefore political, or rather ambassadorial—patron of intelligence and cryptography as well as an alchemy that seeks only the embodiment of the real. Hermes is between text and image, master of the hieroglyphs that are simultaneously both—Hermes is their significance, their translatability. As one who goes "up and down" between spirits and humans, Hermes Psychopomp is the shamanic consciousness, the medium

of direct experience, and the interface between these *other forms* and the political. "Hermetic" can also mean "unseen".

The late Ioan Couliano pointed out that Renaissance Hermeticism offered, as one definition of magic, the influence of text/image complexes "at a distance" on the conscious and unconscious cognition of subjects. In a positive sense these techniques were meant for the "divinizing" of the magus and of material creation itself; thus alchemy is seen as a freeing of consciousness (as well as matter) from the heavier and more negative forms and its realization as self-illumination. But as Blake—himself a great hermeticist—pointed out, everything has its "form and spectre," its positive and negative appearance. If we look at the positive "form" of hermeticism we see it as liberation and therefore as politically radical (as with Blake, for instance); if we regard its "spectre", however, we see that the Renaissance magi were the first modern spies and the direct ancestors of all spin-doctors, PR men, advertisers and brainwashers. "Hermetic criticism" as I see it would involve an attempt to "separate out" various *formal* and *spectral* aspects of communication theory and its modern applications; but this realm is choked with undergrowth and clear separations can rarely be defended. Let's just say we're looking for patches of sunlight.

3. Critique of the Image

The critique of the Image is at the same time a defense of the Imagination.

If the spectral hermeticism of the totality consists of the totality of its *imagery*, then clearly something can be said in defense of iconoclasm, and for resistance to the *screen* (the media interface). The perfection of exchange is presented as a universal *imaginaire*, as a complex of images (and text/image complexes) arranged through reproduction, education, work, leisure, advertising, news, medicine, death, etc., into an apparent consensus or "totality". The unmediated is the unimagined—even though it is life itself we're discussing, we have failed to imagine it, or to evaluate it. That which is present but remains unrepresented also remains virtually unreal for us, inasmuch as we have capitulated to the consensus. And since consciousness actually plays a rather miniscule role here, we all capitulate at least most of the time, either because we can't stand too much reality, or because we've decided to think about it later, or because we're afraid we're insane, and so on.

Byzantine Iconoclasm and (later) Islam attempted to cut through the hermetic dilemma by "prohibiting" the Image. To a certain extent the latter succeeded, so that even its representational art deliberately refused perspective and dimensional illusion; moreover, in a way that Benjamin might have noticed,

the painting never stands alone but is "alienated" by text that enters it and flattens it yet more. The "highest" arts are architecture as arrangement of organic space and calligraphy as arrangement of organic time; moreover the word is ideological for Islam—it not only represents *logos* but *presents* it as linearity, as a linked series of moments of meaning. Islam is "text-based" but it refuses the Image not simply to exalt the text. There are two "Korans" in Islam, and the other one is generally interpreted as integral with Nature itself as a kind of non-verbal semiotics, "waymarks on the horizon." Hence the geomorphism of the architecture, and its interaction with water, greenery, landscape and horizon—and also its ideal interpenetration by calligraphic text.

Now admittedly this ideational or religious complex can assume its own intense rigidity and heaviness. Its truly luminous organicity can perhaps best be appreciated in old anonymous unofficial forms like the domed caravansaries of Central Asia or the African mud mosques rather than in the grand imperial Masterpieces— or the catastrophic modern capital cities of Islamdom. But wherever the Image has been lost and forgotten (or at least supplanted to some extent by other possibilities) it is possible to feel a certain lightness or relief from the burden of the image, and a certain lightness in the sense of luminousness as well. Even in modern Libya, which

has banned all commercial advertising (and allows signs only in Arabic), one can experience at least a moment of the utopia of the absence of the image, the public image, the hieroglyphics of exchange, the iconolatry of representation. One can reject the authoritarianism of the ban on imagery without necessarily rejecting its intentionality. We could interpret it in a sufiistic manner—that a voluntary self-restraint *vis-a-vis* imagery and representation (a sublimation of the image) can result in a flow of power to the autonomous ("divinized") imagination. This could also be envisioned as a suppression-and-realization in the dialectical sense. The purpose of such an exercise, from a sufi perspective, would be to channelize the "creative imagination" toward the realization of spiritual insight—for example, revealed or inspired texts are not merely read but re-created within the imaginal consciousness. Clearly this *direct experience* aspect of imaginal work may raise the question of one's relation with orthodoxy and mediated spiritual authority. In some cases values are not merely re-created, but created. Values are imagined. The possibility appears that orthodoxy may deconstruct itself, that ideology may be overcome from within. Hence the ambiguous relation between Islamic authorities and Islamic mystics.

The sufi critique of the Image can certainly be "secularized" to the extent

of adding to our own concept of hermetic criticism. (Some sufis were themselves hermeticists and even accepted the existence of Hermes Trismegestus as a "prophet".) In other words, we do not oppose the Image as theological iconoclasts but because we require the liberation of the imagination itself—*our* imagination, not the mediated *imaginaire* of the market.

Of course this critique of the image could just as well be applied to the word—to the book—to language itself. And of course it should be so applied. To question a medium is not necessarily to destroy it, in the name of either orthodoxy or heresy. The Renaissance magi were not interested merely in reading the hieroglyphs but in writing them. Hieroglyphics was seen as a kind of *projective semiotics* or textual imaginal performance produced to effect change in the world. The point is that we imagine ourselves rather than allow ourselves to be imagined; we must ourselves write ourselves—or else be written.

4. The Unseen Obelisk

If oppression emanates from the power of that which is seen, then logic might compel us to investigate the possibility that resistance could ally itself with the power of that which is *unseen*. The unseen is not necessarily the invisible or the disappeared. It can be seen and might be seen. It is not yet seen—or it is deliberately hidden. It reserves the

right to re-appear, or to escape from representation. This hermetic ambiguity shapes its tactical movement; to use a military metaphor, it practices guerrilla techniques of "primitive war" against those of "classical war", refusing confrontation on unequal terms, melting into the generalized resistance of the excluded, occupying cracks in the strategic monolith of control, refusing the monopoly of violence to power, etc. ("Violence" here also signifies imagistic or conceptual violence.) In effect it opposes strategy (ideology) with tactics that cannot be strategically bound or ideologically fixed. It might be said that consciousness "alone" does not play as vital a role in this as certain other factors ("Freedom is a psycho-kinetic skill").

For example, there is an aspect of the unseen that involves no effort, but consists simply in the experience of places that remain unknown, times that are not marked. The Japanese aesthetic term *wabi* refers to the power of such places or objects—it means "poor". It is used to refer, for example, to certain teacups that appear badly-made (irregular, unevenly fired, etc.), but upon a more sensitive appraisal are seen to possess great expressiveness of "suchness"—an elegance that approaches conceptual silence—something of the melancholy of transitoriness, anonymity, a point at which poverty cannot be distinguished from the most refined aesthetic, a

quintessence of the Taoist yin, the "mysterious power" of flowing water or empty space. Some of these teacups sell for millions. Most of them are made by Zen artisans who have *achieved* the state of wabi, but it might be said that the most prized of all would be made unselfconsciously (or even "unconsciously") by genuinely poor craftsmen. This mania for the natural and spontaneous also finds its expression in the Taoist fondness for bizarre rocks that stimulate the imagination with convolutions and extrusions and strange imbalances. Zen gardeners prefer rocks that suggest distant mountains or islands, erasing all other images, or better yet rocks suggestive of nothing at all—non-ideational form—perfect *poorness*.

As soon as something is represented it becomes an image of itself, semiotically richer but existentially impoverished, alienated, drawn out of itself and extenuated—a potential commodity. The *wabi* of the teacups is seriously compromised by the high prices they command. To be effective (to produce "*satori*") the object must be experienced directly and not mediated in exchange. Perhaps the really valuable cups are not yet seen because they are *overlooked*. No one can even perceive them, much less their value. The sole and spontaneous exception to this general inattentiveness is...ourselves!—we have imagined the value of *wabi* for these objects times or places—for

ourselves. These are perhaps among the "small pleasures" that Nietzsche says are more important than the great ones. In some cases the melancholy aspect of these things is exacerbated by the realization that time itself has overcome ugliness and turned it into an unnoticed beauty. Certain streets in North Dublin capture this quality perfectly, as do some abandoned New Jersey industrial sites where the organic (rust, water, weeds) has sculpted old machinery into spontaneous pure form and landscape. This *melancholia* (which was held to be a trait or sign of *creativity* by the old hermeticists) approaches another aesthetic term, the Persian word *dard*—which literally means "pain", but is applied in more subtle terms to the art of direct expression of certain musicians (especially singers) in the sense of a transparent and unaffected melancholic longing for an absent transcendent or beloved. The Persian fable teaches that the pain of rejected love turns an ordinary sparrow into a nightingale. The lover is poor as the dervish is poor, because desire is that which is not fulfilled—but from this poverty there emerges an aesthetic of wealth, an overflowing, a generosity or even painful excess of meaning—under the guise of melancholy and disappointment.

Aside from the inadvertency of the unseen, there also exists a more active form, so to speak—the form of the deliberate unseen. This is part of the

sphere wherein appears the consciousness of everyday life of itself and its tactical intention to enhance its own unmediated pleasures and the autonomy of its freedom from representation. Thus conditions are maximized for the potential emergence of "the marvelous" into the sphere of lived experience. This situation resembles that of the artist—but "art" enters this space only on condition that it refuses to mediate experience for us and instead "facilitate" it. One example would be a love affair based on an eroticism that does not appear in mediation, for which no "roles" are constructed, no commodities produced. Another example might be a spontaneous festival, or a temporary autonomous zone, or a secret society; here, "art" would regain its utility.

The Renaissance magi understood that the ancient Egyptian obelisk was a perfect hermetic form for the dissemination of their hieroglyphic projective semiotics. From the top down it represents (mathematically) a sun-beam; from the bottom up, a *lingam*. It broadcasts or radiates its text/image complexes therefore both to the light above consciousness itself, and to the unconscious represented by sexuality. From the emblem-books such as the great *Hypnerotomachia* of 1499 we learn that the hermetic purpose for such monuments would be to call into existence the utopia of desire and the bliss of alchemical union. But the Magi never perfected

their deciphering of the hieroglyphs and their utopia remained enclosed within the hermetic landscapes of the Emblems. The notion of the power of the obelisks, however, took root in western consciousness and unconsciousness, from the Napoleonic and British appropriations in Egypt to the Masonic involvement in the Washington Monument.

By contrast to the obelisk of the State, one could imagine a genuinely hermetic obelisk inscribed with magical writing about direct experience of non-ordinary consciousness; its effectiveness would consist of the near-impossibility of its being seen; it might, for example, be sited in a remote wilderness—or in the midst of abandoned industrial decay. It might even be buried. It would be a "poor" obelisk. Rumors would circulate about it. Those who actually found it would perhaps be deeply moved by its mysteriousness and remoteness. The obelisk itself might even have vanished, and been replaced again with a beam of dusty sunlight. But the story of it might retain some power.

5. The Organic Machine But what is revolt for? Simply to assuage the terminal resentment of the eternally disappointed and belated? Could we not simply cease our agitation and pursue that teacup or that beam of sunlight, if we cannot be satisfied with the ecstasy of the totality? Why should our hermetic critique lead us to an

assertion of a dialectic of presence over exchange, over alienation, over separation? If we pretend to "create values" then we should be prepared to articulate them, however much we may reject "ideology". After all, pancapitalism also rejects ideology and has even proclaimed the end of the dialectic—are our values therefore to be subsumed in Capital? If so, then—why struggle?

One possible response to this question could be made on the basis of an existentialist revolt-for-revolt's sake, in the tradition of Camus or the Italian Stirnerite anarchists. We would be ill-advised to despise this answer—but it may perhaps be possible to add to it in more positive terms (in terms of "form", not "spectre").

For example, we could say that the Paleolithic economy of the Gift still persists, along with the "direct experience" spirituality of shamanism, and the non-separation of "Society Against the State" (Pierre Clastres), in the form of those *rights and customs* discussed by E. P. Thompson, reflected in myth and folklore, and expressed in popular festal and heretically resistant forms throughout history. Refer to Bakhtin's *Rabelais*, to Chrisiopher Hill's *Word Turn'd Upside Down*, or Vaneigem's *Free.Spirit*. In other words: a tradition of resistance has persisted since the Neolithic, unbroken by the rise of the first States, and even till today. Thus: we resist and revolt

because it is our glorious heritage to do so—it is our "conservatism". This resistance movement has become incredibly shabby and dusty since it first arose some 12,000 years ago in response to the "first ideologies" (agriculture, the calendar, the appropriation of labor)—but it still persists because it still defines most of the "empirical freedoms" that most people would like to enjoy: absence of oppression, peace, plenty, autonomy, conviviality or community, no rich or poor, spiritual expression and the pleasure of the body, and so on. It may be impossible to construct a system or ideology or strategy on such uncategorizable desires—but it is equally impossible to refute them with ideology, precisely because of their empirical and "tactical" nature. No matter what, they persist—even if they remain for all practical purposes unseen, still they refuse to go away. When all the ideas have betrayed us, this "organic machine" (Society vs. the State) declines even to define itself as an idea. It remains loyal to our immemorial inarticulacy, our silence, our poorness.

Capital pursues its *telos* beyond the human. Science has already betrayed us—perhaps the next (or last) betrayal will be of the *human* itself, and of the entire material world. Only two examples need be given here to illuminate (rather than "prove") this contention. The first concerns money, which in the last five or six years has

transcended its links with production to the alarming degree that some 94.2% of the global "money supply" now consists of pure financial capital. I've called this *the Gnostic uploading of the economic body*, in honor of those old Gnostic Dualists and their hatred of everything material. The practical result of this situation is staggering for any consideration of economic justice as an "empirical" concern, since the migratory or nomadic nature of pancapitalism permits "disembodied Capital" to strip the productive economy of its assets in the cause of profits that can only be measured by purely "spiritual" means. Moreover, this Capital has become its own medium, and now attempts to define a universal discourse in which alternatives to exchange simply vanish as if they'd never existed and could never exist. Thus all human relations are to be measured in money.

To illustrate Capital as its own medium, and as our second example, we can look at bioengineering. There is no force that can prevent pancapitalism from acquiring *patents* to every identifiable gene. This means that farmers are now being asked to pay "rents" on certain genetic strains that they themselves developed, because the "rights" to those strains were acquired by the zaibatsus. The dubious triumph of cloning is supposed to compensate for the profit-driven ravaging of Nature's last remnants. Moreover, the human genome project,

which has "solved" the production of life as a biochemical machine, allows "evolution" itself to be coopted and absorbed into Capital. As the market envisions the future, the human itself will become humanity's final commodity—and into this "value" the human will disappear. Capital's self defacement implies humanity's self-effacement. Acting as a purely spiritual substance—money—Capital will attain the ownership of life's becoming, and thus the power to shape the very protoplasm of the material world as pure exchange.

Our essential question then concerns the possibility of the re-appearance of the unseen as *opposition*. Finally it would seem that a tactical refusal of all strategic systemization may be inadequate to bring about this desired re-appearance. A positive proposal is required to balance the gestures of refusal. We must hope that an organic strategy of victory will emerge as "spontaneous ordering" from the driftwork of tactics. Any attempt to impose this strategic unity from "above" must be renounced as (at best) nostalgia for the lost utopia of ideology—or as "bad religion" of some sort.

But just as the Image has its spectre and its form, so we might play with the notion that the Idea, too, has a spectral and a formal manifestation. As a "spook in the head" the idea remains nothing but a semantic trap—disguised

for example as a moral imperative. But as a "form" in the Blakean sense the idea itself may take on organicity as a production of the body and the "creative intellect", just as the image may be turned toward realization by the body and the "creative imagination". Perhaps in some sense it is the *idea* that has remained unseen till now, and thus retains all its power, having never fallen away into representation. Neglected *all along*—having never been given a price—and perhaps remaining inexpressible even in its manifestation—this idea may "give meaning to revolt." And it may be written ambiguously in hieroglyphs whose meaning is uncertain, but whose "magical" effect is nevertheless potent—it may be written even on a hidden obelisk. But it will have been written by us.

6. Platonic Nets

It seems as if there should exist two possible kinds of network (or even of communication technology)—one aristotelian, text-based, linear—the other platonic, image-based, non-linear. Language, for example, as viewed from this perspective might appear more platonic, since words are based on "inner pictures" and thus cannot be limited by pure lexicality or one-to-one "translation"; while by contrast a network of computers, using digital text-based programming, might appear as a perfect aristotelian system.

But this neat dualism dissolves into paradox and conundrum. Text itself is picture-based (hence "non-linear") in Sumer, Egypt, China. Even our alphabet is picture-based; the letter "p", for example, is simply an upside-down foot, since Indo-European words for "foot" almost always begin with "p" (or "f"). Text, which is supposed to be linear, is "language-based" and partakes of language's non-linearity. When "speech genres" are textualized they become in some senses more linear (because stripped of contextual depth formerly provided by the extra dimensions of speech such as tone, gesture, performance, etc.)—but in some other ways this stripping of language to produce text results in further ambiguities, since the context of the text now consists largely of the reader and the reader's inner world.

Thus the fact that computers are digital (simple on/off switches in massive array) and text-based does not make them genuine aristotelian machines, since image is already embedded in language, and even more because *the screen itself* is also already an image, whether it displays image, text, or both at once. If programming could be based directly on images rather than text—as some savants believe possible—the computer could easily be seen as a platonic machine. The platonizing effect of the computer is already present not only in its screenal display of images but also in the psychological reality of the screen as

image. In effect, the computer is a hieroglyphic machine, an interface mode of text and image; hence its magic appearance to the unconscious.

The Renaissance magi (especially Athanasius Kircher) believed that the Egyptian hieroglyphs were purely platonic (—in this, they followed Plotinus and Iamblichus)—that is, that each image was an ideal form, and that their deployment could not only indicate meaning but also create and project it. Thus the hieroglyphs were seen as an ideal amalgam of text and image—an *emblematic* form of writing. Now when Champollion deciphered the Rosetta Stone, it was discovered that hieroglyphs were already used quasi-alphabetically (on the model of "[picture] foot = [phoneme] p"), although there were also cases where single images or imageclusters represented the objects depicted as words. This discovery relegated the unsuccessful translation attempts of the old magi to complete oblivion. Their theories are now only mentioned in passing as examples of "false" hermetic science and bad Egyptology. But as Couliano noted, these discarded theories have great secret heuristic power, because they describe empirically some of the ways in which text, image, and mind interact. Once the neo-platonic metaphysics and crude magical fantasies have been discarded, hieroglyphic theory can be used to understand the mode of operation of text/image

complexes—that is, *emblems*.

The emblem books were Renaissance experiments in the "projective semiotics" of hieroglyph-theory. Allegorical pictures accompanied by texts (often one text in prose and one in poetry)—and in a few cases even by music (the great *Atalanta Fugiens* of Michael Maier, for example)—were collected in sequences, published as books, and intended for the magical edification of readers. The "morals" of the emblems were thus conveyed on more than one level at once. Each emblem was simultaneously:

a) a picture accompanied by words;

b) a picture "translated" *from* words. That is, the pictures' real values are not purely formal but also allegorical, so that Hercules stands for "strength", Cupid for "desire", and the emblem itself can be read as a "sentence" composed of these "words";

c) a hieroglyphic "coding" in which certain images not only represent words but also "express the essence" of those words, and *project* them in a "magical" manner, whether or not the reader is consciously aware of this process.

Our working hypothesis is that the world's image of itself not only defines its possibilities but also its limits. The world's representation of itself to itself (its "macrocosmic" image) is no more and no less than the self's "microcosmic" image of itself "writ large" so to speak, on the level or *mentalité* and the *imaginaire*. This is part of our "secularized" hermetic theory; it explains, for instance, why emblems have *influences* on multiple levels of cognition.

The radical magi encountered a world wherein one world-image was locked in place—not just the geocentric cosmos but the whole Christian orthodox value system that went with it. Their subversive purpose revolved around the project of a *free circulation* of imagery, a breaking-up of the stasis and the creation of a more responsive model. The single world-view of orthodoxy was seen as stifling, tyrannical, oppressive. Inasmuch as the self interiorized this view it reproduced the oppression on the level of the subjective. The hermeticists opposed the very singleness of this worldview with a contradictory multiplicity, a critical form of "paganism" based on *difference*.

Analogously, since 1989-91 we have entered a new "dark age" in which one worldview (and its *imaginaire*) claims hegemony over all difference. Not only is "pancapitalism" a global system, it has also become its own medium, so to

speak, in that it proposes a universal stasis of imagery. The free circulation of the image is blocked when one image of the world structures the world's self-image. True difference is leached away toward disappearance and replaced by an obsessive re-cycling and sifting-through of "permitted" imagery within the single system of discourse (like the medieval theologians who supposedly quarreled over the gender of angels as the Turks besieged Byzantium). Pancapitalism "permits" any imagery that enhances profit—hence in theory it might permit *any* imagery—but in practice, it *cannot*. This is the crisis of "postmodernism"—crisis as a form of stasis, of infinite re-circulation of the same—the impossibility of difference.

Within the crisis of stasis all manner of imagery can be allowed or even encouraged when it tends toward the depiction of relation as exchange—even the imagery of terror, murder, crime—even the extinction of Nature and the Human—all this can be turned (as imagery at least!) into profit. What cannot be allowed (except perhaps as nostalgia) is the imagery of relations other than exchange. Nostalgia can be contained and marketed—but actual difference would threaten the hegemony of the one worldview. The "Gift Economy" of some nearly-extinguished "primitive tribe" makes excellent TV; our *mourning* for its disappearance can only boost the sales of whatever commodity might

soothe our sense of loss. Mourning itself can become fetishized, as in the victorian era of onyx and jet and black-plumed graveyard horses. Death is good for Capital, because money is the sexuality of the dead. Corpses have already appeared in advertising—"real" corpses.

Assuming that our hypothesis holds so far, we might well ask from "whence" there could appear any image of true difference in such a situation. The obvious answer is that it would have to come from "outside" the stasis.

This means war, obviously. At the very least, it means "Image War".

But how can we even begin to define what might lie "outside" the stasis? Are we not precisely engaged in a situation where all circulating images become part of the crisis of circulation? This is the "malign hermeticism" of the totality of mediation—its spectral metastasis, so to speak—ontology as oncology. Everything that enters the discourse, all that which is "seen", is subverted by the very fact that there is only one discourse, *one exchange*. "Image War" might be just as productive for exchange as other forms of "pure war", since it would at least offer an "illusion of choice". This, then, is the hermetic crisis of the *tactical media*.

7. *Tactical Media*

The unseen lies at least potentially

outside the space of the represented totality. Thus it becomes for tactical media a subject of great theoretical interest. But as media the tactical media must still mediate, and therefore the unseen remains "mysterious" in the precise sense of the term. Since only the seen can be described, the pure unseen cannot be written about or represented—although it can be communicated, at least in "Zen" terms.

However the unseen is not necessarily "pure". If it were pure, it would interest us a great deal less than it does, since it would thereby share in a characteristic we associate with ideology and stasis. In fact the unseen attracts us because of its impurity.

In effect there appear to exist degrees of the unseen. The unseen can paradoxically appear even within the locked circularity of the mediated totality, either inadvertently or else by subversion. For example the TV show about the primitive tribe, and the melancholy of the disappearance of the Gift, cannot touch the unseen actuality of the Gift and its meaning for the people who know it. But sometimes the spoken text or the editing of the film will create potent cognitive dissonances with certain images that suggest the presence of the unseen, at least for a few viewers who are prepared for such irruptions of the mysterious, its "guerrilla" raids on consensus consciousness.

Moreover, the "intimate media" remain relatively invisible to the totality because they are so "poor". The petty extent to which such media participate in market economics, much less consensus aesthetics, makes them so insignificant as to render them meaningless for all practical purposes. Of course as soon as any energy and originality is seen to emanate from such media they are at once absorbed into Capital—and the unseen must retreat, drift on, evade definition, move elsewhere. But this process takes time, and time makes opportunities.

Thus tactical media could make use either of "guerrilla" operations within the media totality, or of intimate media that remain (in some impure manner) outside that totality. But in either case tactical integrity would demand that such "appearances" take place only where they can be effective—in military terms: where they can damage the totality without being absorbed into its "spectacle of dissidence" and permitted rebelliousness. Tactical media will retreat from any such englobement, and in such moments of tactical withdrawal tactical media may have to engage in violence and sacrifice (at least on a conceptual level). Tactical media will make mistakes—all the more so because of its improvisational nature, the absence of any overall strategy. Because tactical media refuses purity, it will engage—and it will be defeated, very often by its own "success".

The purpose and intention of tactical media is precisely not to rejuvenate the consensus by allowing itself to be vampirized of its creative energies by the imaginaire of the UnDead and its "natural laws" of exchange. But we cannot say therefore that the purpose of tactical media "is" the destruction of the totality. This statement of identity would define an ideology or source of authority for tactical media, and limit it to the role of opposition—in effect, to its "spectral" appearance. We certainly don't wish long life and success to the totality, but by defining ourselves (or our techniques) solely as "destructive" we are simply inviting our own recuperation into the pattern of oppression. Tactical media, I suggest, should be about something and for something—this would constitute its "formal" appearance. It should be for the unseen—even for a seduction into the unseen.

Does this mean that the tactics of tactical media can only be defined "situationally"? Even if we reject all ideologizing of intentionality can we still say anything descriptive about specific goals? If we refuse strategy, can we nevertheless articulate something about a tendency or movement or unifying imaginaire of presence (a "myth" perhaps) that might underlie and inform our tactical mediations?

This may indeed be possible, if only because the imaginal values in the

process of emergence in tactical media seem to concern those empirical freedoms expressed not only in immemorial "rights and customs" but also in the most radical politics of desire. In other words, an "organic" substitute for strategy/ideology arises from a shared imaginaire based on such traditional yet radical perspectives. It is in this way that tactical media can be seen as an aspect of a possible effective opposition to exchange itself, to the post ideological ideology of Capital—an opposition that cannot be englobed, and therefore can contemplate the possibility of victory.

All this is pure hypothesis, so it would be pointless and perhaps even counter-productive to engage in any attempt to prescribe or predict or even to influence the tactical media. The historical movement envisioned here (which even faces the challenge of the very "End of History") can make nothing out of any outmoded vanguardism or "unacknowledged legislator"-ism of a discredited intelligentsia, artists, etc., etc. It does, however, seem possible to adopt an "experimental" approach. Who can foretell success or failure? An inherent weakness for narrativity, however, and a desire to work on some sort of "emblematic" structure leads me to an "aimless wandering" or taoist theorizing around certain themes considered here—notably the notions of hermeticism in both its "formal" and

"spectral" aspects. For instance: since money is "imaginal" it is susceptible to hermetic manipulation—even to the "intuition" discussed by such strange billionaires as George Soros. It seems theoretically possible to "hack" money at the level of its representationality—all the more so now that most of it is pure representation. Money that can be manipulated imagistically because money itself is image, however, can also be "downloaded" from its CyberGnostic numisphere and manifested on the earthly plane as hard cash, goods, production. Thus it would appear feasible to redirect capital as wealth, away from areas where pancapitalism has "decreed" its (symbolic) presence, into areas where it has "forbidden" its (real) presence.

"Decree" and "forbid" are enclosed by quotation marks because in truth the situation is so complex that "legality" has become an extremely ambiguous category. Money as medium is engulfed in the same crisis of definition as all the other media. Into this space of uncertainty, hermetic operations could be directed (in perfectly legal ways) such as to interfere with the circulation of Capital. The space of uncertainty—the crack in the monolith of representation—has its deep origin in the intense anxiety of the crisis of stasis. The image of the imaginaire as a labyrinth with no exit induces a kind of claustrophobia akin to that experienced by the Renaissance

occultists in relation to the cosmic stasis of doctrine: escape panic. We are after all still "in transition" toward a perfect global market—the cosmos of economy is not yet fully and flawlessly enclosed.

Hence for instance the sudden obsession with "content". What are we going to do with all the data—what use is it? And who shall create in order that others (all others) may consume? A real puzzle.

Certain elements within political structures still retain a half-hearted sentimentality about the "Social" state; they still want to help program the "content". They are opposed by the zaibatsus that demand "pure" content, measurable only by price rather than value. But what do "the people" want? Into the tactical spaces left vacant by this clash of bewildered titans, certain mediations might be effected. The old magic power of the scribe, the hermetic initiate, might constitute a counter-force to the magic power of the manipulation of content, the monopoly of meaning and interpretation claimed by the totality (which suddenly doesn't look quite so total...).

As we are discussing media, the evocation of the word "magic" seems somehow permissible. How relevant these musings might prove to situations encountered in unmediated reality—perhaps that is another kettle

*of fish. For now, however, we are
simply exercising our imagination.*

*Hakim Bey
NYC
May 1, 1997*

Seduction of the Cyber Zombies

by Hakim Bey

(For Konrad and Marie)

For a start, it would help if we could speak about nets rather than The Net. Only the most extropian true believers in the Net still dream of it as the final solution. More realistic thinkers have rejected cyber-soteriology, but accept the Net as a viable tool (or weapon). They would agree that other nets must be set up and maintained simultaneously with "the" Net--- otherwise it becomes just another medium of alienation, more engrossing than TV, maybe, but thereby even more total in entrancement.

The other nets of course include---first and foremost---patterns of conviviality and of communicativeness. I borrow this word from 19th-century phrenology---apparently there's a bump of communicativeness somewhere on the skull---but I use it to mean something like Bakhtin's "dialogue" transposed to the register of the social; whereas conviviality implies physical presence, communicativeness can also include other media as well. But---as hermeticism teaches us---the positive act of communicating meaning, whether face-to-face (and even without speech), or symbolically

mediated (by text, image, etc.), is always confronted by its negativity. Not all "communication" communicates, map is not territory, and so on.

"Interactive programs" in themselves convey no meaning between living beings but, in fact, no medium is privileged or completely open. As Blake might have said, every medium has its form and its spectre.

What we need, then, is a Blakean "spectral analysis" of the Net. A "Fourier analysis" would also be useful (not Fourier the mathematician, Fourier the Utopian Socialist). But these philosophers were true hermeticists, while we can only heap up a few shards against the whatever.

The implied question:---does the Net further the purpose of communicativeness, and can it be used as a tool to "maximize the potential of the emergence" of convivial situations? Or does there exist a "paradoxical counterproductive effect" (as Illich would say)? In other words: the sociology of institutions shows that certain systems (e.g. education, medicine) attain a monopolistic rigidity and begin to produce the opposite of their intended effect (education stupefies, medicine sickens). Media can also be analyzed in this way. The mass media, considered as a paradoxical entity, has approached the limit of total image-enclosure---a crisis of the stasis of the image---and of the complete disappearance of communicativeness.

The unique structure of the InterNet was considered to be its "many-to-many" patterns, the implication being the possibility of an electronic popular democracy. The Net is an institution, at least in the loose sense of the word. Does it serve its "original" purpose, or is there a paradoxical counter-effect?

Another original pattern within the Net is its centerlessness (its "military" heritage); this has launched the Net into a kind of war with governments. The Net "crosses borders" like a virus. But in this way the Net shares certain qualities with, say, transnational corporations ("zaibatsus")---and with nomadic Capital itself. "Nomadism" has its own form and spectre. As the Five Per Cent Nation of Islam puts it, "not every brother is a brother." Molecularity is a tactic that can be used for or against our autonomy. It pays to be informed. And we can be sure that Global Intelligence pays well for its information;---certainly the Net is by now completely penetrated by surveillance...every bit of E-mail is a postcard to God....

Everyone's favorite examples of imaginative insurrectionary use of the Net---the McLibel Case, the Scientology Case, and above all the Zapatistas---prove that the centerless many-to-many structure has real potential. [McDonald's won the battle but seems to be losing the war---franchises are down 50%!] Luddites who deny this are simply making themselves look

uninformed---and badly disposed toward good causes. The original Luddites were no indiscriminate machine-smashers---they intended to defend their hand-looms and home labor against mechanization and factory centralization. Everything depends on situation, and technology is only one factor in a complex and many-valued situation. Exactly what is it here that needs to be smashed?

Global Capital openly embraces the Net because the Net seems to have the same structure as Global Capital. It proclaims the Net as the Future Now, and protects the netizens from these bad old governments. Why, the Net is the very paradigm of a Free Market, no? A Libertarian's dream. But secretly Global Capital [pardon the pathetic fallacy----gosh, I just can't help reifying Capital...]... secretly, Global Capital must be worried sick. Billions of "start up" dollars have been sunk into the Net, but the Net seems to act like an eclipsed body:---there's some penumbral effect, but the planet is black. Or even a black hole. After all, Hawking proved that even black holes produce a tiny bit of energy---a few million bucks maybe. But essentially there is no money in the Net, and no money coming out of it. It seems the Net can act metaphorically as a "street market" to some extent (possibly to a much greater extent that it does)---but it has failed to develop into a Big Market. The WWW doesn't seem to help much in this respect. "Virtual

Reality" is beginning to look like yet another lost future. IntraNets, point-casting (push), and "interactive television" are the strategies proposed by the Zaibatsus for colonizing what's left of the Net. E-cash doesn't seem to be catching on.

Meanwhile the Net takes on an aspect not only of disembodied street fair but also psychic slum. Predatory avatars---disinformationists---slave-labor data-entry in US prisons---cyberrape (violation of the data body)---invisible surveillance---waves of panic (K-porn, Nazis-on-the-Net, etc.)---massive invasion of privacy---advertisements---all manner of psychic pollution. Not to mention the possibility of bionic brainwashing, carpal tunnel syndrome, and the sinister all-gray-green presence of the machines themselves, like old sci-fi movie sets (future as bad design).

In fact, just as Gibson predicted, the Net is already virtually haunted. Web cemeteries for dead cyber-pets---false obituaries---Tim Leary still sending personal messages---ascended masters of Heaven's Gate---not to mention the already vast lost archaeology of the Net, its ARPA levels, old BBSs, forgotten languages, abandoned Webpages. In fact, as someone said at the last NETTIME conference in Ljubljana, the Net has already become a kind of romantic ruin. And here, at the most "spectral" level of our analysis, suddenly, the Net begins to

look...interesting again. A bit of gothic horror. Seduction of the Cyber Zombies. Fin-de-millennium, hothouse flowers, laudanum.

However.

We live in a country where 1% of the population controls half the money---in a world where fewer than 400 people control half the money---where 94.2% of all the money refers only to money, and not to production of any kind (except of money);---a country with the highest per capita prison population in the world, where "security" is the only growth-industry (except for entertainment), where an insane war on drugs and the environment is conceived as the last valid function of government;---a world of ecocide, agribusiness, deforestation, murder of indigenous peoples, bioengineering, forced labor---a world built on the assumption that maximum profit for 500 companies is the best plan for humanity---a world in which the total image has absorbed and suffocated the voices and minds of every speaker---in which the image of exchange has taken the place of all human relations.

Instead of bleating liberal platitudes about all this---or raising the disturbing question of "ethics"---let me simply comment as a Stirnerian anarchist (a point of view I still find useful after all these years):---since I presume to take the world as my oyster, I am

personally at war with all the above "facts" because they violate my desires and deny me my pleasures. Therefore I seek alliances with other individuals (in a "union of self-owning-ones") who share my goals. For the leftwing Stirnerites the favored tactic was always the General Strike (the Sorelian myth). In response to Global Capital we need a new version of this myth that can include syndicalist structures but not be limited by them. The old enemy of the anarchists was always the State. We still have the State to worry about (police in the universal Mall), but clearly the real enemies are the zaibatsus and banks. (The biggest mistake in revolutionary history was the failure to seize the Bank in Paris, 1871.) In the very near future there is going to be "war" against the WTO/IMF/GATT structure of Global Capital --- a war of sheer desperation, waged by a worldfull of individuals and organic groups against corporations and "the money power" (i.e. money itself). Hopefully a peaceful war, like a big General Strike --- but realistically one should prepare for the worst. And what we need to know is, what can the InterNet do for us?

Obviously a good revolt needs good communication systems. Right now however I'd prefer to transmit my conspiratorial secrets (if I had any) through the Post Office rather than the Net. A really successful conspiracy leaves no paper trail, like the Libyan Revolution of 1969 (but then, phone-

tapping was still fairly primitive then). Moreover, how could we be sure that what we saw on the Net was information and not disinformation? Especially if our organization existed only on the Net? Speaking as a Stirnerite, I don't want to banish spooks from my head only to find them again on my screen. Virtual street-fighter, virtual ruins. Sounds like a losing proposition.

Most disturbing for us would be the "gnostic" quality of the Net, its tendency toward exclusion of the body, its promise of technological transcendence of the flesh. Even if some people have "met through the Net", the general movement is toward atomization---"slumped alone in front of the screen". The "movement" today pays too much attention to media in general because power has virtually eluded us---and within the speculum of the Net its reflection mocks us. Net as substitute for conviviality and communicativeness. Net as bad religion. Part of the media-trance. The commodification of difference.

Aside from this criticism of the Net from the point of view of the Individual Sovereign we could also launch an analysis from a Fourierite position. Here instead of individuals we would consider the "series", the basic Passional group without which the single human remains incomplete---and the Phalanstery, or complete Series of Series (minimum 1620

members). But the goal remains the same:---grouping occurs to maximize pleasures or "luxury" for the members of the group, Passion being the only viable force for social cohesion. (In fact on this basis we might consider a "synthesis" of Stirner and Fourier, apparently polar opposites). For Fourier, Passion is by definition embodied; all "networking" is carried out via physical presence (although he allows carrier pigeons for communications between Phalansteries). As a number mystic, Fourier might well have enjoyed the computer---in fact he invented "computer dating" in a sense---but he would most certainly have disapproved of any technology that involved physical separation. (I believe it was Balzac who said that for Fourier the only sin was eating lunch alone.) Conviviality in the most literal sense---ideally, the orgy. "Passional Attraction" works because everyone has different Passions:---difference is already "luxury". The data body, the screenal body, is only metaphorically a body. The space between us---the "medium"--is meant to be filled with Aromal Rays, zodiacs of brilliant light (new colors!), profusions of fruit and flowers, the aromas of gastrosophic cuisine---and ultimately that space is meant to be closed, healed.

Another critique of the Net could be made from a Proudhonian perspective. (Proudhon was influenced by Fourier, though he pretended not to be. They

were both from Bezançon, like Victor Hugo.) Proudhon was more "progressive" about technology than our other exemplars, and it would be interesting to see what kind of role he would design for the Net in his ideal future of Mutualism and anarcho-federation. For him "governance" was a matter of mere administration of production and exchange. Computers might prove to be useful tools under such conditions. But Proudhon as well as Marx would undoubtedly modify their optimistic view of technology if they could be channeled today for their opinion: ---machine as social pollution, technology itself (and by implication Work) as alienation. This argument was of course made by libertarian Marxists, Green anarchists, etc.--- legitimate descendants of Marx and Proudhon, such as Marcuse or Illich. The InterNet cannot be fairly considered outside this critique of technology. (Neither can bioengineering.) The work of Benjamin, Debord, and even Baudrillard (until he fell exhausted) makes it clear that the total image---"the media"---plays a central role in this critique. Proudhon would question the Net about justice, and about presence.

But I would prefer to focus more narrowly on the question of the image. Here we might return to Blake as our "philosophical hammer" (Nietzsche really meant a kind of tuning fork), since we are speaking of the idol, the image. I would argue that we are

suffering from a crisis of overproduction of the image. We are, as Giordano Bruno put it, "in chains", entranced by the image. In such a case we need either a healthy dose of iconoclasm, or else (or also) a more subtle kind of hermetic criticism, a liberation from the image by the image. Actually, Blake supplied both---he was both an idol-smasher and simultaneously a hermeticist who used images for liberation, both political and spiritual. Hermeticists understand that the "hieroglyph", the image/text or mediated (symbolic) communication, has a "magical" effect, by-passing linear working rational consciousness and deeply influencing the psyche. This is why Blake says one must make one's own system or else be a slave to someone else's. The autonomy of the imagination is a high value for hermeticism---and the critique of the image is the defense of the imagination. The screen is an aspect of the image that cannot escape this "spectral analysis"---media as "satanic mills."

Ultimately it seems there's no escape from technology or alienation. Techné itself is prosthesis of consciousness, and thus inseparable from the human condition. (Language is included here as techné.) Technology as the obvious melding of techné and language (the ratio or "reason" of techné) has simply been a category of human existence since at least the Paleolithic. But---are we permitted to ask at what point the

heart itself is to be replaced by an artificial limb? At what point does a given technology "flip" and begin producing paradoxical counterproductivity? If we could reach a consensus on this, would there still exist any reason to speak of technological determinism, or the machinic as fate? In this sense, the oldtime Luddites deserve some consideration. Techné must serve the human, not define the human.

We must (apparently) accept the inevitability of consciousness, but only on the condition that is not to be the same consciousness. We suspect that rational, machinic, linear, aufklaerung, universal consciousness has enjoyed too long a tyranny---or "monopoly". There's nothing wrong with reason (in fact we could use a lot more of it) but rationalism feels like a passé ideology. Reason must share space with other forms of consciousness:---entheogenic consciousness, or shamanic consciousness (which has nothing to do with "religion" as commonly defined)---bioconsciousness, the systemic awareness of the hermetic ideal of the living earth---cultural or ethnic consciousness, different ways of seeing---indigenous peoples---or the Celts---or Islam---"identity" consciousness of all sorts---and trans-identity consciousness. Variety of consciousness would seem to be the only possible ground for our ethics.

Well then, what about InterNet

consciousness? It has its non-linear aspects, doesn't it? If there can exist a "rationality of the marvelous", is there not a place for Net mind at the feast?

In the end we must be content with ambiguity. A "pure" answer is impossible here---it would stink of ideology. Yes and no.

But---"Between Yes and No, stars fall from heaven and heads fly off at the neck", as the great sufi Shaykh Ibn Arabi told the Aristotelian philosopher Averöes.

A fitting image for a romantic ruin....

Hakim Bey
NYC
Aug. 18 1997

Overcoming Tourism

by Hakim Bey

In the Old Days tourism didnt exist. Gypsies, Tinkers and other true nomads even now roam about their worlds at will, but no one would therefore think of calling them «tourists».

Tourism is an invention of the 19th century-a period of history which sometimes seems to have stretched out to unnatural length. In many ways, we are *still* living in the 19th century.

The tourist seeks out Culture because - in our world-culture has disappeared into the maw of the Spectacle culture has been torn down and replaced with a Mall or a talk-show- because our education is nothing but a preparation for a lifetime of work and consumption- because we ourselves have ceased to create. Even though tourists appear to be physically present in Nature or Culture, in effect one might call them ghosts haunting ruins, lacking all bodily presence. They're not really *there*, but rather move through a mind-scape, an abstraction («Nature», «Culture»), collecting images rather than experience. All too frequently their vacations are taken in the midst of other peoples' misery and even add to that misery.

Recently several people were assassinated in Egypt *just for being tourists*. Behold the Future. Tourism and terrorism: -just what is the difference?

Of the three archaic reasons for travel - call them «war», «trade», and «pilgrimage» - which one gave birth to tourism? Some would automatically answer that it must be pilgrimage. The pilgrim goes «there» to see, the pilgrim normally brings back some souvenir; the pilgrim takes «time off» from daily life; the pilgrim has nonmaterial goals. In this way, the pilgrim foreshadows the tourist.

But the pilgrim undergoes a shift of consciousness, and for the pilgrim that shift *is real*. Pilgrimage is a form of initiation, and initiation is an opening to other forms of cognition.

We can detect something of the real difference between pilgrim and tourist, however, by comparing their effects on the places they visit. Changes in a place-a city, a shrine, a forest-may be subtle, but at least they can be observed. The state of the *soul* may be a matter for conjecture, but perhaps we can say something about the state of the *social*.

Pilgrimage sites like Mecca may serve as great bazaars for trade and they may even serve as centers of production, (like the silk industry of

Benares) - but their primary «product» is *baraka* or *maria*. These words (one Arabic, one Polynesian) are usually translated as «blessing», but they also carry a freight of other meanings.

The wandering dervish who sleeps at a shrine in order to dream of a dead saint (one of the «People of the Tombs») seeks initiation or advancement on the spiritual path, a mother who brings a sick child to Lourdes seeks healing; a childless woman in Morocco hopes the *Marabout* will make her fertile if she ties a rag to the old tree growing out of the grave; the traveller to Mecca yearns for the very center of the Faith, and as the caravans come within sight of the Holy City the *hajji* calls out «*Labbaïka Allabumma!*» - «*I am here, O Lord!*»

All these motives are summed up by the word *baraka*, which sometimes seems to be a palpable substance, measurable in terms of increased charisma or «luck». The shrine *produces* *baraka*. And the pilgrim takes it away. But blessing is a product of the Imagination-and thus no matter how many pilgrims take it away there's always more. In fact, the more they *take*, the more blessing the shrine can produce (because a popular shrine *grows* with every answered prayer).

To say that *baraka* is «imaginal» is not to call it «unreal». It's real enough to those who feel it. But spiritual goods do not follow the rules of supply and

demand like material goods. The more demand for spiritual goods, the more supply. The production of baraka is *infinite*.

By contrast, the tourist desires not baraka but *cultural difference*. The pilgrim - we might say - leaves the «secular space» of home and travels to the «sacred space» of the shrine in order to experience the *difference* between secular and sacred. But this difference remains intangible, subtle, invisible to the «profane» gaze, spiritual, imaginal. Cultural difference however is measurable, apparent, visible, material, economic, *social*.

The imagination of the capitalist «first world» is exhausted. It cannot imagine anything *different*. So the tourist leaves the homogenous space of «home» for the heterogenous space of «foreign climes» not to receive a «blessing» but simply to admire the *picturesque*, the mere view or snapshot of difference, to *see the difference*.

The tourist *consumes* difference.

But the production of cultural difference is not infinite. It is not «merely» imaginal. It is rooted in language, landscape, architecture, custom, taste, smell. It is very physical. The more it is used up or taken away, the less remains. The social can produce just so much «meaning», just so much difference. Once it's gone, it's gone.

Over the centuries perhaps a given sacred place attracted millions of pilgrims - and yet somehow despite all the gazing and admiring and praying and souvenir-buying, this place *retained its meaning*. And now-after 20 or 30 years of tourism-that meaning has been lost. Where did it go? How did this *happen*?

Tourism's real roots do not lie in pilgrimage (or even in «fair» trade), but in *war*. Rape and pillage were the original forms of tourism, or rather, the first tourists followed directly in the wake of war, like human vultures picking over battlefield carnage for imaginary booty - for *images*.

Tourism arose as a symptom of an Imperial-ism that was *total* - economic, political, and spiritual.

What's really amazing is that so *few* tourists have been murdered by such a meagre handful of terrorists. Perhaps a secret complicity exists between these mirror-image foes. Both are displaced people, cut loose from all mooring, drifting in a sea of images. The terrorist act exists only in the *image* of the act - without CNN, there survives only a spasm of meaningless cruelty. And the tourist's act exists only in the images of that act, the snapshots and souvenirs; otherwise nothing remains but the dunning letters of credit-card companies and a residue of «free mileage» from some foundering airline. The terrorist and the tourist are

perhaps the most alienated of all the products of post-imperial capitalism. An abyss of images separates them from the objects of their desire. In a strange way they are twins.

Nothing ever really touches the life of the tourist. Every act of the tourist is *mediated*. Anyone who's ever witnessed a phalanx of Americans or a busload of Japanese advancing on some ruin or ritual must have noticed that even their collective gaze is mediated by the medium of the camera's multi-faceted eye, and that the multiplicity of cameras, videocams, and recorders forms a complex of shiny clicking *scales* in an armor of pure mediation. Nothing organic penetrates this insectoid carapace which serves as both protective critic and predatory mandible, snapping up images, images, images. At its most extreme this mediation takes the form of the *guided tour*, in which every image is interpreted by a licensed expert, a *psychopomp* or guide of the Dead, a virtual Virgil in the Inferno of meaninglessness—a minor functionary of the Central Discourse and its metaphysics of appropriation—a pimp of fleshless ecstasies.

The real place of the tourist is not the site of the exotic, but rather the no-place place (literally the «utopia») of median space, liminal space, in-between space - the space of travel itself, the industrial abstraction of the airport, or the machine-dimension of

plane or bus.

So the tourist and the terrorist-those twin ghosts of the airports of abstraction-suffer an identical hunger for the *authentic*. But the authentic recedes whenever they approach it. Cameras and guns stand in the way of that moment of *love* which is the hidden dream of every terrorist and tourist. To their secret misery, all they can do is destroy. The tourist destroys *meaning*, and the terrorist destroys the tourist.

Tourism is the apotheosis and quintessence of «Commodity Fetishism.» It is the ultimate Cargo Cult - the worship of «goods» that will *never* arrive, because they have been exalted, raised to glory, deified, worshipped and absorbed, all on the plane of pure spirit, beyond the stench of mortality (or morality).

You buy tourism - you get nothing but images. Tourism, like Virtual Reality, is a form of Gnosis, of bodyhatred and body-transcendence. The ultimate tourist «trip» will take place *in* Cyberspace, and it will *be*

CyberGnosis SM_

a trip to paranirvana

and back,
in the comfort of your
very own
«workstation.»
Jack in,
leave Earth
behind!

The modest goal of this little book is to address the *individual traveler* who has decided to resist tourism.

Even though we may find it impossible in the end to «purify» ourselves and our travel from every last taint and trace of tourism, we still feel that improvement may be possible.

Not only do we disdain tourism for its vulgarity and its injustice, and therefore wish to avoid any contamination (conscious or unconscious) by its viral virulency - we also lavish to understand travel as an act of *reciprocity* rather than alienation. In other words, we don't wish merely to avoid the negativities of tourism, but

even more to achieve *positive travel*, which we envision as a productive and mutually enhancing relation between self and other, guest and host - a form of *cross-cultural synergy* in which the whole exceeds the sum of parts.

We'd like to know if travel can be carried out according to a secret economy of baraka, whereby not only the shrine but also the pilgrims themselves have «blessings» to bestow.

Before the Age of the Commodity, we know, there was an Age of the Gift, of reciprocity, of giving and receiving. We learned this from the tales of certain travelers, who found remnants of the world of the Gift among certain tribes, in the form of potlach or ritual exchange, and recorded their observations of such strange practises.

Not long ago there still existed a custom among South Sea islanders of travelling vast distances by outrigger canoe, without compass or sextant, in order to exchange valuable and useless presents (ceremonial art-objects rich in *mana*) from island to island in a complex pattern of overlapping reciprocities.

We suspect that even though travel in the modern world seems to have been taken over by the Commodity - even though the networks of convivial reciprocity *seem* to have vanished from the map - even though tourism *seems*

to have triumphed - even so - we continue to suspect that other pathways still persist, other tracks, unofficial, not noted on the map, perhaps even «secret»- pathways still linked to the possibility of an economy of the Gift, smugglers' routes for freespirits, known only to the geomantic guerillas of the art of travel.

As a matter of fact, we don't just «suspect» it. We *know* it. We know there exists an art of travel.

Perhaps the greatest and subtlest practitioners of the art of travel were the sufis, the mystics of Islam. Before the age of passports, immunisations, airlines and other impediments to free travel, the sufis wandered footloose in a world where borders tended to be more permeable than nowadays, thanks to the transnationalism of Islam and the cultural unity of *Dar al-Islam*, the Islamic world.

The great medieval Moslem travelers, like Ibn Battuta and Naser Khusraw, have left accounts of vast journies - Persia to Egypt, or even Morocco to China-which never set foot outside a landscape of deserts, camels, caravanserais, bazaars, and piety. *Someone* always spoke Arabic, however badly, and Islamic culture permeated the remotest backwaters, however superficially. Reading the tales of Sinbad the sailor (from the *1001 Nights*) gives us the impression of a world where even the terra incognita

was still - despite all marvels and oddities - somehow familiar, somehow *Islamic*. Within this unity, which was not yet a uniformity, the sufis formed a special class of travelers. Not warriors, not merchants, and not quite ordinary pilgrims either, the dervishes represent a *spiritualization of pure nomadism*.

According to the Koran, God's Wide Earth and everything in it are «sacred». not only as divine creations but also because the material world is full of «waymarks» or signs of divine reality, Moreover, Islam itself is born between two journies, Mohammad's *hijra* or «Flight» from Mecca to Medina, and his *hajj*, or return voyage. The hajj is the movement toward the origin and center for every Moslem even today, and the annual Pilgrimage has played a vital role not just in the religious unity of Islam but also in its cultural unity.

Mohammad himself exemplifies every kind of travel in Islam: - his youth with the Meccan caravans of Summer and Winter, as a merchant; his campaigns as a warrior his triumph as a humble pilgrim. Although an urban leader he is also the prophet of the Bedouin and himself a kind of nomad, a «sojourner» - an «orphan». From this perspective travel can almost be seen as a *sacrament*. Every religion sanctifies travel to some degree, but Islam is virtually unimaginable without it.

The Prophet said, «Seek knowledge, even as far as China». From the

beginning Islam lifts travel above all «mundane» utilitarianism and gives it an epistemological or even gnostic dimension. «The jewel that never leaves the mine is never polished», says the sufi Saadi. To «educate» is to «lead outside», to give the pupil a perspective beyond parochiality and mere subjectivity.

Some sufis may have done all their traveling in the Imaginal World of archetypal dreams and visions, but vast numbers of them took the Prophet's exhortations quite literally. Even today dervishes wander over the entire Islamic world-but as late as the 19th century they wandered in veritable hordes, hundreds or even thousands at a time, and covered vast distances. All in search of knowledge.

Unofficially there existed two basic types of wandering sufi: the «gentleman-scholar» type, and the mendicant dervish. The former category includes Ibn Battuta (who collected sufi initiations the way some occidental gentlemen once collected masonic degrees); and - on a much more serious level - the «Greatest Shaykh» Ibn Arabi, who meandered slowly through the 13th century from his native Spain, across North Africa through Egypt to Mecca, and finally to Damascus.

Ibn Arabi actually left accounts of his search for saints and adventures on the road, which could be pieced together

from his voluminous writings to form a kind of *rihla* or «travel text» (a recognised genre of Islamic literature) or autobiography. Ordinary scholars travelled in search of rare texts on theology or jurisprudence, but Ibn Arabi sought only the highest secrets of esotericism and the loftiest «openings» into the world of divine illumination, for him every «journey to the outer horizons» was also a «journey to the inner horizons» of spiritual psychology and gnosis.

On the visions he experienced in Mecca alone he wrote a 12-volume work (*The Meccan Revelations*), and he has also left us precious sketches of hundreds of his contemporaries, from the greatest philosophers of the age to humble dervishes and «madmen», anonymous women saints and «Hidden Masters». Ibn Arabi enjoyed a special relation with Khezr, the immortal and unknown prophet, the «Green Man», who sometimes appears to wandering sufis in distress, to rescue them from the desert, or to initiate them. Khezr, in a sense, can be called the patron saint of the travelling dervishes - and the prototype. (He first appears in the Koran as a mysterious wanderer and companion of Moses in the desert.)

Christianity once included a few orders of wandering mendicants (in fact St. Francis organised one after meeting with dervishes in the Holy Land, who may have bestowed upon him a «cloak of initiation» - the famous patchwork

robe he was wearing when he returned to Italy) - but Islam spawned dozens, perhaps hundreds of such orders.

As Sufism crystallised from the loose spontaneity of early days to an institution with rules and grades, «travel for knowledge» was also regularised and organised. Elaborate handbooks of duties for dervishes were produced which included methods for turning travel into a very specific form of meditation. The whole Sufi «path» itself was symbolised in terms of *intentional travel*.

In some cases itineraries were fixed (e.g., the Hajj); other involved waiting for «signs» to appear, coincidences, intuitions, «adventures» such as those which inspired the travels of the Arthurian knights. Some orders limited the time spent in any one place to 40 days; others made a rule of never sleeping twice in the same place. The strict orders, such as the Naqshbandis, turned travel into a kind of full-time choreography, in which every movement was pre-ordained and designed to *enhance consciousness*.

By contrast, the more heterodox orders (such as the Qalandars) adopted a «rule» of total spontaneity and abandon - «permanent unemployment» as one of them called it - an insouciance of bohemian proportions - a «dropping-out» at once both scandalous and completely traditional. Colorfully dressed, carrying their

begging bowls, axes, and standards, addicted to music and dance, carefree and cheerful (sometimes to the point of «blameworthiness»!), orders such as the Nematollahis of 19th century Persia grew to proportions that alarmed both sultans and theologians - many dervishes were executed for «heresy». Today the true Qalandars survive mostly in India, where their lapses from orthodoxy include a fondness for hemp and a sincere hatred of work. Some are charlatans, some are simply bums - but a surprising number of them seem to be people of *attainment* how can I put it? people of self-realization, marked by a distinct aura of grace, or baraka.

All the different types of sub travel we've described are united by certain shared vital structural forces. One such force might be called a «magical» worldview, a sense of life that rejects the «merely» random for a reality of signs and wonders, of meaningful coincidences and «unveilings». As anyone who's ever tried it will testify, intentional travel *immediately* opens one up to this «magical» influence.

A psychologist might explain this phenomenon (either with awe or with reductionist disdain) as «subjective» ; while the pious believer would take it quite literally. From the sun point of view neither interpretation rules out the other, nor suffices in itself, to explain away the marvels of the Path. In sufism, the «objective» and the

«subjective» are not considered opposites, but complements. From the point of view of the two-dimensional thinker (whether scientific or religious) such paradoxology smacks of the forbidden.

Another force underlying all forms of intentional travel can be described by the Arabic word *adab*. On one level *adab* simply means «good manners» and in the case of travel these manners are based on the ancient customs of desert nomads, for whom both wandering and hospitality are sacred acts. In this sense the dervish shares both the privileges and the responsibilities of the *guest*.

Bedouin hospitality is a clear survival of the primordial economy of the Gift - a relation of reciprocity. The wanderer must be taken in (the dervish must be fed) - but thereby the wanderer assumes a role prescribed by ancient custom - and must give back something to the host. For the bedouin this relation is almost a form of clientage: - the breaking of bread and sharing of salt constitute a sort of kinship. Gratitude is not a sufficient response to such generosity. The traveler must consent to a temporary adoption - anything less would offend against *adab*.

Islamic society retains at least a sentimental attachment to these rules, and thus creates a special niche for the dervish, that of the full-time guest. The

dervish returns the gifts of society with the gift of baraka. In ordinary pilgrimage the traveler receives baraka *from* a place, but the dervish reverses the flow and brings baraka *to* a place. The sufi may think of himself (or herself) as a permanent pilgrim - but to the ordinary stay-at-home people of the mundane world the sufi is a kind of perambulatory shrine.

Now tourism in its very structure breaks the reciprocity of host and guest. In English, a «host» may have either guests - or parasites. The tourist is a parasite - for no amount of money can pay for hospitality. The true traveler is a *guest* and thus serves a very real function, even today, in societies where the ideals of hospitality have not yet faded from the «collective mentality». To be a host, in such societies, is a *meritorious act*. Therefore, to be a guest is also to *give merit*.

The modern traveler who grasps the simple spirit of this relation will be forgiven many lapses in the intricate ritual of adab (how many cups of coffee? Where to put one's feet? How to be entertaining? How to show gratitude? etc.) peculiar to a specific culture. And if one bothers to master a few of the traditional forms of adab, and to deploy them with heartfelt sincerity, then both guest and host will gain more than they put into the relation and this *more* is the unmistakable sign of the presence of

the Gift.

Another level of meaning of the word *adab* connects it with *culture* (since culture can be seen as the sum of all manners and customs); in modern usage the Department of «Arts and Letters» at a University would be called *Adabiyyat*. To have *adab* in this sense is to be «polished» (like that well-traveled gem) - but this has nothing necessarily to do with «fine arts» or literacy or being a city-slicker or even being «cultured». It is a matter of the «heart».

«Adab» is sometimes given as a oneword definition of schism. But insincere manners (*ta 'arof* in Persian) and insincere culture alike are shunned by the sufi - «There is no *ta'arof* in *Tassawuf* [Sufism]», as the dervishes say; ..*Darvishi*» is an adjectival synonym for informality, the laid-back quality of the people of Heart - and for *spontaneous adab*, so to speak. The true guest and host never make an obvious effort to fulfil the «rules» of reciprocity - they may follow the ritual scrupulously, or they may bend the forms creatively, but in either case they will give their actions a depth of sincerity that manifests as natural grace. *Adab* is a kind of *love*.

A complement of this «technique» (or «Zen») of human relations can be found in the sufi manner of relating to the world in general. The «mundane» world - of social deceit and negativity,

of usurious emotions inauthentic consciousness («*mauvaise conscience*»), boorishness, ill-will, inattention, blind reaction, false spectacle, empty discourse, etc. etc. -all this no longer holds any interest for the traveling dervish. But those who say that the dervish has abandoned «this world» - «God's Wide Earth» - would be mistaken.

The dervish is not a Gnostic Dualist who hates the *biosphere* (which certainly includes the imagination and the emotions, as well as «matter» itself). The early Moslem ascetics certainly closed themselves off from everything. When Rabiah, the woman saint of Basra, was urged to come out of her house and «witness the wonders of God's creation», she replied, «Come *into* the house and see them», i.e., come into the heart of contemplation of the oneness which is above the manyness of reality. «*Contraction*» and «*Expansion*» are both sufi terms for spiritual states. Rabiah was manifesting *Contraction*: a kind of sacred melancholia which has been metaphorized as the «Caravan of Winter», of return to Mecca (the center, the heart), of inferiority, and of asceticism or selfdenial. She was not a world-hating Dualist, nor even a moralistic fleshhating puritan. She was simply manifesting a certain specific kind of grace.

The wandering dervish however manifests a state more typical of Islam

in its most exuberant energies. He indeed seeks Expansion, spiritual joy based on the sheer multiplicity of the divine generosity in material creation. (Ibn Arabi has an amusing «proof» that *this* world is the *best* world - for, if it were *not*, then God would be ungenerous - which is absurd. Q.E.D.) In order to appreciate the multiple waymarks of the Wide Earth precisely as the unfolding of this generosity, the sufi cultivates what might be called the *theophanic gaze* : - the opening of the «Eye of the Heart» to the experience of certain places, objects people, events as *locations of the «shining-through»* of divine Light.

The dervish travels, so to speak, both in the material world and in the «World of Imagination» simultaneously. But for the eye of the heart these worlds interpenetrate at certain points. One might say that they mutually reveal or «unveil» each other. Ultimately, they are «one»-and only our state of tranced inattention, our mundane consciousness, prevents us from experiencing this «deep» identity at every moment. The purpose of intentional travel, with its «adventures» and its uprooting of habits, is to shake loose the dervish from all the trance-effects of ordinariness. Travel, in other words, is meant to induce a certain state of consciousness or «spiritual state» - that of Expansion.

For the wanderer, each person one

meets might act as an «angel», each shrine one visits may unlock some initiatic dream, each experience of Nature may vibrate with the presence of some «spirit of place». Indeed, even the mundane and ordinary may suddenly be seen as numinous (as in the great travel haiku of the Japanese Zen poet Basho) - a face in the crowd at a railway station, crows on telephone wires, sunlight in a puddle....

Obviously one doesn't *need* to travel to experience this state. But travel can be used - that is, an art of travel can be acquired - to maximise the chances for attaining such a state. It is a *moving meditation*, like the Taoist martial arts. The *Caravan of Summer* moved outward, out of Mecca, to the rich trading lands of Syria and Yemen. Likewise the dervish is «moving out» (it's always «moving day»), heading forth, taking off, on «perpetual holiday» as one poet expressed it, with an open Heart, an attentive eye (and other senses), and a yearning for Meaning, a thirst for knowledge. One must remain *alert*, since anything might suddenly unveil itself as a *sign*. This sounds like a kind of «paranoia» - although «metanoia» might be a better term - and indeed one finds «madmen» amongst the dervishes, «attracted ones», overpowered by divine influxions, lost in the Light. In the Orient the insane are often cared for and admired as helpless saints, because «mental illness» may sometimes appear as a symptom of too

much holiness rather than too little «reason». Hemp's popularity amongst the dervishes can be attributed to its power to induce a kind of intuitive attentiveness which constitutes a controllable insanity: - herbal metanoia. But travel in itself can intoxicate the heart with the beauty of theophanic presence. It's a question of *practise* - the polishing of the jewel - removal of moss from the rolling stone.

In the old days (which are still going on in some remote parts of the East) Islam thought of itself as a whole world, a wide world, a space with great latitude within which Islam embraced the whole of society and nature. This latitude appeared on the social level as *tolerance*. There was room enough, even for such marginal groups as mad wandering dervishes. Sufism itself - or at least its austere orthodox and «sober» aspect-occupied a central position in the cultural discourse. «Everyone» understood intentional travel by analogy with the Hail - everyone *understood* the dervishes, even if they disapproved.

Nowadays however Islam views itself as a partial world, surrounded by unbelief and hostility, and suffering internal ruptures of every sort. Since the 19th century Islam has lost its global consciousness and sense of its own wideness and completeness. No longer therefore can Islam easily find a place for every marginalized individual and group within a pattern of tolerance

and social order. The dervishes now appear as an *intolerable difference* in society. Every Moslem must now be the same, united against all outsiders, and struck from the same prototype. Of course Moslems have always «imitated» the Prophet and viewed his image as the norm - and this has acted as a powerful unifying force for style and substance within Dar al-Islam. But «nowadays» the puritans and reformers have forgotten that this «imitation» was not directed only at an early-medieval Meccan merchant named Mohammad but also at the *insan al-kamil* (the «Perfect Man» or «Universal Human»), an ideal of *inclusion* rather than *exclusion*, an ideal of *integral culture*, not an attitude of purity in peril, not xenophobia disguised as piety, not totalitarianism, not reaction.

The dervish is persecuted nowadays in most of the Islamic world. Puritanism always embraces the most atrocious aspects of modernism in its crusade to strip the Faith of «medieval accretions» such as popular sufism. And surely the way of the wandering dervish cannot thrive in a world of airplanes and oil-wells, of nationalist/chauvinist hostilities (and thus of impenetrable *borders*), and of a puritanism which suspects all difference as a threat. This puritanism has triumphed not only in the East, but rather closer to home as well. It is seen in the «time discipline» of modern too-Late-Capitalism, and in the porous rigidity of consumerist

hyperconformity, as well as in the bigoted reaction and sex-hysteria of the «Christian Right». Where in all this can we find room for the poetic (and parasitic!) life of *Aimless Wandering* - the life of Chuang Tzu (who coined this slogan) and his Taoist progeny - the life of Saint Francis and his shoeless devotees - the life of (for example) Nur All Shah Isfahani, a 19th century sufi poet who was executed in Iran for the awful heresy of meandering-dervishism?

Here is the flip side of the «problem of tourism»: -the problem of the *disappearance of «aimless wandering»*. Possibly the two are directly related, so that the more tourism becomes possible, the more dervishism becomes impossible. In fact, we might well ask if this little essay on the delightful life of the dervish possesses the least bit of relevance for the contemporary world. Can this knowledge help us to *overcome* tourism, even within our own consciousness and life? Or is it merely an exercise in nostalgia for lost possibilities - a futile indulgence in romanticism?

Well, yes and no. Sure, I confess I'm hopelessly romantic about the *form* of the dervish life, to the extent that for a while I turned my back on the mundane world and followed it myself. Because of course, it hasn't really disappeared. Decadent yes - but not gone forever. What little I know about travel I learned in those few years - I

owe a debt to «medieval accretions» I can never pay - and I'll never regret my «escapism» for a single moment. BUT - I don't consider the *form* of dervishism to be the answer to the «problem of tourism.» The *form* has lost most of its efficacy. There's no point in trying to «preserve» it (as if it were a pickle, or a lab specimen) - there's nothing quite so pathetic as mere «survival».

But: beneath the charming outer forms of dervishism lies the conceptual matrix, so to speak, which we've called *intentional travel*. On this point we should suffer no embarrassment about «nostalgia». We have asked ourselves whether or not we *desire* a means to discover the art of travel, whether we *want and will* to overcome «the inner tourist», the false consciousness which screens us from the experience of the Wide World's waymarks. The way of the dervish (or of the Taoist, the Franciscan, etc.) interests us - finally - only to the extent that it can provide us with a key - not THE Key, perhaps - but a key. And of course - it does.

One fundamental key to success in Travel is of course *attentiveness*. We call it «paying attention» in English & «prêter attention» in French (in Arabic, however, one *gives* attention) suggesting that we're as stingy with our attentiveness as we are with our money. Quite often it seems that *no one is* «paying attention», that

everyone is hoarding their consciousness - what? saving it for a rainy day?-and damping down the fires of awareness lest all available fuel be consumed in a single holocaust of unbearable *knowing*.

This model of consciousness seems suspiciously «Capitalist» however - as if indeed our attention were a limited resource, once spent forever irrecoverable. A *usury* of perception now appears: - we demand interest on our payment-of-attention, as if it were a loan rather than an expense. Or as if our consciousness were threatened by an entropic «heat-death», against which the best defense must consist of a dull mediocre trance-state of grudging half-attention - a miserliness of psychic resources - a *refusal* to notice the unexpected or to savour the miraculousness of the ordinary - a lack of *generosity*.

But what if we treated our perceptions as gifts rather than payments? What if we *gave* our attention instead of *paying* it? According to the law of reciprocity, the gift is returned with a gift - there is no expenditure, no scarcity, no debt against Capital, no penury, no punishment for giving our attention away, and no end to the potentiality of attentiveness.

Our consciousness is not a commodity, nor is it a contractual agreement between the Cartesian ego and the abyss of Nothingness, nor is it simply a

function of some meat-machine with a limited warranty. True, eventually we wear out and break. In a certain sense the hoarding of our energies makes sense-we «save» ourselves for the truly important moments, the break-throughs, the «peak experiences».

But if we picture ourselves as shallow coin-purses - if we barricade the «doors of perception» like fearful peasants at the howling of boreal wolves - if we never «pay attention» - how will we recognise the approach and advent of those precious moments, those *openings*?

We need a model of cognition that emphasises the «magic» of reciprocity: - to *give* attention is to *receive* attention, as if the universe in some mysterious way responds to our cognition with an influx of effortless grace. If we convinced ourselves that attentiveness follows a rule of «synergy» rather than a law of depletion, we might begin to overcome in ourselves the banal mundanity of quotidian inattention, and open ourselves to «higher states.»

In any case, the fact remains that unless we learn to cultivate such states, travel will never amount to more than tourism. And for those of us who are not already adepts at the Zen of travel, the cultivation of these states does indeed demand an initial expenditure of energy. We have

inhibitions to repress, hesitations to conquer, habits of introversion or bookishness to break, anxieties to sublimate. Our third-rate stay-at-home consciousness seems safe and cozy compared to the dangers and discomforts of the Road with its eternal novelty, its constant demands on our attention. «Fear of freedom» poisons our unconscious, despite our conscious *desire* for freedom in travel. The art we're seeking seldom occurs as a natural talent. It must be cultivated - practised - perfected. **We must summon up the will for *intentional* travel.**

It's a truism to complain that difference is disappearing from the world - and it's true, too. But it's sometimes amazing to discover how resilient and organic the different can be. Even in America, land of Malls and tv's, regional differences not only survive but mutate and thrive in the *interstices*, in the cracks that criss-cross the monolith, beneath the notice of the Media Gaze, invisible even to the local bourgeoisie. If all the world is becoming one-dimensional, we need to look *between the dimensions*.

I think of travel as *fractal* in nature. It takes place off the map-as-text, outside the official Consensus, like those hidden and embedded patterns that nestle within the infinite bifurcations of non-linear equations in the strange world of chaos mathematics. In truth the world has

not been completely mapped, because people and their everyday lives have been excluded from the map, or treated as «faceless statistics», or forgotten. In the fractal dimensions of unofficial reality all human beings - and even a great many «places» - remain unique and different. «Pure» and «unspoiled»? Maybe not. Maybe nobody and nowhere was ever really pure. Purity is a will-o-the-wisp, and perhaps even a dangerous form of totalitarianism. Life is gloriously impure. Life *drifts*.

In the 1950's the French Situationists developed a technique for travel which they called the *derive*, the «drift.» They were disgusted with themselves for never leaving the usual ruts and pathways of their habit-driven lives; they realised they'd never even seen Paris. They began to carry out structureless random expeditions through the city, hiking or sauntering by day, drinking by night, opening up their own tight little world into a terra incognita of slums, suburbs, gardens, and adventures. They became revolutionary versions of Baudelaire's *famous flaneur*, the idle stroller, the displaced subject of urban capitalism. Their aimless wandering became insurrectionary praxis.

And now, something remains possible - aimless wandering, the sacred drift. Travel cannot be confined to the permissible (and deadening) gaze of the tourist, for whom the whole world

is inert, a lump of picturesqueness, waiting to be consumed - because the whole question of permission is an illusion. We can issue our own travel permits. We can allow ourselves to participate, to experience the world as a living relation not as a themepark. We carry within ourselves the hearts of travelers, and we don't need any experts to define and limit our more-than-fractal complexities, to «interpret» for us, to «guide» us, to mediate our experience for us, to sell us back the images of our desires.

The *sacred drift* is born again. Keep it secret.

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Obsessive Love

by Hakim Bey

An Introduction

"Rough dialectics" allows us to indulge an impure taste for history - a dredging operation - bricolage of "suppressed & realized" bricabrac - foolish unsavory outdated practises such as "obsessive love". Romance is "Roman" only in a terminal sense, in that it was brought back to "Rum" (the Islamic name for Europe & Byzantium) by Crusaders & troubadors. Crazy hopeless passion (ʿishq) appears first in texts from the Orient such as Ibn Hazm's *Ring of the Dove* (actually a slang term for for the neck of circumcised cock) & in the early *Layla & Majnun material from Arabistan*. The language of this literature was appropriated by the sufis (ʿAttar, Ibn ʿArabi, Rumi, Hafez, etc.) thus further eroticizing an already eroticized culture and religion.

But if desire pervades the structure and style of Islam, nevertheless it remains a repressed desire. "He who loves but remains chaste and died of longing, achieves the status of a martyr in the Jihad", i.e., paradise - or so claims a popular but perhaps spurious tradition of the Prophet himself. The cracking tension of this paradox galvanizes a new category of emotion into life: romantic love, based on the unsatisfied desire, on "separation" rather than

"union"... that is, on longing. The Hellenistic period (as evoked for instance by Cavafy) supplied the genres for this convention - the "romance" itself as well as the idyll and the erotic lyric - but Islam set new fire to the old forms with its system of passional sublimation. The Greco - Egypto - Islamic ferment adds a pederastic element to the new style; moreover, the ideal woman of romance is neither wife nor concubine but someone in the forbidden category, certainly someone outside the category of mere reproduction. Romance appears therefor as a kind of gnosis, in which spirits and flesh occupy antithetical positions; also perhaps as a kind of advanced libertinage in which strong emotion is seen as more satisfactory than satisfaction itself. Viewed as "spiritual alchemy" the goal of the project would appear to involve the inculcation of non-ordinary consciousness. This development reached extreme but still "lawfull" degrees with such sufis as Ahmad Ghazzali, Awhadoddin Kermani and Abdol-Rhaman Jami, who "witnessed" the presence of the Divine Beloved in certain beautiful boys and yet remained (reputedly) chaste. The Troubadors said the same of their lady-loves; Dante's *Vita Nuova* represents the extreme example. Christians and Moslems alike walked a very treacherous precipice with this doctrine of sublime chastity, but the spiritual effects could sometimes prove tremendous, as with Fakhroddin 'Iraqi, or indeed Rumi and Dante themselves.

But wasn't it possible to view the question of desire from a "tantrik" perspective and admit that "union" is also a form of supreme enlightenment? Such a position was taken by Ibn 'Arabi, but he insisted on legal marriage or concubinage. And since all homosexuality is forbidden in Islamic Law, a boy-loving sufi had no "safe" category for sensual realization. The jurist Ibn Taimiyya once demanded of such a dervish whether he had done more than simply kiss his beloved. "And what if I did?" replied the rogue. The answer would be "guilty of heresy!" of course, not to mention even lower forms of crime. A similar answer would be given to any Trobadour with "tantrik" (adulterous) tendencies -- and perhaps this answer drove some of them into the organized heresy of Catharism.

Romantic love in the west received energies from neoplatonism, just as the islamic world; and romance provided an acceptable (still orthodox) means of compromise between Christian morality and the rediscovered erotocosm of Antiquity. Even so the balancing-act was precarious: -- Pico della Mirandola and the pagan Botticelli ended up in the arms of Savonarola. A secretive minority of Renaissance nobles, churchmen and artists opted out altogether in favor of clandestine paganism; the *Hypnerotomachia* of Poliphilo, or the garden Monsters at Bomarzo, bear witness to the existence of this "tantrik" sect. But for most platonizers, the idea of a love based on

longing alone served orthodox and allegorical ends, in which the material beloved can only be a distant shadow of the real (as exemplified by such as St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross) and can only be loved according to a "chivalrous", chaste and penitential code. The whole point of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is that Lancelot fails to achieve the chevalric ideal by loving Guenivere in the flesh rather than only in the spirit.

The emergence of Capitalism exerts a strange effect on romance. I can only express it with an absurd fantasy: -- it's as if the Beloved becomes the perfect commodity, always desired, always paid for, but never really enjoyed. The self-denial of Romance harmonizes neatly with the self-denial of Capitalism. Capital demands scarcity, both of production and of erotic pleasure, rather than limit its requirements simply to morality or chastity. Religion forbids sexuality, thus investing denial with glamor; capital withdraws sexuality, infusing it with despair. "Romance" now leads to the Wertherian suicide, Byron's disgust, the chastity of the dandies. In this sense, romance will become the perfect two-dimensional obsession of the popular song and the advertisement, serving the utopian trace within the infinite reproduction of the commodity.

In response to this situation, modern times have offered two judgements of romance, apparently opposed, which

relates to our present hermeneutic. One, the surrealist *amour fou*, clearly belongs to the romantic tradition, but proposes a radical solution to the paradox of desire by combining the idea of sublimation with the tantric perspective. In opposing the scarcity (or "emotional plague" as Reich called it) of Capitalism, Surrealism proposes a transgressive excess of the most obsessive desire and the most sensual realization. What the romance of Nezami or Malory had separated ("longing" and "union"), the Surrealists proposed to recombine. The effect was meant to be explosive, literally revolutionary.

The second point of view relevant here was also revolutionary, but "classical" rather than "romantic". The anarchist-individualist John Henry Mackay despaired of romantic love, which he could only see as tainted with the social forms of ownership and alienation. The romantic lover longs to "possess" or to be possessed by the beloved. If marriage is simply legal prostitution (the usual anarchist analysis), Mackay found that "love" itself had become a commodity-form. Romantic love is a sickness of the ego and its relation to "property"; in opposition Mackay proposed erotic friendship, free of property relations, based on generosity rather than longing and withdrawal (i.e., scarcity): - a love between equal self-rulers.

Although Mackay and the Surrealists seem opposed, there does exist a point

at which they meet: the sovereignty of love. Moreover both reject the platonic heritage of "hopeless longing", which is now seen as merely self-destructive -- perhaps a measure of the debt owed by both the anarchists and the surrealists to Nietzsche. Mackay demands an apollonian eros, the surrealists of course opt for Dionysos, obsessive, dangerous. But both are in revolt against "romance"

Nowadays both these solutions to the problem of romance seem still "open" , still "possible". The atmosphere may feel yet more polluted with degraded images of desire than in the days of Mackay or Breton, but there appear to have been no *qualitative* changes in the relations between love and Too-Late Capitalism since then. I admit to a philosophical preference for Mackay's position because I have been unable to sublimate desire in a context of "hopeless obsession" without falling into misery; whereas happiness (Mackay's goal) seems to arise from "giving-up" of all false chivalry and self-denying dandyism in favor of more "pagan" and convivial modes of loves. Still, it must be admitted that both "separation" and "union" are *non-ordinary states of consciousness*. Intense obsessive longing constitutes a "mystical state", which only needs trace of religion to crystallize as full-blown neopltonic ecstasy. But we romantics should recall that happiness also possesses an element completely unrelated to any tepid bourgeois

coziness or vapid cowardice. Happiness expresses a festal and even an insurrectionary aspect which gives it -- paradoxally -- its own romantic aura. Perhaps we can imagine a synthesis of Mackay and Breton -- surely an umbrella and sewing-machine on an opera ting-table": -- and construct a utopia based on *generosity as well as obsession*. (Once again the temptation arises to attempt a conflation of Nietzsche with Charles Fourier and his "Passional Attraction"...); but in fact , I have dreamed this (I remember it suddenly, as if it were literally a dream) -- and it has taken on a tantalizing reality and filtered into my life -- in certain Temporary Autonomous Zones -- an "impossible" time and spaceand on this brief hint, all my theory is based.

The Ontological Status of Conspiracy Theory

(for Kevin Coogan)

Is conspiracy theory a delusion of the Right which has infected the Left as well? Leftist Conspiracy Theorists sometimes make uncritical use of the texts of Rightist Conspiracy Theorists—delving into the work of the Liberty Lobby for JFK Assassination tidbits, picking up Birchist notions about the CFR/Bilderberg/Rockefeller "liberal" internationalists, etc., etc. Since anti-semitism can be found on the Left as well as the Right, echoes of the Protocols may be heard from both directions. Even some anarchists are attracted to "Historical Revisionism". Anticapitalism or economic populism on the Right has its counterpoint on the Left in "Red Fascism", which broke the surface of History in the Hitler/Stalin Pact, and has come back to haunt us in the bizarre European "Third Wave" amalgamation of Right and Left extremism, a phenomenon which emerges in the USA in the libertine nihilism and "satanism" of anarcho-fascist groups like Amok Press and Radio Werewolf -- and conspiracy theory plays a big role in all these

ideologies.

If conspiracy theory is essentially right wing, it can only be so because it posits a view of History as the work of individuals rather than groups.

According to this argument, a Mae Brussel-type theory (she believed that Nazis had penetrated American Intelligence and Government at policy level) may appear Leftist but in fact provides no sustenance for genuine dialectical analysis, since it ignores economics and class struggle as causal forces, and instead traces all events to the machinations of "hidden" individuals. Even the anti-authoritarian Left may sometimes adopt this low opinion of conspiracy theory, despite the fact that it is not bound by any dogmatic belief in economic determinism. Such anarchists would agree that to believe in conspiracy theory is to believe that elites can influence History. Anarchism posits that elites are simply carried by the flow of History and that their belief in their own power or agency is pure illusion. If one were to believe otherwise, such anarchists argue, then Marx and Lenin would be correct, and conspiratorial vanguardism would be the best strategy for the "movement of the social". (The existence of vanguardism proves that the Left-or at least the authoritarian Left -- has not merely been tainted accidentally with conspiracy theory: vanguardism IS conspiracy!) The Leninists say the state is a conspiracy, either of Right or Left-

take your choice. The anarchists argue that the state does not "have" power in any absolute or essential sense, but that it merely usurps the power which, in essence, "belongs" to each individual, or to society en masse. The state's apparently conspiratorial aspect is therefore illusory-mere ideological wanking on the part of politicians, spies, bankers and other scum, blindly serving the interests of their class. Conspiracy Theory is therefore of interest only as a kind of sociology of culture, a tracking of the delusory fantasies of certain in-groups and out-groups-but conspiracy theory itself has no ontological status.

This is an interesting theory with a great deal of merit, especially as a critical tool. However, as an ideology, it suffers from the same flaw as any other ideology. It constructs an absolute Idea, then explains reality in terms of absolutes. The authoritarian Right and Left share a view of the ontological status of elites or vanguards in History; the anti-authoritarian response is to shift the ontological-Historical weight to individuals or groups; but neither theory has bothered to question the ontological status of History, or for that matter of ontology itself.

In order either to confirm or deny conspiracy theory categorically one must believe in the category of "History". But since the 19th century "History" has fragmented into dozens

of conceptual shards- ethno-history, psycho-history, social history, history of things and ideas and mentalities, cliometrics, micro-history-these are not competing ideologies of History, but simply a multiplicity of histories. The notion that History is made by "great men", or that History is the outcome of blind struggle between economic interests, or that History "IS" anything specific at all, cannot really survive this fragmentation into an infinity of narratives. The productive approach to such a complex is not ontological but epistemological; i.e., we now ask not what "History" "is", but rather what and how we can know of and from the many many stories, erasures, appearances and disappearances, palimpsests and fragments of the multiple discourses and multiple histories of the inextricably tangled complexities of human becoming.

Thus we might posit (as an epistemological exercise if nothing else) the notion that although human beings are carried along or moved by class interests, economic forces, etc., we can also accept the possibility of a feedback mechanism, whereby the ideologies and actions of both individuals and groups can modify the very "forces" which produce them.

In fact it seems to me that as anarchists of one sort or another we must adopt some such view of matters, or else accept that our agitation, education, propaganda, forms of

organization, uprisings, etc., are essentially futile, and that only "evolution" can or will bring about any significant change in the fabric of society and life. This may or may not be true of the long duree of human becoming, but it is manifestly not true on the level of individual experience of everyday life. Here a kind of rough existentialism prevails, such that we must act as if our actions could be effective, or else suffer in ourselves a poverty of becoming. Without the will to self-expression in action, we are reduced to precisely nothing. This is unacceptable. Therefore, even if one could prove that all action is illusion (and I do not believe that any such proof is available), we would still face the problem of desire. Paradoxically we are forced (on pain of utter negation) to act as if we freely choose to act, and as if action can bring about change.

On this basis it seems possible to construct a non-authoritarian theory of conspiracy theory which neither denies it altogether nor elevates it to the status of an ideology. In its literal sense of "breathing together", conspiracy may even be thought of as a natural principle of anarchist organization. Face to face, unmediated by any control, together we construct our social reality for ourselves. If we must do so clandestinely, in order to avoid the mechanisms of mediation and control, then we have perpetrated a kind of conspiracy. But more: we can also see that other groups may

organize clandestinely not to avoid control but to attempt to impose it. It's pointless to pretend that such attempts are always futile, because even if they fail to influence "History" (whatever that is), they can certainly intersect with and impact upon our everyday lives. To take one example, anyone who denies the reality of conspiracy must face a difficult task indeed when attempting to explain away the activities of certain elements within Intelligence and the Republican Party in the USA over the last few decades. Never mind the Kennedy Assassination, that spectacular boondoggle; forget the remnants of the Gehlen Org who were lurking around Dallas; but how can one even begin to discuss Nixon's plumbers, Iran/Contra, the S&L "crisis", the show-wars against Libya, Grenada, Panama, and Iraq, without some recourse to the concept of "conspiracy"? And even if we believe that the conspirators were acting as agents of blind forces, etc., etc., can we deny that their actions have actually produced ramifications on the level of our own everyday lives? The Republicans launched an open "War on Drugs", for example, while secretly using cocaine money to finance right wing insurgency in Latin America. Did anyone you know die in Nicaragua? Did anyone you know get caught up in the hypocritical "war" on marijuana? Did anyone you know fall into the misery of crack addiction? (Let's not even mention the CIA's heroin dealing in Southeast Asia and Afghanistan.)

As Carl Oglesby points out, sophisticated conspiracy theory posits no single, all-powerful, over-riding cabal in charge of "History". That would indeed be a form of stupid paranoia, whether of the Left or the Right. Conspiracies rise and fall, spring up and decay, migrate from one group to another, compete, collude, collide, implode, explode, fail, succeed, erase, forge, forget, vanish. Conspiracies are symptoms of the great "blind forces" (and hence useful as metaphors if nothing else), but they also feed back into those forces and sometimes even affect or effect or infect them. Conspiracies, in effect, are not THE way history is made, but are rather parts of the vast complex of myriads of ways in which our multiple stories are constructed. Conspiracy Theory cannot explain everything but it can explain something. If it has no ontological status, nevertheless it does have its epistemological uses.

Here's a hypothesis:

History (small "h") is a kind of chaos. Within history are embedded other chaoses, if one can use such a term. Late "democratic" Capitalism is one such chaos, in which power and control have become exceedingly subtle, almost alchemical, hard to locate, perhaps impossible to define. The writings of Debord, Foucault, and Baudrillard, have broached the possibility that "power itself" is empty, "disappeared", and been replaced by

the mere violence of the spectacle. But if history is a chaos the spectacle can only be seen as a "strange attractor" rather than as some sort of causative force. The idea of "force" belongs to classical physics and has little role to play in chaos theory. And if capitalism is a chaos and the spectacle is a strange attractor, then the metaphor can be extended: -- we can say that the "Republican" conspiracies are like the actual patterns generated by the strange attractor. The conspiracies are not causal- but, then, nothing is really "causal" in the old classical sense of the term.

One useful way in which we can, so to speak, see into the chaos that is history, is to look through the lens provided by the conspiracies. We may or may not believe that conspiracies are mere simulations of power, mere symptoms of the spectacle-but we cannot dismiss them as empty of all significance.

Rather than speak of conspiracy theory we might instead try to construct a poetics of conspiracy. A conspiracy would be treated like an aesthetic construct, or a language-construct, and could be analyzed like a text. Robert Anton Wilson has done this with his vast and playful "Illuminati" fantasy. We can also use conspiracy theory as a weapon of agit-prop. Conspiracies of "power" make use of sheer disinformation; the least we can do in retaliation is to trace it to its source.

Indeed we should avoid the mystique of conspiracy theory, the fantasy that conspiracy is all-powerful. Conspiracies can be blown. They can even be defeated. But I fear they cannot simply be ignored. The refusal to admit any validity to conspiracy theory is itself a form of spectacular delusion-blind belief in the liberal, rational, daylight world in which we all have "rights", in which "the system works", in which "democratic values will prevail in the long run" because Nature has so decreed it.

History is a big mess. Maybe conspiracies don't work. But we have to act as if they do work. In fact the non-authoritarian movement not only needs its own conspiracy theory, it needs its own conspiracies. Whether they "work" or not. Either we all breathe together or we each suffocate on our own. "They " are conspiring, never doubt it, those sinister clowns. Not only should we arm ourselves with conspiracy theory, we should have our own conspiracies-our TAZ's-our ontological guerilla commando hit-squads-our Poetic Terrorists- our chaos cabals-our secret societies. Proudhon said so. Bakunin said so. Malatesta said so. It's anarchist tradition.

Islam and Eugenics

"Stain your prayer carpet with wine"

-Hafez

In Persian Alchemy the two highest stages of transmutation are called Black Light (nur-i siyah) and Green/Gold. Some place one higher, some the other, but the two can also be seen as manifestations of each other. Black light is the nothingness that is also total luminescence, the dark side of god, Chaos & Old Night, the Sun at Midnight, presence of absence as light. Green/Gold (colors of the Prophet, and of the Philosopher's Stone as "emerald in Egyptian Hermeticism) represent the other half of Hesiod's first theogony, Eros and Gaia - Desire, and the greenness of the living world. "And the three things of this world are worthy of the gaze = water, green things and a beautiful face" (hadith). According to the Sufi, the Black Light is a beauty spot (mole or freckle) on that very face. Black & beautiful. The banners of revolutionary & esoteric Islam are black and green - although another possibility is black & red, as the Prophet said enigmatically, "I come for the black & red". Oddly enough black and red are the colors of the goddess - reminding us that the Byzantines accused the Moslems of worshipping "a head of Aphrodite". Also the colors of anarcho-syndicalism. A coincidence, no doubt.

Religion of the Sword

The Huntington/CIA "Clash of Cultures" model of Islam proposes it as a kind of disease that has to be kept isolated & confined. The neo-liberal "Global Market" model of the "Orient" views it as a source of

raw material (such as black gold) and cheap labor that must be exploited. The resources are to be taken away, the labor is to be kept in place. Obviously Moslem immigration to the "North" does not fit well with either of these models. If Islam is a "disease, then "refugees" are a virus, penetrating borders like immune systems. But then disruptions are also inevitable, given the "logic of the Market". The old liberal response to the problem of immigration was to turn the migrants into Europeans or Americans, to erase their difference into sameness. The new liberal response however, relies more heavily on overt repression - isolation in "zones of depletion" - incredible proliferation of border patrols, immigration police, surveillance.

Instead of bleating a few liberal NGO-style humanitarian platitudes about the plight of the refugees (perhaps we should give them all PC's so they can join the WWI!), I think it would be more interesting to admit that immigration really is a problem; and that Islam really does pose a threat to "Global Culture".

Immigration at the forced/repressed pace of globalism puts unfair pressure on the hospitality of the hosts, who have their own local crisis of downsizing and privatization to deal with. Meanwhile the migrant, weather lured to El Norte by the gleam of Macdisneyfication, or simply in flight from the economic and political ruin at home (caused directly by predatory Global Capital), will be bitterly disappointed by the "freedom" of the "free" world. Any memories of the organic *communitas* in their homeland, however eroded by poverty & corruption, will soon seem utopian compared with the new poverty of the North, its racism & alienation.

On a crude level, this nostalgia gives a seductive quality to the rhetoric of fundamentalism. However, its worth considering that Islam possesses a far deeper & more sophisticated critique of "the modern world" than that proposed by the "Islamists". In fact, more than one critique. To mention a few (without judgement or evaluation): -The militant anti-colonialist sufism of Emir Abel Kader, or the Sanussi Order of Libya -The strange "anarcho-sufism" of Col. Qaddafi's Green Book (Qaddafi rebelled against a Sufi king, but was himself raised as a Sufi) _the Shiite socialism of the martyred Ali Shariati -the idea of the Mahdi or Redeemer as a collectivity - the ideal of Social Justice - the ban usury (which makes Global Capital impossible, of course) -the heroic Naqshbandi Order in Chechnya, resisting Russian imperialism for centuries - going back in time, the Persian \$ Syrian Nizaris or "Assassins", who went so far as to proclaim the Day of Resurrection, and to liberate a network of castles in the cause of esoteric enlightenment -etc. etc. - or even further back in time, the Prophet himself: professional revolutionary, guerilla leader, returned from his exile to establish egalitarian iconoclastic mystical/militant regime in Mecca... and so on.

A Green Thought in a Green Shade

Khezr, the Green Man, the Hidden Prophet, the trickster, the dream-master of all those seekers who need no other master. He drank the Waters of Life in Hyperborea and became immortal. He appears to lost travelers in the desert with water. He wears green. He might be the unknown face in any gathering. According to one version he is a water spirit, like one of the "Believing Djinn", and wherever he walks flowers & herbs spring up

in his footsteps. He should be considered the patron saint of Sufi eco-warriors - an Order should be founded in his name the Khezriyya; more militant than Greenpeace or Earth First!, but in defense of ecological agriculture as well as sacred wilderness.

My Story

The Moorish Orthodox Church is a recognized offshoot of the Moorish Science Temple, which was founded in 1913 in Newark New Jersey by Noble Timothy Drew Ali, a black man adopted into the Cherokee Tribe, who traveled as a circus magician to Egypt and was initiated in the Great Pyramid. His Circle Seven Koran is based on theosophical Christianity and genuine folk tradition about Islam in America handed down from times of slavery. Moorish Science was very successful, especially in Chicago, where Noble Drew Ali was martyred by police in 1929.

Noble Drew had racial theories but he was anti-racist. The MST believes that the Celts are an "Asiatic race" (which is certainly true in a sense), and that Persians are Moslems who are also Indo-European (which is true); therefore the MST issued passports to white people as Celts or Persians. This gave rise to various subgroups, including (in 1964) the Moorish Orthodox Church.

The M.O.C. in the 60's was inter-racial, inter-faith, and interested in drugs. Hashish was declared a sacrament, & a branch of the church existed at Millbrook, on the millionaire's estate inhabited by Tim Leary, the Sri Ram Ashram, the Neo-American church & other groups. We believe in "ceremonial entheogenism".

The M.O.C. was dormant for a while but

revived in 1986 on the centenary of Noble Drew Ali's birth. The Church today is largely a communication web among widespread friends and allies. Issues of the Moorish Science Monitor are occasionally published, and there is -of course- a web site (www.geocities.com/Heartland/Woods/4623), the Moorish Observatory, and related sites.

One view is that difference is a good thing -it allows for the practice of tolerance, communication, presence, and exchange of gifts. "Love, Truth, Peace, Freedom, & Justice".

The War on Difference

Among the victims of Eugenics in the 19th - 20th century America were a number of groups with Islamic antecedents. The archetypal explanation of these groups proposed a "mongrelization" of run-away black slaves with Indians and renegade white serfs (usually Irish) - hence they were called "tri-racial isolates". Some of these groups had clearly been "founded" (at least partly) by Moslem maroons (escaped slaves). The Melungeons descend from Moorish "convertados" brought as slave-labor to Florida by Spain and abandoned there. The Delaware Moors, the Louisiana Turks, and the Ben Ishmael Tribe of Ohio, all reveal Islamic connections.

As for the Celtic part of the mixture, it begins not first with Cromwellian slavery but even earlier, according to myths and legends of the N E Coast Indian tribes. Irish monks and settlers reached Turtle Island even before the Vikings, and much more peacefully ("St. Brendan" as the prototype). Africans, too, had no doubt reached this hemisphere before Columbus. The possibility of many "peaceful

trading voyages" before the military arrival of European imperialism, and even settlements like Vinland, or the "Welsh Indians" (a folktale with disturbing material evidence) must be considered in tracing the unwritten story of the "tri-racial isolates".

In the 1970's these groups threw off the Eugenic archetype under the influence of the American Indian Movement (AIM). They realized themselves as tribes, "nations" with identity and history. The M.O.C. respects these groups as pure Americans, in the sense that their cultures unite our real "unwritten history" & excluded heritage - Native American, African, and "white trash"! - on the basis of tribalism, racial tolerance, and "empirical freedoms". It's inspiring for us to think that Islamic ideals play an ancient role in this heritage.

Tulipomania

All over Eastern Europe one sees traces of the Ottomans, usually in the form of abandoned, closed, and deteriorating hamams, mosques, kiosks, etc. - a neglected heritage. It would be perfectly possible to forget the "old-age hostility" of the "borderland between Christendom & Infidelity" simply by invoking an aesthetic judgement on the beauty of these unseen ruins - why should it disturb us? Why not see and enjoy?

But this romanticism could go on to invoke the whole form of the "good things" of the Ottoman world - into gardens, tulips, calligraphy, Sufi orchestras, poetic refinement, sensuality, hashish. In a way this is mere "orientalism" to be sure - but then, the "Orient" has its own romanticism. What exactly is "wrong" with any of the items

listed here?

The dusty remains of the Ottoman world also inspire some thought about Ottoman administration. The Osmanli were a single tribe running a vast empire & trade network from Istanbul. (In fact, come to think of it, this was the Roman Empire.) The last thing they wanted was "age-old hatreds" getting in the way of their gold bezants. Under the Millet system, every religious minority had judicial autonomy (although Islam retained prerogatives). The Byzantine Patriarch remains in Istanbul to this day. The Ottoman Empire was about taxes, not ideology or "race". The "Young Turks" rebelled against the Ottomans in order to vent "ancient hatreds" against Greeks & Armenians, long protected under the Empire. Granted the Ottomans were monsters - but how do they look after a century of communism and a decade of Global Capital?

Inshallah, some day Sarajevo will rise again as a unique particularly in which European Moslems and European Christians (I'm speaking loosely here of communities, not professions of faith) will create in mutual tolerance & synergy a city-state of precious value, with an Islamic heritage. That would constitute an imaginal infusion, a flow of energy from the past, which would now be "our" past. This would mean far more than an empty apology for the old Ottomans, Caliphs of Islam and inventors of the fez.

Jihad

"Islam" in Europe & America? Why not? Why not enjoy it? Autonomous enclaves in Berlin, Paris, London - linked by anarcho-federalism with other autonomous zones, squats, social centers, eco-farms & free rural

municipalities, & other anti-Capital entities & non-hegemonic particularities. Revolutionary difference against the idols of Moloch & Mammon, & the culture of global sameness. Why not introduce into "western culture" the virus of a critique of the tyranny of the image - an iconoclastic breath from the desert? Reactionary fundamentalism has long since betrayed itself as a revolutionary force. Why not something else, the "spirit of Sarajevo" perhaps - or the castles of the Assassins...

Hakim Bey
NYC
Aug 16 1997
"Ya Hafez"

The Lemonade Ocean & Modern Times

A Position Paper by Hakim Bey

1. One More River to Cross

In our *experience* (that is, not merely in intellectual speculation but in everyday-life) we have found that "the Ego" can be as much of a *spook* as "the Group"--or indeed, spooky as any abstraction which is allowed to control behavior, emotion, thought, or fate. Deeply as we've been influenced by Stirner / Nietzsche Tucker/ Mackay, we have never held to any rigid ideological or psychological form of Individualism / Egoism. Individualist anarchism is lovely dynamite, but not the only ingredient in our cocktail.

Our position, put quite simply (in the form of a truism): The autonomy of the individual appears to be complemented & enhanced by the movement of the group; while the effectiveness of the group seems to depend on the freedom of the individual.

In the 1980's--thru poverty, terror, mediation, & alienation--the individual was more & more isolated, while all

forms of "combination" (communes, co-ops, etc.) were eliminated or else reduced to pure simulation. The pleasures of the isolated ego have begun to pull as the "self" is gradually reduced to a comm-terminal or funnel for commodity-fetishes. In the 90's we will demand effective means of *association* which depend neither on Capital nor any other form of representation. We reject the false trance of the Spectacular *group*--but we also reject the lonely ineffectiveness of the embittered hermit. Always one more illusion to overcome!

2. Maximizing Marx

"Type-3 anarchism" (a term coined by Bob Black) designates a radically non-ideological form of anarchism neither Individualist nor Collectivist but in a sense both at once. This current within anti-authoritarianism is not a new invention, however (nor has it been given any final form). One can find versions of it in such works as *_bolo'bolo_*, or in the writings of the Situationists. One Situ group ("For Ourselves") went so far as to suggest a synthesis of Max Stirner & Karl Marx, who in real life were bitter enemies. They pointed out that Stirner's psychological existentialism does not necessarily conflict with Marx's economics. Bakunin criticized not Marx's original critique but rather the solution he proposed, dictatorship.

As for us, Stirner outweighs Marx

because psychology precedes economics in our theory of liberation-- but we read Stirner in the light of Bakunin & the early Marx--the light of the 1st International & the Commune of 1870--the light of Proudhon.

In order to clarify this position, we'll introduce two more names from our "family tree," Steven Pearl Andrews (1812-1886) & Charles Fourier (1772-1837). In a sense we find them a more congenial pair than Max und Marx, because they both made significant donations to the cause of erotic liberation (a central concern of the Mackay Society), unlike say the virginal Bakunin, or Marx or Proudhon--both prudes--or for that matter Stirner, Nietzsche, or Tucker, who all more or less avoided the subject. Serious historians of the Social often ignore Andrews & Fourier because they were "cranks"--utopianists, marginals, Blake-like visionaries. One needs to be something of a surrealist to appreciate them. But our appreciation is more than erotic, aesthetic, or spiritual. We also draw from them a precise picture of our own position in the "type-3" current of contemporary libertarianism.

3. Lemonade Ocean

Fourier was amazing. He lived at the same time as De Sade & Blake, & deserves to be remembered as their equal or even superior. Those other two apostles of freedom & desire had no political disciples, but in the middle

of the 19th century literally hundreds of communes (phalansteries) were founded on fourierist principles in France, N. America, Mexico, S. America, Algeria, Yugoslavia, etc. Proudhon, Engels, & Kropotkin all read him with fascination, as did Andre Breton & Roland Barthes. But today in America he is forgotten--not one complete work by Fourier is in print here--a few anthologies came out in the 70's but have vanished--& only one work about him (a fine biography by Jonathan Beecher, which may serve to stir some enthusiasm). Fourier's own disciples suppressed some of his most important texts (on sexuality), which did not appear in print till 1967. It's about time he was re-discovered again.

To quote Fourier out of context is to betray him. To say for example that he believed the ocean would turn to lemonade in the future, when humanity comes to live in Harmonial Association, is to make him a figure of fun (as Hawthorne did in The Blythedale Romance). To understand the beauty of the idea it must be seen in the context of Fourier's grand & brilliant cosmological speculations, rivals in complexity of Blake's prophecies. For Fourier the universe is composed of living beings, planets, & stars, who feel passion & who carry out sexual intercourse, so that creation itself is continual. The miseries of Civilization have deflected Earth & humanity from their proper destiny in a literal cosmic sense. Passion, which we have been taught to regard as "evil," is in fact

virtually the divine principle. Human beings are microscopic stars, & all passions & desires (including "fetishes" & "perversions") are by nature not only good but necessary for the realization of human destiny. In Fourier's system of Harmony all creative activity including industry, craft, agriculture, etc. will arise from liberated passion-- this is the famous theory of "attractive labor." Fourier sexualizes work itself-- the life of the Phalanstery is a continual orgy of intense feeling, intellection, & activity, a society of lovers & wild enthusiasts. When the social life of Earth is harmonized, our planet will re-join the universe of Passion & undergo vast transformations, affecting human form, weather, animals, & plants, even the oceans.

Passion draws humanity into *association* just as gravity draws celestial bodies into orbital systems. The phalanstery is a little solar system revolving around the central fire of the passions. Thus, altho Fourier always defends the individual against the tyranny of the *Civilized* groups (what we've called Spectacular groups, in the modern context), nevertheless for him the group in its ideal form takes on a quality of absoluteness. It's been jokingly said of him that the only *sin* in his system is eating lunch alone. But "association" cannot be considered a form of collectivism or communism--it is not strictly "egalitarian," nor does it eliminate personal property or even inheritance. Moreover, all the elaborate

titles & ranks Fourier delighted to invent for his Harmonians were voluntary & purely ceremonial. The Harmonian does not live with some 1600 people under one roof because of compulsion or altruism, but because of the sheer pleasure of all the social, sexual, economic, "gastrosophic," cultural, & creative relations this *association* allows & encourages.

4. The Convivial Individualist

One of Fourier's favorite illustrations of how harmony works even in Civilization was the dinner party, where wine, wit, & good food are enjoyed according to a spontaneous order, not subject to any law or morality. Social Harmony would be like a never-ending party: Fourier envisioned people leaping out of bed at 3 a.m. to pick cherries as if they were rushing off to a grand ball.

Steven Pearl Andrews (who also used the dinner-party metaphor) was not a fourierist, but he lived through the brief craze for phalansteries in America & adopted a lot of fourierist principles & practices. His chief mentor was Josiah Warren, first exponent of Individualist anarchism (or "Individual Sovereignty") in America--altho Warren in turn inherited much from certain strains of radical democracy & Protestant "spritual anarchy" which can be traced to the earliest Colonial period. Andrew was a system-builder, a "logothete" like Fourier & Blake, a maker of worlds out of words. He syncretized Abolitionism,

Free Love, spiritual universalism, Warren, & Fourier into a grand utopian scheme he called the Universal Pantarchy.

He was instrumental in founding several "intentional communities," including the "Brownstone Utopia" on 14th St. in New York, & "Modern Times" in Brentwood, Long Island. The latter became as famous as the best-known fourierist communes (Brook Farm in Massachusetts & the North American Phalanx in New Jersey)--in fact, Modern Times became downright notorious (for "Free Love") & finally foundered under a wave of scandalous publicity. Andrews (& Victoria Woodhull) were members of the infamous Section 12 of the 1st International, expelled by Marx for its anarchist, feminist, & spiritualist tendencies.

Like Fourier, Andrews created a "religion" to replace all the corrupt authoritarian cults of Civilization. We admit that this mystical tendency in both thinkers interests us a great deal, & again rouses our sympathies more than the cold atheism (or "fundamental materialism") of a Stirner or Marx. Type-3 anarchism includes for us the heritage of the Ranters, Antinomians, & Family of Love, as well as radical forms of buddhism, taoism, & sufism.

Like Blake, Fourier & Pearl Andrews built systems of their own so as not to be slaves to someone else's--& these

grand structures included psychological, sexual, & spritual dimensions missing from mere ideological or philosophical systems. The structural details of Harmony & Pantarchy are fascinating & inspiring, but for us their deepest value lies in the daring of their total "radical subjectivity." Fourier & Pearl Andrews created _poetics of life_, not merely politics or economics, & it is this aspect of their work we most admire & wish to emulate.

5. Universal Pantarchy & North American Phalanx

In a more immediate sense, however, we find that Fourier & Pearl Andrews offer useful arguments & practical hints for the establishment of a kind of association which seems even more desirable now than before the age of Late Capitalism, Dead Communism, pure Spectacle, & the eerie alienation of credit cards & answering machines, polls & surveys, computer viruses, & immune-system breakdowns. In the 1980's even the anti-authoritarian "Margin" fell into a spooky state of communication via the mail, BBSs, xerography, & tape. Physical separateness can never be overcome by electronics, but only by "conviviality," by "living together" in the most literal physical sense. The physically divided are also the conquered & Controlled. "True desires"--erotic, gustatory, olfactory, musical, aesthetic, psychic, & spritual--are best

attained in a context of freedom of self & other in physical proximity & mutual aid. Everything else is at best a sort of representation. The entire revolt against Civilization can be seen (at least from one point of view) as an attempt to recreate the autonomous intimacy of the band, the *free association of individuals*.

Morbid loneliness is no better than the engineered consensus of the New World Order--in fact the two are but opposite sides of the coin, like homelessness & rent: false individualism vs. false collectivism. In the face of this illusory dichotomy we will continue to propagate Individual Sovereignty--but at the same time proclaim that our first & most urgent research of the decade must concern the nature of association.

Thus we announce our intention to revive & amalgamate both the Universal Pantarchy & the North American Phalanx, the local (NY area) manifestations of Andrews' & Fourier's systems. The new Universal Pantarchy & North American Phalanx (UP/NAP) will be first a society of appreciation & research (more musty-dusty 19th century obscure crackpots to venerate & imitate!--but also & perhaps more importantly it may become a nucleus of association). We plan to make field trips to the original sites of Modern Times & the Phalanx; we intend to revive the fourierist tradition of banquets; we plan to construct a shrine

to Fourier & the Pantarch; we may even go so far as to produce another newsletter!

And perhaps our research will actually lead to further experiments in the creation of temporary autonomous zones, free times & spaces excavated in the walls of Babylon--creative autonomy & comradeship in the no-go areas where power has "disappeared"--& who knows? even in our lifetimes, the _mutation_..."A crank? Yes, I'm a crank: a little device that causes revolutions!" (E.F. Schumacher).

Long live Individual Sovereignty! Long live the Pantarchy! Long live Harmony!

-- April 7 (Fourier's birthday) 1991 NYC

Media Creed For The Fin De Siecle

By Peter Lamborn Wilson

1. We can define "The Media" according to whether or not a given medium professes itself to be "objective"-in three senses of the word, i.e., that it "reports objectively" on reality; and that it defines itself as part of an objective or natural condition of reality; and that it assumes reality can be reflected and represented as an object by an observer of that reality. "The Media"-used here as a singular but collective noun-brackets the subjective and isolates it from the basic structure of mediation, which is professed as the self-reflecting gaze of the social, "impartial", "balanced", pure empirical reportage. By deliberately blurring the line between the objective and the subjective-as in "infotainment", or the "soaps" which so many people believe are "real", or the "real-life" cop shows-or in advertising - - or the talkshows-the Media constructs the image of a false subjectivity, packaged and sold to the consumer as a simulacrum of his/her own "feelings" and "personal opinions" or subjectivity. And at the same

time, the Media constructs (or is constructed by) a false objectivity, a false totality, which imposes itself as the authoritative world-view, far greater than any mere subject- inevitable, inescapable, a veritable force of Nature. Thus as each "feeling" or "personal opinion" arises within the consumer it is felt as both deeply personal and as objectively true. I buy this because I like it because it's better; I support the War because it's just and honorable, and because it produces such entertaining excitement ("Desert Storm", a made-for-TV primetime mini-series). Thus by seeming to refute the merely subjective (or to bracket it as "art"), the Media actively recuperates the subject and reproduces it as an element within the great object, the total reflection of the total gaze: -- the perfect commodity: -- oneself.

2. Of course all media behave like this to some extent, and should perhaps be consciously resisted or "criticized" precisely to that extent. Books can be just as poisonous as Top-40 Radio, and just as falsely objective as the Evening News. The big difference is that anyone can produce a book. It has become an "intimate medium", one in which critical faculties are engaged, because

we now know and understand the book as subjective. Every book, as Calvino remarked, embodies a personal politique-whether the author is conscious of it or not. Our awareness of this has increased in direct proportion to our access to the medium. And precisely because the book no longer possesses the aura of objectivity which it enjoyed in, say, the 16th century, that aura has migrated from the intimate media to "The Media", the "public" media such as network TV. The media in this sense remains by definition closed and inaccessible to my subjectivity. The Media wants to construct my subjectivity, not be constructed by it. If it allowed this it would become-again by definition-another intimate medium, bereft of its claim to objectivity, reduced (in Spectacular terms) to relative insignificance. Obviously the Media will resist this eventuality-but it will do so precisely by inviting me to invest my subjectivity in its total energy. It will recuperate my subjectivity, bracket it, and use it to reinforce its own false objectivity. It will sell me the illusion that I have "expressed myself", either by selling me the lifestyle of my "choice", or by inviting me to "appear" within the gaze of representation.

3. In the 1960's the Media was still emerging and had not yet consolidated its control over the realm of the image. A few strange glitches occurred. It tried to trivialize and demonize the counter-culture, but inadvertently succeeded in making it appear more attractive; it tried to glorify and justify the neo-colonialist war in Vietnam, but inadvertently revealed it as cruel and meaningless, like a bad acid trip. These glitches arose out of a dissonance between ideology and image. The voice told us that the counter-culture was clownish and wicked, but it looked like fun: the voice told us the war was just and heroic, but it looked like Hell. Luckily for the Media, however, McLuhan and Debord came along to explain what was really going on, and the situation was soon rectified. (McLuhan wanted to empower the Media, Debord to destroy it-but both writers analyzed and criticized with such insight that their findings proved useful to the Media in ways that neither of them intended.) The media was able to bring ideology and image into focus, so to speak, and eliminate virtually all cognitive dissonance.

4. During the 1960's a few people began to sense or even understand the misalignment of

ideology and image in the media, and perceived therein an opening, an unguarded means of access to power. The counterculture and protest movements began to seek out "media exposure" because they were confident that their image was more attractive than the ideology which sought to interpret that image. Some theorists became adept at seizing the media. The eye appeared to be drawn irresistibly to gaze upon certain images, even those images which were coded as assaults on "the system" or "the establishment". But once again, the Media survived -- and even thrived-on the very oppositional dissident imagery which sought to assault its power. Finally what was important was "good TV", and TV thrived on hot images of protest, Yippie stunts, devilish rock stars, psychedelic aesthetics and the like. The media appeared now far stronger and more resilient than its opposition; in fact, the reality studio had been stormed (as Burroughs urged), and had resisted by opening all image-doors and ingesting its enemies. For, ultimately, one could only appear in the Media as an image, and once one had reduced oneself to this status, one simply joined the shadow-play of commodities, the world of images, the spectacle. Without a few hundred millions to buy a

network for yourself, there was no way to impose one's subjectivity on the Media. (And even this would prove impossible, since no one with that much money and egotism could ever produce anything but oppressive banality; is this a "law of nature"?) The media, in other words, lost a few battles in the sixties-but won the war. Once it understood that the medium (the image) is the message (the ideology), and that this identity itself constitutes the spectacle and its power, the future was secure. Kennedy had acted like an actor to win power, but Reagan was an actor-the first symbol of the emptying of the spectacle itself and its re-consolidation as pure simulation. Bush then perfected "pure" or simulated war and Clinton is our first fully "virtual" president, a symbol of the absolute identity of image and ideology. It's not that the Media has all the "power" now, or that it uses power in any conspiratorial manner. The truth is that there is no "power"-only a complete and false totality in which all discourse is contained-a false and totalitarian objectivity-an absolute Empire of the Image outside of which nothing exists except the pathetic and insignificant and (in fact) unreal subjectivity of the individual. My subjectivity. My absolute

meaninglessness.

5. This being the case-and so obviously the case-it would seem a cause for amazement that media theorists and activists still talk and behave as if it were 1964 instead of 1994 -- nearly a third of a century later. We still hear about "seizing the media", infiltrating, subverting, or even reforming the media. Of course, some of the master media manipulators of the 60's are still alive, Allah bless and preserve them, old beatniks and hippies, and one can forgive them for urging on us tactics which once seemed to work for them. As for me, however, it was one of those old 60's types who alerted me to what was really going on. In 1974, I was seated at a dinner table in Tehran, Iran, at the house of the very hip Canadian ambassador, James George, with Ivan Illich, when a telegram arrived from Governor Brown of California, inviting Illich to fly there at Brown's expense to appear with him on TV and accept a post in the administration. Illich, who is a fairly saintly individual, lost his temper for the first and only time during his stay in Iran, and began cursing Brown. When the Ambassador and I expressed puzzlement at this reaction to a cordial offer of

money, fame, and influence, Illich explained that Brown was trying to destroy him. He said he never appeared on television because his entire task was to offer a critique of institutions, not a magic pill to cure humanity's ills. TV was capable of offering only simple answers, not complex questions. He refused to become a guru or media-star, when his real purpose was to inspire people to question authority and think for themselves. Brown wanted the display of Illich's image (charismatic, articulate, unusual-looking, probably very televisual) but not the task of thinking about Illich's critiques of consumer society and political power. Furthermore, said "Don Ivan", he hated to fly, and had only accepted our invitation to Iran because our letter was so full of typing errors!

6. Illich's answer to the question, "Why do you not appear in the media?", was that he refused to disappear in the media. One cannot appear in "the media" in one's true subjectivity (and the political is the personal just as much as the personal is the political); therefore one should refuse the Media any vampiric energy it might derive from the manipulation (or simply the possession) of one's image. I

cannot "seize the media" even if I buy it, and to accept publicity from, say, the New York Times, Time magazine, or network TV, would simply amount to the commodification of my subjectivity, whether aesthetic ("feelings", art) or critical ("opinions", agitprop). If I wish to bring about this commodification-if I want money and fame-there might be some reason to "appear in the Media"-even at the risk of being chewed up and spat out (for the Gaze is cold and bored and easily distracted). But if I value my subjectivity more than the dubious gamble for 15 minutes of fame and twice that many pieces of silver-I will have one very good reason not to "appear", not to be gazed upon. If I wish my own "everyday life" to be the site of the marvels I desire, rather than wishing to project those desires into a bodiless progression of images for public consumption (or rejection), then I will have another good reason to evade the media rather than try to "seize" it. If I desire "revolution" I have an urgent motive not to exchange the chance of social change for the image of change, or (even worse) the image of my desire for revolution, or (worse yet) the image of the betrayal of my desire.

7. From this point of view I can see only two possible strategies toward "the Media". First, to invest our energies in the intimate media, which can still play a genuine role (of "positive mediation") in the everyday lives of ourselves and others. And second, to approach the "major public media" (or "negative mediation") either in the mode of evasion, or the mode of destruction. Creativity in this case would indeed have to be destructive, since the "space" taken up by false representation can only be "liberated" by violence. Needless to say, I don't mean violence to individuals-which would be utterly futile in this case, however tempting-but violence to institutions. I admit that in both these strategic positions (evasion and destruction) I have not yet developed very many specific and effective tactics-and of course tactics are vitally necessary, since we must precisely break through the spooky realm of ideology and image into a real "field of struggle" which can be compared with war. The last thing we need in this struggle are more naive theories about seizing the media or boring from within or liberating the airwaves. Give me one example of a radical take-over of major media, and I'll shut up and apply for a job at PBS, or start

looking around for a few million
dollars.

[Not one??]

Then I'll stick to my silence.

Islam and the Internet

Net-religion, a War in Heaven

Lecture by
Peter Lamborn Wilson

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I don't even own a computer. Is there anybody else in here who doesn't own a computer? It's interesting to watch the net and to approach media ecology, and the internet, specifically from the point of view of what I do.

Which is essentially the study of the history of religions, or histories of religion. It is extremely obvious to me that the internet is a religious phenomenon. This may not have occurred to everyone who is closer to it than I am. First of all, all technology can be analyzed according to religious principles. When I speak about religion, I am not speaking from the point of view of religion. In fact, I prefer to be an outsider there as well. However, in some points, unavoidably, I will express myself as if I were thinking from a religious point of view.

Please understand that I am not supplying any dogma or article of

faith, I am simply trying to analyze the phenomenon in a purely structural way and if that is useful for me in my own search for truth, maybe it's useful for you. Please accept what I have to say on that basis.

All technology is a religious phenomenon: Why?

Because unless you belong to the human condition, you cannot have technology. What is the human condition? What makes a human being different from an animal? I would say consciousness or selfconsciousness, perhaps. Not awareness though, we know that animals are aware, but what we don't know is whether they are conscious. And we certainly don't know whether they are self-conscious.

One of the symptoms of consciousness, or selfconsciousness, is technology and it is impossible, structurally or historically, to separate technology from consciousness when we try to imagine what it is to be human. As soon as we see in the archeological record evidence of a Simian or a similar creature that we could identify as human, then the only reason why we do so is because there are some broken stones next to the bones, that look like they may have been intended to be tools. What separates animals from humans is technology. From one point of view, that is religion. Because you cannot have technology unless you can

extricate consciousness outside the body. If you cannot understand that consciousness is something which projects outward into the world, you cannot create the prothesis, the extension of the body, which is technology, be it a broken stone, or a computer.

Because there is this intimate relationship between technology and consciousness, technology itself is always threatening to take the place of religion. Technology is always becoming confused with religion the marxists used to call this reification. Not a bad word.

It means making an intuition a "thing," making it "thingy," or giving it "thinginess." If we want to talk about the Greek word techne, it would be useful to describe the whole range of prothesis of consciousness. But, if we want to talk about technology, then we are moving into different ground. Technology is techne plus logos in Greek. Techne, the technique or the mechanic principle plus the logos, or the word. If we are trying to find out what the first technology is, in the strict sense of the word, you would have to answer that it is writing, which adds the mechanic to the word. Therefore, there is no techne, but technologia. Then we see the process of reification that works immediatly here. Writing itself defines words. Words do not define writing, but immediatly a paradoxical feedback

comes up, where writing defines words and words define things. Logically, it should be the other way round, but we know that language is a double-edged sword. As a means of communication, language leaves a great deal to be desired.

One of the speakers yesterday, Heath (Bunting), I think it was, said that communication doesn't always communicate, and this is so clear. I don't know why this was a surprise. Everyone can understand this immediatly: a map is not a territory. As soon as you mistake the word 'Budapest' on the map for the city of Budapest, you are in deep trouble. You have got a cognitive problem. If instead of talking about Budapest, you want talk about love, or patriotism, or valour, or truth, or communication, or the net, or freedom, or any words like that, which have very few references in the world of thinginess, you have a problem. We reify those concepts and solidify them in writing, in sign systems. Then they influence consciousness as you grow up, as a child learning language. All of these signs are imprinted. Writing begins with pictures, than we have pictographs, pictographic writing like ancient Armenian, or Chinese, or Egyptian hieroglyphics. Then some of those signs are chosen to be phonemes. For example, a very common word in the indoeuropean language is the word for foot, which always sounds something like paw or

pede or pedes. A picture of a foot becomes a P. If you turn that upside down, it is still like a P, and that P still looks like a foot. Even the alphabet, alphabetic writing, which is supposedly free of images, is not free of all images.

When you move from the alphabet to binary writing, this is also not free of images. It is a very simple image system, black-white-yes-no, but it is still an image system. The computer is still a machine of inscription, it is still a writing machine, in fact for most of you it is just a glorified typewriter. There is going to be a gradual process in the realm of technology of the reduction of the sign: from the complexity of a representational picture to the abstraction of a binary sign system which apparently no longer contains pictures, although we can see that the pictures are just more deeply buried.

The Greek word for symbol, symbolon, actually means, an object which is broken in half. That is why communication systems are not monodic or unitary, they are always dual or diadic. I prefer to say that all communications are diadic, it involves two-ness. There must be a speaker and a hearer, then these relations can be reversed. The breaking of the symbolon symbolizes the split in human consciousness itself. A split between the animal intimacy, which we can hypothesize as our Semian

heritage, and the idea that consciousness and self are two different things. As soon as that split occurs we have a symbolic system at work, where one thing stands for another. The same holds true for all language systems, all musical systems, all dance systems, anything which can possibly communicate on any level whatsoever. These are all symbolic systems. Language is a symbolic system. All computer programs are symbolic systems.

It is important to remember that in any symbolic system this split, the doubling of consciousness, the hypothesis of consciousness which is actually prothesis, obtains something which is outside the body and which can act in the world. In the history of religion, this desire for lost intimacy, this desire to recapture unified consciousness, is the cause of yet a further split. We see the whole idea of sacrifice that is meant to heal this wound in the cosmic structure. Sacrifice appears very early in human religion, at least as early as agricultural systems in the Neolithic Age, if not sooner, and it is violent. Initially, it probably involves human sacrifice.

I see this as a violence of the sacred. Whatever is religious is also inherently violent, because it's based on the split. The split consciousness, the act of splitting is violent, and so the act of repairing the split is also violent. In

fact, the word religion, "religio," in Latin, means to re-link, which is really the same as the word in Hindi "yo go" which means yoke, as the yoke which connects two oxen. Religion itself, at its very base, is about this relinking of consciousness. It is an attempt to overcome the split of consciousness and to unify what was doubled and make it one. This is a very violent process throughout human history, and it is not an accident that religions were associated with violence.

If we're going to talk about belief systems, then I include all belief systems under the group of religion, including ideology, then we are going to be talking about violence. There is no way out of it. The initial split of consciousness can also be seen as a split between nature and culture, and in between nature and culture comes an ambiguous, marginal space, which is neither nature nor culture. In all folklore and in all methodological systems we have this moment where the ocean of primordial chaos is separated from culture.

Eventually this split between culture and nature also applies to primitive systems like shamanism. The split became more and more severe, and instead of being layed on a horizontal level, with nature over here and culture over there, the whole thing moved on to a vertical axis, and culture and consciousness are now reified as heaven. Nature, what is left below, what is not saved, what is not

taken up into heaven, is this body, this physical body, which can die. Nature is conscious of death, which is probably at the root of all consciousness, but consciousness of death by itself can only be negative.

Consciousness has to be turned, paradoxically, away from its original object, which is death, and focused on life, which is also death.

This is what fails to happen in most religions. Most religions are systems of death consciousness because they posit a radical split between body and spirit, but they are no longer upset about it. They are not interested in reconciling the body and the spirit anymore. They are interested in eliminating one of those factors, the body, and perpetuating the other, the spirit, or mind or perhaps information. So you have spirit and heaven at the top and nature, body and earth at the bottom. It becomes associated with the feminine; the catatonic, the chaotic, the uncultured, the uncultivated. It is associated with tribal societies, with hunting and gathering, with everything primitive, with everything despicable. Mind or spirit, which is now separated from the body, is associated with maleness; with power, with structure, with culture, with civilisation, and with religion itself. What is in between is now only a technology of the sacred, the actual workings of religion itself. The ritual, the sacrifice, the priesthood, which is now a completely

privileged closed-off class; you now have class structure.

We now have the pyramidal structure, we now also have cyberspace. We have the concept of the virtual. Heaven or paradise, the mind principle, separated from the body, becomes cyberspace.

Cyberspace is a version, paradoxical, or even a parody, of heaven. It's a place where your body is not present, but your consciousness is. It is a place of immortality, of not being mortal, of having overcome death. There is a view that cyberspace is a salvational reality, that it saves us from our crude shitfilled rotting bodies, and that we will transcend into an angelic sphere of pure data where we will download consciousness and never die. If you have read William Gibson, the image is very clear: You have the hacker, who is jacked in, literally jacked into the computer. The body is rotting, but the cyberpersona is clearly immortal.

Actually, Gibson is heavily ironic about this. The problem is that what we have been promised is transcendence through techno-mediation. It is a false transcendence. Formerly, in religion we said that God, who has been stripped of all material, becoming, and is now pure, being a transcended God. It's actually not interrelating with the material world. If we have a god, as in some forms of paganism, that has a material nature, the god is a rebirth. We will call that an eminent form of

deity, as opposed to transcendent. What we are being offered in the net is not eminence, not a true eminence, but a false transcendence. It is a dangerous, gnostic fallacy. Cyberspace is spurious immortality.

This brings me to the point of the military aspect of the net, because the net is actually a war in heaven. What else would the phrase "information war" mean than a war in heaven? A war which would take place in this spurious heaven, this false transcendence of cyberspace. We know that the net originates as a military space. The original ARPA-net was designed in order to avoid the physical disruption which would have been involved in atomic explosion. The net itself is a very gnostic invention since it transcendentalises matter in a very rapid and effective way. Basically, we are looking at a war in heaven.

Kevin Kelley likes to say that this technology is out of control. This is bullshit, it's not out of control. It's something very different and much more interesting. A brilliant French anthropologist, Pierre Clastres, wrote one book called, "Society against the State," and another, which we (Autonome) were very proud to publish, called, 'The Archeology of Violence.' I follow his thinking very closely on a number of points. He makes a distinction between two kinds of warfare in human history: There is

primitive war and classical war. These are not at all the same thing. It cannot even be said that the classical war is a development of the primitive war, it's rather a betrayal of primitive war. If the sacred is violent, then violence is not always negative, unless we believe in pacifism. There are certain kinds of violence which are positive, and primitive warfare is positive in this one sense.

Clastres uses the metaphor of centrifugal and centripetal. The centrifugal machine is one which pushes out from the center, and the centripetal machine is one which pulls in towards the centre. First of all, there is really no such thing as primitive society anymore, there are only societies which have retained primitive forms. The rest of the world has moved on to culture and civilisation. Clastres believed that this was a chosen path on the part of these societies. Consciously or unconsciously these societies developed certain social functions to centrifugalize power, they don't want power, they refuse power. They want a society, but they don't want the state. They don't want the centralisation of power, they don't want class structure, they don't want economic hierarchy. They want egalitarianism, they want democracy.

Trancendentalism, which is that mysticism and spiritual experience should be available in an egalitarian fashion. The shaman is not a specialist

in ecstasy, because these tribes themselves specialize in ecstasy. At some point in the history of human society, some society rises where primitive warfare changes. Some society rises where primitive warfare is paradoxically changed into its opposite and unfortunately Clastres died before he was able to really explain this. You can say that particularly wicked and clever people saw that violence could be used to centralize power as well as to disperse power. Or you can say that maybe there were population problems, or climate problems. Some explanations have given the switchover of the hunting-gathering societies which are egalitarian without exception and do not practice sacrifice, with agricultural societies which are non-egalitarian and almost invariably do practice sacrifice.

We are still living in the Neolithic Age. We are still basically living in the agricultural-industrial period and we still practice sacrifice. If you don't believe it, come to New York State, where they just reintroduced the death penalty, a symbolic sacrifice. At some point primitive warfare turns into classical warfare, and here is the interesting thing about the net. The net is born much more like a primitive warfare structure than a classical one, because of that strange gnostic necessity to avoid atomic disintegration. The net suddenly turns into a space in which power is dispersed rather than centralized.

They thought this was a brilliant strategy. It turned out that they lost control of the net almost instantly. They should have realized that a not-centralized system can't be kept in control from within that system. If you take a closed system and decentralize it, then there is no way you can recentralize it. That recentralisation of power is going to have to come from outside the system.

This is my point about Kelley's thesis. That a technology, which is out of control as long as you study only the technology, is nothing new. The postal system is out of control. I can get much better security with snailmail now than I can on the net, that is one of the reasons I still don't own a computer. If somebody proved to me that I can really get top security by using a computer and I can send my evil revolutionary messages everywhere with complete safety, I would do it. I am no luddite. I am not against technology just because i don't like technology. I happen to be very bad at it, but that's my personal thing. All the people I knew in the 60's and 70's who were phonephreaking have moved on to the net. The telephone is so oldfashioned, it is just like hot and cold running water. No one is thinking about it at all, there is no mumbo jumbo in the telephone. There is no magic left in the telephone. The magic is all in the net, so that's what everybody wants to control.

Mumbo jumbo is power, and if you control the base of a basic symbolic exchange system, you have power. Those who control the definition of words have power. Those who control the means of communication between you and me have power over both of us. Where is this control going to come from, if the system itself, the technology itself, is out of control. Because it was designed to be out of control, then the control has to come from outside the system.

The internet is not heaven, the internet is not paradise. The internet is not safe, in terms of control, simply because as a closed system it represents the decentralization of power structures. That power can just reach in from outside, and that's exactly what the Church of Scientology can do. For example, the Church of Scientology can kill you, or disperse all your secrets, they can track you to your house and break in and smash your computers. And if you think that the Church of Scientology is powerful, wait until you hear from the American government. And if you think that the American government is a little outdated, and that as John Perry Barlow says, that governments are not the corporate entities which are ideally designed to control the new technology, then wait until you hear from AT&T, because they are designed to control. It is far worse.

National governments have been practically reduced to flags of

convenience, for the international global market. The only reason why the global market is interested in nations, is because you can set up trade barriers, and so forth and so on, and maximize profits, by using the fictions of nationalism. The true corporate structures, the real gnostic beings, the real gnostic angels, are not governments or capitalized corporations within the structures of capital.

The relevance of all these statements to Hungary, is that since 1989, there is not an ideological struggle in the world. The night the Berlin Wall fell, I turned on the television and I heard that the Cold War was over and we won. This is widely believed and as a result, we have been told that ideology has come to an end. That the social has come to an end, even history has come to an end. History itself which involved the dialectical struggle, according to Hegel, is now over. The Cold War is over and we, the capital, won.

There is now only one ideology which disguises itself as nature. Once again we have a false transcendence of bringing together culture and nature, in a totally phoney way, where you can establish a more efficient control mechanism. The net can be controlled from outside, through fear, through terror. The net is extremely susceptible to terror. Because the net is a religious phenomenon and religion is inherently violent, the sacred is inherently violent, and invariably both are

involved in fear, in terror. That's why the net is perfect ground, "Grund," in German, for the passion play which is going to occur within five years, maybe within the next five minutes. The net can be controlled from outside, and therefore, resistance must be organized from outside.

So far, we've only had virtual resistance, and actually that is no more than a spectacle of resistance. If we don't organize on the basis of politics, and of economy, then the net has no future as a space for human freedom. No future.

So far, I don't see that organizing going on. I see that the most brilliant minds that are involved in the net are all involved in cryptography and PGP, and various kinds of mechanisms, which are meant to protect the net from takeover from within the net, but that's not what the danger is coming from. Sooner or later, somebody will figure it out and it better be us because if it isn't, then it's going to be AT&T with 600 channels and the 100 home shopping network. Or riskier, are those heavy footed jack booted governments, or the Church of Scientology.

So the net is not heaven, the body must be present. I love Heath Bunting's point that without the presence of body, this whole thing is just a curious form of metaphysical shlock with cream. Whoever understands the net as religion,

whoever understands the problem with body and re-embodiment, will have a tremendous edge, or at least gain an edge in the struggle of whether the net remains a space of potential freedom, or whether it doesn't.

Rememebering the Paeleolithic and how the invention of agriculture relates to the invention of the alphabet, which relates to the invention of the computer, is a vital and important course now.

Whoever can understand this, whoever can understand the reason why the state will be the first to lose control of the net? First of all, the corporations will not lose control in the same way. Whoever understands that's methaphysics, that's religion. We steal a march in strategic terms. We will be one days march ahead of the animal, which is oppressive control, whether it comes from governments, or from corporations, or from our own disturbed psyche. There are two vital areas of understanding, politics and economics. The politics is cruel and simple and I think we 're understanding it very well.

I would like to think about the economics for a minute. We see that money is also going to heaven. Billions of billions of billions of billions of whatever units of money are there, floating around in cyberspace. Money is now a purely transcendental principle, it's a symbolic system, it's a

symbolon, just like any other symbol. It is broken into two halves and has meaning only if the two halves are reunited. That's where money begins, precious metal, which has no inherent value whatsoever. The relationship between gold and silver, from the start, is based on the lunar-solar cycle. It is pure symbolism.

The first coins were temple souvenirs. This is historically known to numismatics experts studying the history of coinage. The first coins are souvenirs, they are picked up in temples and that coin, that image, becomes valuable as nostalgia. You can take them home to bumfuck the old, and trade one of them for a cow, because it's like mumbo jumbo.

It's called JuJu. Mumbo jumbo and JuJu are African words for mysterious power. The coins themselves, which still have a memorable, valuata aspect, are made out of precious metal, which is gradually added to less precious metal. Presume coins are largely symbolic, they could change to paper which represents the coins. Then in 1933, in America, the link between the paper and the precious metal is cut, paper is now floating free. It's a reference without any referent, and we now have purely abstract money, ready to jack in. Ready to ascend to heaven, to the heaven of cyberspace, and that's exactly what's happened. Ninety percent of all commercial transactions are electronic and do not involve any

form of paper. They are in a world where imagination and electricity interrelate in some strange and metaphysical way. Coins become papers become absence. Finally there is an absence itself, valued as a form of money, in a kind of a reverse alchemy, changing precious metals into nothing.

In this regard, my favorite story is about the alchemist, Paracelsus, who was travelling through Germany and was invited into the court of one of those petty German princes of the 15th century, who said, "Oh, Mr Paracelsus, great to meet you. We've heard so much about you. You're such a great scientist, we'd like set you up with your own laboratory here." I don't remember the details, but Paracelsus says "Oh you must set me up in a laboratory! What do you want me to do?" The king says, "Oh, you had this lead into gold thing. This base metal and precious metal experiment...We are very interested in that." Paracelsus says, "Oh, your Majesty, your Majesty, I am just a Puffer. You, your Majesty, you are the real alchemist." "Why?" "This is because all you have to do is give a license to a bank to lend money. That is gold out of nothing."

That was in 15th century. It took another couple of hundred years for the Bank of England to be established on that basis. Now all Banks in the world can lend up to ten times the

amount of money, whatever the hell that is, that they have in the vault. It's probably just a harddisk somewhere, so you can take 10 times nothing and call it a dollar and change it into a dollar. That's alchemy. Whoever understands that money is also religion, will also gain in the struggle.

This lecture was meant to be called 'Islam and the Net,' I should say something about that. First of all, you probably remember that the Iranian Revolution was entirely based on the cassette tape recorder. If you don't know yet, I'm going to tell you. Khomeini would not have held power in Iran, well he's dead now. He would not achieved power in Iran without the cassette tape recorder. He was in exile in Iraq and sent recordings of his sermons, which attacked the Shah, to Iran.

The tapes were spread around in a network from mosque to mosque and from cassette recorder to cassette recorder. That was the chief weapon of the Iranian Revolution. There was very little blood involved in that revolution, very little blood and only for a short time. A very serious revolutionary movement was carried out entirely through communications technology.

Just think what they can do with the net. Just think what terrorists can do with the net. The net, to answer the questions of our friends from former Yugoslavia, The net will never reach

this world in time. There will always be lag time.

The net, the marvelous miracle of communication which might be some utopian reading of the situation, will never reach the other 99% of the world in time. The reason that it will never come to save the world, like a miracle, is that terrorists will invade the net. They will be representative of all of the outside, and the outside includes all the countries where the people don't even have telephones. This is all the outside, the outside is all demonic for the inside, and therefore the technology will not be transferred, because that would be asking angels to transfer their technologies to devils, from their point of view.

It's not going to happen unless religious power itself is deconstructed or overcome. Because it's religion which has prevented the net from arriving in time to save.

It's a religious problem. We can deconstruct the religious aspect of technology. We can stop reifying technology, and worshipping it. This is a religious paradise, you can't save your soul from technology, unless you know that technology can't save it. An act, even more paradoxically, the process of overcoming, can only be to understand and even more paradoxical, this process of overcoming can be carried out through religious means. In other words, we have to understand the power of the

imagination to create values. It is, in fact, through imagination and only through imagination, that values are created. If we understand that, we are free. We, as least as individuals, then are free in some meaningful sense. Maybe not free of incompetence, but in in some sense we are free.

Communication doesn't communicate.

Communication as noise.

Communication as cognitive dissonance causes separation.

Mediation causes alienation. You can't mediate beyond a certain extent. All forms of communication are mediated, even if I speak with you. It's moving through the air and the molecules of the air are carrying sound to your ears. Simple conversation is already mediated, but you can carry that mediation, you can excaberate to a point where it becomes alienation, where you are actually violently separated or split from other people.

Mediation which becomes alienation is then reproduced in the media, so the television, newspapers, the internet, all forms of communication, as a media, in the usual sense of that word, simply increase alienation, and of course, wherever advertising comes in, it is very easy to see how this happens. It is very easy to understand how the net itself has become a source of horrible alienation, once advertising and protocolations have taken it over, once the ones in Rubeca have moved

in, once Disney and Coca-Cola have moved in and taken it over.

We even have to go back to language itself. We have to work on language, this is the job of the poet, to clarify the language of the tribe, not purify, but to clarify.

We still need ideology in some sense, in that we need ideas, and that we need a logos, or a word, or an expression of those ideas. I would prefer to end by referring these problems to Michail Bakhtin, the Russian critic, who uses the word, dialogics. I like this word because it doesn't bring in any ideological frame. It's a new, fresh word. It means conversation, really, it means high value relating. We call it dialogics because it sounds like something we haven't thought of before.

To me, it's just a good, old 19th century American word, communicativeness.

Communicativeness is not necessarily the same thing as simple communication. It implies warmth, a human presence, an actual desire, a pleasure, a joy, a jouissance, if you like, of communication.

Communicativeness is erratic, essentially, and festive. This is what Bakhtin wanted us to remember, that the spiritual path of material, the body of principle, this is something real. The material body itself, is in effect, a symbol. It is a spiritual principle, and

that, if you going to overcome the religious problem, which is to split the body off from the mind, forever, having assention to heaven, which is force and dillusory. What we need more than anything else, is a spirituality OF the body FOR the body. A re enchantment of the natural. Re-enchantment means singing, music. I am not proposing any kind of dialectical materialism or reductionism here. Actually, I am interested in a re-mytholization, in reenchantment, in magic, in action at a distance. I am interested in technology because it is magical, it is magic, it is action at a distance. What I want to see is this technology used to re-enchant nature, and finally, hopefully, to sacrifice the violence of the sacred.

Against Multiculturalism

"Let a thousand flowers bloom"

By Peter Lamborn Wilson &
Mao Tse-tung (revised)

The USA was always supposed to be a "melting pot." Canada, by contrast, calls itself a "mosaic", which may explain why Canadians seem to suffer a kind of long-drawn-out and perpetual identity crisis. What does it mean to be "Canadian" as opposed to (or as well as) Quebecois, Celt, or Native?

In the 1950s the USA was supposed to be immune to such headaches. All cultures would "melt" and fuse into the American character, the main stream. In truth, however, this "consensus" culture was simply English colonial culture with amnesia, and a faded patina of frontier bluster.

Immigrant cultures which resisted meltdown were considered simply abnormal; the Irish, for example, were viewed as savage recalcitrants until quite recently. Of course it was hard to tell if certain cultures remained "outside" because they wanted to or because they were excluded. In the 1960s blacks were identified as an unfairly excluded culture, and steps were taken to absorb them into the mainstream (through school integration for example). Native Americans were still excluded by law,

which defines them by blood rather than by culture, and maintains "segregation" by the reservation system. Jews, Hispanics, Asians, each followed their own trajectory toward assimilation or resistance.

By the late 1970s or early 1980s it became obvious that the Melting Pot had somehow failed. Black culture, the test case, now appeared impossible to absorb. The "consensus" was in danger. The Right, with its schizophrenic attitudes toward race and culture, had faltered. A new "liberal" consensus was proposed. It was called *multiculturalism*.

Let there be no mistake: multiculturalism is a strategy designed to save "America" as an idea, and as a system of social control. Each of the many cultures that make up the nation are now to be allowed a little measure of self-identity and a few simulacra of autonomy. School textbooks now reflect this strategy, with 1950s illustrations of happy historical whites retouched to include a few blacks, Asians and even Natives. A dozen or so departments of multiculturalism spring up at university level. Each minority must now be treated with "dignity" in the curriculum. Conservatives raise a stink: the Canonical Shibboleths of Western Civilization are in danger! Our children will be forced to study ... black history! This babble on the Right lends multiculturalism an aura of "radical"

righteousness and political correctitude, and the Left leaps forward to defend the new paradigm. In the middle according to theory - balance will be restored, and the consensus will function again. The trouble is that the theory itself emanates neither from the Right nor Left nor Center. It emanates from the top. It's a theory of *control*.

The old textbooks depicted all ethnic/cultural particularity as a taint which could only be overcome in the great pot of conformity to the Norm. Yet the Norm was itself so clearly and simply a form of hegemonic particularism that the textbooks wore thin and eventually grew transparent. They had to go - I agree. Now we have a few texts which admit, for example, that Columbus was a mixed blessing and that Africans were not morally responsible for being slaves. This is a step forward - I agree. However, I remain interested in knowing precisely *who* has given us permission to hold such opinions - and *why*?

In the first place, it seems obvious that each of the "many" particular cultures is being measured against or assimilated to a mainstream "universal" culture. The only difference is that the mainstream now, apparently, values a bit of "diversity," and feels a bit of permissible nostalgia for colorful ethnic customs. At the heart of the discourse however, the very discourse which now defines itself

as "multicultural", there remains a "solid core curriculum" made up of the same old Euro-rationalist axiomata, scientific triumphalism, and ruling-class teleology.

This mainstream constitutes Civilization, and only on the periphery of this centrality can the *cultures* find a place. Whatever the cultures may possess which might be of use to Civilization will of course be accepted with gratitude. Each quaint little local culture has something to offer, something to be "proud" of. A museological passion inspires the Center; everyone collects little ethnic particularities; everyone's a tourist; everyone *appropriates*.

The multicultural conversation as totalist monologue might go something like this: Yes, your little handicrafts will look good in my living room, where they'll help disguise the fact that my house was designed by - and perhaps for - a machine. Yes, your sweat-lodge ceremony will provide us with a pleasant week-end "experience". Gosh, aren't we the Masters of the Universe? Why should we put up with this bland old Anglo-American furniture when we can take *yours instead*? Aren't you grateful? And no more Imperial Colonialism either: we pay for what we take - and even what we break! Pay, pay, pay. After all, it's *only money*.

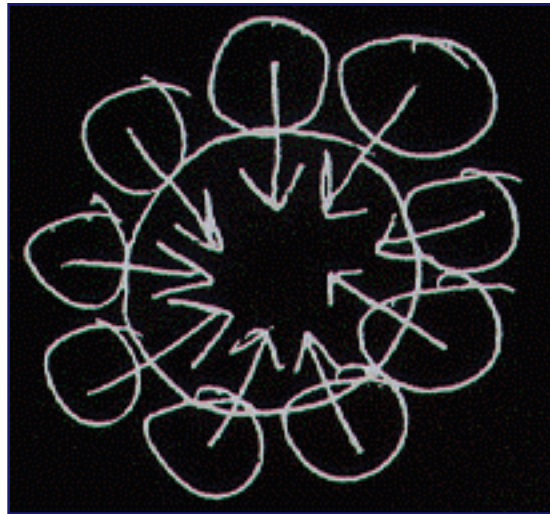
Thus multiculturalism is seen in the

first place to propose both universalism and particularism at once - in effect, a totality. Every totality implies a totalitarianism, but in this case, the Whole appears in friendly face, a great theme park where every "special case" can be endlessly reproduced. Multiculturalism is the "Spectacle" of communicativeness - conviviality which it renders into *commodity form* and sells back to those who have dreamed it. In this sense multiculturalism appears as the necessary ideological reflection of the Global Market or "New World Order," the "one" world of too-Late Capitalism and the "end of History."

The "end of History" is of course code for the "end of the Social". Multiculturalism is the *decor* of the end of the Social, the metaphorical imagery of the complete atomization of the "consumer". And what will the consumer consume? *Images of culture*.

In the second place, multiculturalism is not just a false totality or unification, but also a false *separation*. The "minorities" are told in effect that no common goals or values could unite them, except of course the goals and values of the consensus. Blacks have Black Culture, for example, and are no longer required to assimilate. So long as Black Culture tacitly recognizes the centrality of the consensus - and its own peripherality - it will be allowed and even encouraged to thrive.

Genuine autonomy, however, is out of the question, and so is any "class consciousness" which might cut across ethnic or "lifestyle" lines to suggest revolutionary coalitions. Each minority contributes to the Center, but nothing is allowed to circulate on the periphery, and certainly not the power of *collectivity*. A diagram would look like this:



Unlike a flower, which opens its borders to bees and breezes and flows out into life, the "consensus" draws all energy inward and absorbs it into a closed system of rigid control a death-like process which must eventually end in sterility and *hysteresis*.

Living as we do in the era of total Global order and the physical and cultural environment it secretes, it should be obvious that particularise can represent a form of resistance. The Totality has therefore undertaken to appropriate the energy of the resistance by offering a false form of particularism, empty of all creative

power, as a commodified simulacrum of insurrectionary desire. In this sense multiculturalism is simply the recto of that page whose verso is "ethnic cleansing". Both sides spell disappearance for any authentic particular culture of resistance.

At the same time the Consensus secretly encourages race and even class hatred. In the mysterious absence of that "Evil Empire" which once provided an excuse for every act of violent repression and corruption carried out in "defense of Western Civilization", the Consensus must now seek out or even create its "enemies" *within itself*. Intelligence orgs fall in love with violent nationalists, separatists, and chauvinists of all kinds. In such circles, multiculturalism means: "let them tear out each others' throats, and save us the trouble". Thus every act of rebellion and violent hatred simply increases the power of the "Security State". Already we see that the Discourse of Power is running out of patience with these "darned minorities and all their P.C. blather. We offered them multiculturalism and look! Still they rebel. Criminals!"

The Left has believed so long in the "International" that it has - so far - failed to adjust to the post-1989 situation with a clear response to the "New Globalism." When the Berlin Wall fell, in the moment of freedom which opened there, a new form of internationalism rushed to fill the

breach. As United States politicians crowed about how "the Cold War is over and *we won*" international Capital declared the end of all ideology. This means not only that Communism is "dead" but also that "democratic republicanism" has served its purpose and transformed itself into an empty idol. Henceforth only one force will "rule" - the rationality of money. Abstracted from all real valuation, representing nothing but itself, money is etherealized, and finally divinized. Money has "gone to Heaven" and left mere life behind.

In this situation both Right and Left will rebel - and in some cases it will be hard to tell the difference. A myriad forms of *particularism* will arise, consciously or unconsciously, to oppose the false totality and pitiful booby-prizes of multiculturalism's "New World Order". The Social has not ended, of course, no more than everyday life itself. But the Social will now involve itself with the insurrectionary potential of *difference*. In its most unconscious and deeply deluded form, this passion for *difference* will simply repeat the old and empty rhetoric of classical nationalism or racism. Hence, "ethnic cleansing" from Bosnia to California.

Against this hegemonic particularism, we might propose a more conscious and socially just form of *anti-hegemonic particularism*. It's difficult to envision the precise shape such a

force might assume, but it grows easier to identify as it actually emerges. A miraculous revival of Native-American culture steals the fire of the Columbus celebrations in 1992, and sharpens the debate over cultural appropriation. In Mexico the Zapatista uprising, according to the *New York Times*, the first "post-modern rebellion", constitutes the first armed action against the New Globalism - in the particularise but antihegemonic cause of the Mayans and peasants of Chiapas. I regard this as a struggle for "empirical freedoms" rather than "ideology." In a positive sense one might say that all cultural and/or social forms of particularism deserve support as long as

they remain anti-hegemonic, and precisely to the extent that they remain so.

In this context we might even discover uses for "multiculturalism", since it may serve as a medium for the propagation of subversive memes, and the insurrectionary desire for radical difference. Such a subversive "entry into the media," however, can serve only one ultimate purpose: the utter destruction of multiculturalist neo-imperialism and its transformation into *something else*. If the secret agenda of multiculturalism demands universal separation under the aegis of a false totality, then the radical response to multiculturalism must attack not only its ersatz universality but also its

invidious alienation, its false separatism. If we support true anti-hegemonic particularism, we must also support the other half of the dialectic by developing a force to penetrate all false boundaries, to restore communicativeness and conviviality across a horizontal and random web of connectivities and solidarities. This would constitute the true force of which multiculturalism is merely the empty simulacrum. It would complement anti-hegemonic particularism with a genuine reciprocity among peoples and cultures. The "economy of the Gift" would replace the economy of exchange and commodification. The Social would resume circulation on the level of experienced life" through the exercise of imagination and generosity.

In this sense the answer to the problem of "appropriation" would arise from the concept of a "universal potlach" of giving and sharing. As a test case, examine the issue of cultural appropriation of Native-American values. The original identity of tribal peoples in the "New" World was tribal, not racial. Anyone could be adopted into a tribe, as were many drop-out whites and run-away blacks. The twentieth-century renaissance of Native Culture has discovered certain spiritual universals which it wants to give and share with everyone, and it has discovered an anti-hegemonic particularism which it desires for itself.

The Elders charge that too many Americans want to appropriate or commodify the latter (sweat-lodges, sun-dances, etc.) but ignore or despise the former (reverence for Nature, love of place as topocosm, etc.) . The Native tradition is not *closed*, despite the just anger and bitterness of the tribes, but demands reciprocity rather than appropriation. Let us Euro's first evolve a serious revolutionary attitude toward the restoration of wild (er) ness; then it will be appropriate for us to make the fine Alexandrian gesture of "worshipping local spirits".

The Situationists already envisioned this strategy when they coined that much-abused slogan: "think globally, act locally". Our true interests include global realities, such as "environment", but effective power can never be global without being oppressive. Top-down solutions reproduce hierarchy and alienation. Only local action for "empirical freedoms" can effect change on the level of "experienced life" without imposing categories of control. A New-age Nietzsche might have called it "the will to self-empowerment".

The poet Nathaniel Mackay calls it *cross-culturalism*. The image expresses a non-hierarchic, de-centered web of cultures, each one singular, but not alienated from other cultures. Exchange takes place as reciprocity across the permeable boundaries of this complex of

autonomous, but loosely defined, *differences*. I would add a further refinement. This reciprocity will produce more than the mere sum of exchanges within the system, and this *more* will constitute a universal value in circulation among free collectivities and individuals. Hence the term *cross-cultural synergetics* might describe the precise term (or slogan) proposed as a replacement for "multiculturalism".

Conclusion

The multicultural paradigm presupposes a false totality within which are subsumed a set of false particularities. These differences are represented and packaged as "lifestyle choices" and "ethnicities", commodities to appease the genuine passion for genuine difference with mere "traces" and *images* of "dignity" and even of "rebellion". Against this, cross-cultural synergism proposes actual autonomy, whether for individuals or cohesions of individuals, based on radical consciousness and organic identity. In this sense, cross-culturalism can only oppose itself to "multiculturalism", either through a strategy of subversion, or through open assault. Either way, "multiculturalism" must be destroyed.

Cybernetics & Entheogenics: From Cyberspace to Neurospace

Lecture by Peter Lamborn Wilson

Held during the "Next Five Minutes"
Conference on Tactical Media
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The term "Neurospace" I learned from the Kiev artist Vladimir Muzehesky, through Geert Lovink. What I immediately thought he meant by it was a comparison of that space which is posited as belonging to the computer with the neural space or the inner-body experience, that comes, for most of us, largely through psychedelic drugs--neurospace as the space of hallucinations, for example. I would like to compare and contrast, as they used to say in school, cyberspace and neurospace. There are similarities and differences.

I remember some years ago, when virtual reality suddenly

appeared with a big whizbang on the scene, going to a conference in New York where Timothy Leary, God bless him, appeared with Jaron Lanier and couple of other cybernauts. Tim was wearing the goggles, he was on stage and he said, "Oooh, I have been here before." So right from the start there was this connection set up between virtual reality and the LSD experience--or as some us prefer to call it "the entheogenic experience," which is just a fancy way of not using the word psychedelic because it alerts the police. Actually, "entheogenic" means the birth of the "Divine Within." I am able to use this term that is meaningful for me even though I am not a theist in the strict sense of the word. I don't think you have to believe in God to understand that there can be an experience of the Divine Becoming Within.

In fact historically--and, at least for me, experientially and existentially--that has been the most important aspect of the reappearance of psychedelic drugs in my lifetime. I am almost

an exact contemporary of LSD: I was born in 1945, and Albert Hofmann was already cooking up various preliminary versions. Last summer I got to meet Hofmann, and he is a wonderful advertisement for the psychedelic experience. He is well over 80, and he is hale and hearty--got all his brain cells and is still working, eats like a horse, drinks like a fish. This is my lifetime we are talking about.

There is a historical question, in the history of religions per se, and that is: Where do psychedelics come from?

Terence McKenna believes that human consciousness itself is a function of the psychedelic experience, specifically of the psilocybin mushroom. He believes that one day an ape took a shroom and became a human, because cognition appeared. Terence says that what makes us human is the psychedelic experience. I don't know if I literally believe this; in any case, I don't believe in any single origin for human consciousness. But it's

enlightening to think about the possibility that we may owe our difference from the other members of the simian clan to our ability to experience psychedelics in a certain way. If that were the case, it would be true that our entire experience of cognition--which historically belongs in the category of what is known as "religion"--would have begun with psychedelics. The entire psychedelic experience would be co-existent in time with human becoming. An interesting hypothesis; we can add it to all theories of human origins.

I like to think of palimpsests. In the Middle Ages they didn't have much paper, so they would write one way on the paper and then would write another way on the same paper. Sometimes they would even write a third way. They were used to reading it this way. My approach to theory is a palimpsestic one: I like to pile up theories one on top of another and hold up the whole stack up to the light and see if still any light is coming through. Think of it as animation gels, but with

writing in a stack. Add all those theories, one on top of each other.

The positive way of looking at consciousness is that is "us." The bad aspect of it is that consciousness itself would seem to be a separation process. Georges Bataille spoke about this in an interesting way: he hypothesized that all religion concerns a memory trace of a time in which the human was separate from nature--from the animal, let's say. And if you believe in evolution, this is just literally true. There was a time when we were apes of some sort. It's at the moment of consciousness that this separation occurs. Suddenly it's no longer a question of the animal experience and what Bataille calls the "original intimacy." We are now taken out of the matrix and plunged into cognition. Religion in this view begins immediately after this moment, because *religio* means to relink, to link up again. What we're trying to do with all these religious and philosophical forms is to try to link up with the

original intimacy, which we lost when we began to experience cognition.

If Terence is right, than cognition begins with drugs, and then the next step would be to take more drugs to try to recover what one had lost. So, in this reading, human consciousness and human religion, which are so closely related, would have always been involved with psychedelic plants. Here we come up against a problem in anthropology, which I have only recently become aware of. As anthropologists look at the most "primitive" societies that we can find--that is to say hunter-gatherer tribal societies--these societies don't seem to have much to do with psychedelics. According to anthropologists, psychedelic plants occur in human history with agriculture--so, at the very most, 12000 years ago.

Agriculture, the age we are still in, is at most 1% of the whole human story. But if you go to South America and compare the hunting tribes and the primitive

agriculturalists, who grow a bit of subsistence vegetables, do some hunting and fishing-- without strong leadership, very egalitarian--it is in these groups that we begin to see the psychedelic plants emerge as a cultural phenomena. It immediately struck me that there is something wrong here. Why should agriculturalists know more about wild plants than the hunters and gatherers, who in fact depend on the wild plants? They depend at least 70% on gathering, and only 30% on hunting. The gathering, which is usually done by women, is much more important economically than the hunting, which is usually done by men. The men think that hunting is much more prestigious, but it is economically less important. The hunters of course know about all the plants, but they have not necessarily ritualized it yet: they have not made a cult of the psychedelic plant.

Agriculture is the only radical new technology that ever appeared in the world; what it amounts to is a cutting into the

earth. If you read any anthropology about Native Americans, you will find that when the white Europeans arrived and tried to force the tribes into agriculture, the tribal people always say the same thing: "What, you want us to rape our Mother, the Earth? This is perverse. How could you ask human beings to do this?" Agriculture immediately appears as a bad deal to these tribes. There is no doubt that this technology leads inevitably and fairly quickly to social hierarchies, separation, class structure, property, and religion as we understand it--a priest class that tells everybody else what to do and how to think. It leads, in other words, to authoritarianism and, ultimately, to the state itself.

Economy, money, all the misery of civilization, we owe to agriculture. Before that, you have two million years of hunting and gathering, the beautiful cave art, a world that looks suspiciously utopian, a golden age by comparison with a lot of the problems that agriculture

brings about. In some sense, agriculture is fall from grace. I don't want to be a reactionary, a luddite--I am just simply pointing out something that is very true and obvious, but it took a long time for civilized human beings to realize this. In the 1960s, the anthropologist Marshal Sahlins discovered that the hunting and gathering societies that exist today only work an average of four hours a day to get their food, whereas the agricultural societies work an average of sixteen hours a day. Hunter-gatherers have over 200 kinds of food in their larder over the course of a year, whereas the primitive agriculturalists will only eat an average of twenty.

From this point of view, Sahlins pointed out, it is absolutely incomprehensible that anybody would ever give up hunting for agriculture. Ever since I read that book *Stone Age Economy* I have been figuring out why-- why did we give up this Garden of Eden kind of situation? Of course the hunter knows starvation, but the hunter doesn't know scarcity; that only

comes into being with economy. The hunter's life can be miserable-- it can be too cold, too hot, too naked, he can be wiped out by the polar bear, whatever--but the one thing the hunter does not have anything of is the miseries of civilization.

If we are going to talk about the positive features of civilization, let's remember that they are only serviceable for 10% of any given population, in other words, the property-owning elite. For everybody else, civilization is a fucking awful deal. It turns you into a serf or a slave, into the human sacrifice. We know that cannibalism belongs to agriculture, not to the hunting tribes. I like bread--I'm not about to give up bread. What I am trying to point out to you with this exaggerated attack on agriculture, is that agriculture is a very severe technological break. It is as if you drew a line: on that side there is wild forest, and on this side there is culture, humanity and, ultimately, civilization. On the clear side, we cut into the earth, we make straight lines, we know the

technology of seeds. The calendar is the first ideology, in the sense of false consciousness, because only farmers could invent it. Industry is a minor epiphenomenon of agriculture, from this point of view.

Agriculture is the one and only important technology that has ever been invented and that calls for a complete reevaluation of the human relation vis-a-vis the natural world, the world of plants and animals.

As a result of this entire new relationship, of this novelty, there will be an entirely new interpretation of the psychedelic plant. The entheogenic, magic plant will now emerge in a religious context--whereas before it might only have been a question of the individual knowledge of an individual gatherer. Now, suddenly, there has to be a cult of the entheogenic plant. Because agriculture is so traumatic for human society, it necessitates having a living, shamanic, magical relationship with plants. Before, plants were like other beings, now they are strange

spirits that grow in the forest. Actually, one anthropologist wrote a fascinating book on tobacco as a psychedelic plant in South America: the very first agriculture would have been the growing of psychoactive plants, and that's why human beings might even become farmers, to ensure a nice supply of tobacco or mushrooms or whatever. A friend of mine once said, "Yeah, everything is psychotropic." Any substance that you can take into your body will bring about a transmutation. I don't care if it's water, food, air--it's all transformation through substance.

It is not true that agriculture discovered psychedelics. I can prove, on the basis of mythology, that hunting society knew it very well. All myths concerning psychedelic plants always say that we learned about the plants from the wild people from the forest. One example: the Buiti-cult from northwestern Africa, which is based on ibogaine. They claim that they got it from the pygmies. Suddenly we seem to

see for the first time the appearance of the psychotropic plant, whereas before it was simply one among many psychoactive things in a world that was entirely psychoactive, it's now the one special substance that will allow us to recover that original intimacy. It will make us better than conscious, it will give us a beyond mere consciousness, which in a sense will be a return to that original intimacy of nature.

It's fairly clear that all the great neolithic societies had some kind of cult of soma--the Sanskrit word for the psychoactive experience. The Rg-Veda, one of the oldest books of humanity, is all about the psychedelic experience. If only Tim Leary had used the Rg-Veda instead of the Tibetan Book of the Death to introduce LSD, the sixties would have been a different decade. The Tibetan Book is about death, a downer, whereas the Rg-Veda is very much about life and joy and power. Anyway, all neolithic and classical societies had some variety of this. We owe these

discoveries to the great Gordon Wasson, who was the first to discuss whether the soma of the Rg-Veda was in fact a magic mushroom. He also came to the conclusion that the Eleusinian mysteries, one of the central religious rights of the ancient Greeks, was also fueled by a psychoactive plant. The ancient Persians had something called "helma," it might have been a plant that contains harmoline. I claim to have discovered that the ancient Irish had a similar cult... and of course we know about the Aztecs and the Mayans: they still ha an active psychedelic cult when the conquistadors arrived. In some of the old Spanish chronicles you can actually read about magic mushrooms. But somehow these texts were lost, or no one read them, or if they read them they did not believe them, or they were horrified by them.

It is the spread of Christianity which seems to signal the end of the classical psychedelic world. John Allegro, one of the original Death Sea Scroll scholars--he went crazy, according to most

people--wrote a book called *The Mushroom and the Cross* in which he said that Jesus Christ was a mushroom. I always felt that Jesus Christ can be whatever you want him to be, so why not? Historically, perhaps this antipsychedelic effect had something to do with wine, the sacrament of Christianity. Wine itself, although it is psychoactive, is not nearly as psychedelic as magic mushrooms. And alcohol has it's problems. Terence McKenna has taken a very puritanical stand-- antialcohol, coffee, sugar, tea, any of those modern psychotropics.

The West probably lost awareness of the most mind-altering substances in a gradual process parallel to the diffusion of Christianity. Wine is sacramentalized, and its Dionysian potential remains, as magic--for example in the Catholic Mass, a magical performance in which bread and wine are turned into a cannibal feast, And in the "soma function," which means that everything is psychotropics. As one of the Sufi poets said: "A

drunkard will never become wise, even after a hundred bottles of wine, but a wise man will become intoxicated one a glass of water."

Think about Rabelais, for example. He devoted his last chapter of his book to what he called the "Herb Pantagruelion" and it's clear to any modern reader that he is talking here about marijuana. So the psychedelic knowledge was not even lost, not even by the time of Rabelais. It was handed down on a nonliterate level--by wise women, country doctors, witch doctors, and peasant mothers who knew about plants. The knowledge has become occult, it's a secret. Rabelais is playing with the fact that he is knowing something that you don't know. The knowledge was never lost because no culture can persist without an some opening towards non-ordinary consciousness. You have to have some escape valve to some civilization, even if it is mass psychosis. There has got to be a way out.

The idea of the transformation through ingestion of entheogens or psychedelic plants still was not quite erased even in the High Middle Ages. The knowledge has been condemned to hell. The psilocybin mushroom was always here, it never went away, but it was hiding--I am talking like Terence now, let's just take it as a metaphor--it was hiding because nobody respected it, nobody needed it. It was not because Wasson brought the spores out on his boots in 1956 that suddenly magic mushrooms were all over the world again; it was because some paradigm shift occurred at the same time. If Wasson hadn't done it, someone else would have made the discovery. As Robert Anton Wilson says "When it is steam engine time, it's steam engines."

The rediscovery had already been going on since the nineteenth century when people like Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and DeQuincy, or the Romantics, who got into hashish and opium. They learned about it from the Islamic world. Once again, in a very occult and hidden way, these

were *poetes maudites* --
damned knowledge, known by
damned people. Then there is
Antonin Artaud, who went to
Mexico and took peyote; or Ernst
Juenger, Mircea Eliade, C.-G.
Jung, Walter Benjamin, Ernst
Bloch--they were all
experimenting with drugs. We
know about Aldous Huxley
because he wrote the first book
in English. So when the
psychedelic revolution happens,
it is already an old story.

The invention of LSD, around
1945-47, is somehow
emblematic to me. It is, in fact,
the very first synthetic
psychedelic drug; and the
remarkable thing about it is that
you need 200mg or even less.
That's nothing. It takes the
whole story of the psychedelic
experience into a new, much
more technical world of modern
science. Before, it is the
primitive world of the plants.
There is a reason for this. In the
beginning, I have hypothesized,
drugs first appear in human
history because they are used in
a religious way in agricultural
societies, and the use and

discovery of psychedelics is somehow a response to a technological development. This technological advance makes more poignant, more violent our separation from that original intimacy, from that experience of pure animal consciousness. So that is it technology itself that causes the recognition, on the part of early agricultural societies, of the cultic and religious aspect of these plants. Now we are here, a good deal later in human history--and there is the first interesting development in technology since agriculture.

It could be that, around 1945, we see things...instead of becoming more and more massive--suddenly become more dematerialized. (The atomic bomb dematerializes matter in a very radical way.) A very spiritual experience, on the one hand, and the computer, on the other hand--which, as we know now, was destined to bring about the "information economy." You cannot eat information, so it isn't really an economy, and it never will be--but there is nevertheless

something to this expression. There is a truth behind the bullshit, there is this dematerialization, a revulsion against the heaviness of the body, a disembodiment of production. We know that computers are supposed to be a great spiritual event, even though it is still a machine; it is not a heavy machine, a simple machine, an on-off switch.

Of course, we will not overcome the economy of production through this. Someone still has to make shoes, has to grow food--and it is not going to be us! *We* aren't going to get our hands dirty with that anymore. Let the Mexicans do it, while we will inhabit this marvelous gnostic space of pure information. We have sent our filthy polluting factories to India, to Bophal, to Chernobyl, so that we can be clean, so we can be the "cyber class." No matter what you think about the liberatory potentials of the computer, we must also face up to this fact that there is a disembodiment going on. Suddenly you ain't got no body

anymore--it'sanalogous to the disembodiment that the atomic bomb brings about when it hits you. Is it a coincidence therefore, that in this precise same two years, LSD is synthesized, mescaline, MDMA, plus the rediscovery of the mushroom...

There is a very interesting link between technology and the psychedelic experience.

Probably the occultation of psychedelics climaxes with industrialization and with the sneaking substitution of machinic space for organic space as a principle of psychic ordering. Even agricultural consciousness is still organic consciousness: it has to do with the earth, with plants and animals. It is a very ordered, gridwork consciousness, but it still is organic. But as we get toward the "Satanic mills" (Blake) and the English working class of Engels, machinic space has become the ordering principle. It is not the plow that creates space anymore, it is the production line that creates psychic space. So Victorian

puritanism and imperialism must represent the public repression of the unconscious by a rigid sobriety based on a mind/machine model that is the isolate and commanding cogito. If you wanted to find one period of human history when there really was a complete amnesia about the psychedelic experience, it would be the nineteenth century, around 1830-1880, when us civilized folks not only forgot that there was something like the psychedelic experience but denied it.

As a culture, we like to laugh at primitive tribes--for example, those who are shown photographs of themselves and cannot recognize them. But in 1876 a French scientist fell by accident into one of the paleolithic caves. Later, in his diary he wrote that there seemed to be some scribbles on the wall. He could not see that it was art, he was just as blind as the pygmy who is blind to the photograph. Suddenly, a few years later, people could see it as art. What allowed T. S. Eliot to say that ever since Lascaux,

Western art "tumbled from the staircase"? What allowed Picasso suddenly to see African masks, the French expressionists to see Japanese art, the hippies in the sixties to hear Indian music? For the colonialist British who visited India, the music for them was like the "whining of the mosquitoes--how can they stand it?" The Brits could not hear it as music. My parents' generation could never hear Indian music as music: "What's that buzzing noise? Are you kids stoned again?" That is what I call a paradigm shift of cognition.

At the very moment when entheogenesis--that is, the birth of the Divine Within--reappears in the West with the late Romantics as a subculture, as "occult history," the conditions were being set up for this paradigm shift. We are still basically undergoing it. The only thing that could even pretend to suppress this shift of consciousness, would be the Law, as in the War on Drugs. But our law is a machine law, a gridwork, clockwork law, and it is obviously unable to contain the

fluidity of the organic. That is why the War on Drugs will never ever work. You might as well declare war on every plant. So public discourse is approaching breakdown over the question of consciousness. The War on Drugs is a war on cognition itself, about thought itself as the human condition. Is thought this dualist cartesian reason? Or is cognition this mysterious, complex, organic, magical thing with little mushrooms elves dancing around. Which it is to be?

The War on Drugs is a paradigm war. Each refinement in machinic consciousness will evoke a dialectical response from the organic realm. It is as if the mushroom elves were there; it is as if there were plant consciousness that responds to the machinic consciousness. It is such a beautiful metaphor--you don't have to believe in the elves, it's all human consciousness, ultimately. You don't have to believe in something supernatural to explain this. So around the mid-twentieth century, technology

begins to shift away from an imperial-gigantic frame to a more "inward" dimension, with the splitting of the atom, the virtual space of communications and the computer. And it was around that same time that the really serious psychedelics begin to show up--mescaline, psilocybin, LSD, DMT, ketamine, MDMA, etc. etc.

The paradigm war that's now breaking out is one measure of an antagonism between cyberspace and neurospace, but the relation cannot simply be vulgarized as a dichotomy. This brings us up to the so-called "second psychedelic revolution"-- just another battle in the same war. >From one point of view, we lost the War on Drugs in the sixties, it was crushed and driven underground again. What Leary and Huxley dreamed of, a transformation of society through this experience, did not occur. Or did it? Now we know that the CIA was deeply involved in spreading LSD around the world. On Wasson's second trip to Mexico there was a CIA- agent in the group. They all had a

wonderful time, except one person--guess who... They were interested in the bad-trip side of things--certainly also a psychedelic experience. The CIA attempted to monopolize LSD, to control its distribution, they funded virtually every research project. They were interested in brainwashing. The sixties owe just as much to the CIA as they do to the Learies and the hippies. There was this complex web of good and evil, smart and stupid, all in mix of smoke--fractal patterns influencing each other, in which every jewel reflects every other jewel. That is the secret history of the sixties.

Through the seventies and eighties things looked fairly grim. The "second psychedelic revolution" we now have involves some new drugs like ibogaine and a new, more careful scientific approach. We have all learned to be careful where the funding comes from and in the protocols. And there is a new generation: don't worry, the kids are alright. LSD is a dangerous drug, it destroys some people,

but life is a risky business. If there's one thing I hate, it's the word "safety". We live in a civilization of safety, in which we are eventually cocooned from all danger, that is to say, from all experience. What we are left with is a vegetable plugged into a computer, who never leaves the room, like a hideous vision of a William Gibson novel. We would be well advised to rediscover risk.

The new round of psychedelic work one can find in the work of the Albert Hofmann Foundation and in the spread of acid in Eastern Europe--all part of this "second psychedelic revolution," which I very much link up to the Internet, this dialectic response between the plant world and the machine world. The antagonism between cyberspace and neurospace is one thing--but there is also an analogy. Somehow, cyberspace is hallucinogenic, or it was thought to be. They both involve a visionary inner space. It is like saying that LSD is like the atomic bomb, "it blew your mind." It has this negative side

to it as well.

Let us be clear: cyberspace is happening outside your body, you might move your body, seeing these bad animations moving around you. Did virtual reality fail already?

Somebody said today that virtual reality failed because it was already virtually experienced through the media. Save your money and hear about it on television--that's enough. It is very conceptual, one of those futures that never happened and never will. And don't forget that cyberspace is much more than only VR. The really important Net is not the Internet, but the international banking network. There, one trillion dollar is being moved around each day. "Money went to heaven," as my friend Gordon uses to say. Money that refers to money that refers to money, etc.--the most abstract concept humanity has ever developed. Compared to this the Internet is nothing, it is a tiny corner of electrocommunications.

Nevertheless, the Internet is

interesting to me because it seems to have a liberatory potential--we want to find out it's psychedelic aspect. I personally am getting more and more pessimistic, the trajectories all seem to end in a reduction of our autonomy. The Internet is either going to be another crisis-solving device for global capitalism, or it will vanish or be relegated to a minor communications medium, a good deal less important than the post office. There are only a very few corners left for beautiful agitation. We can no longer expect to win this particular battle of the paradigm war. I don't think that this technology, any more than any other technology, is going to be the fix that will bring us freedom and glory. It is not the solution; it isn't even the question anymore, much less the answer. I would prefer to see the question enlarged to include neurospace--because cyberspace, conceptually, is a form of disembodiment.

As a historian of religions, I see that the tragedy of the human

story is the separation of mind and body. Since Mesopotamian times, religion has always been an attempt to escape the body: it becomes more and more gnostic, in the sense of hatred of the body. If you want to hear some marvelous gnostic, all you have to do is to listen to some of the enthusiastic advocates of the Internet. The people who really believe that you are going to transcend the body, download consciousness, escape from the corpse. It is immortality through technology, transcendence through machinic consciousness. It is the same of pie in the sky when you die that the old anarchists used to criticize about religion. The Internet, in this aspect, is simply the modern version of religion. Cyberspace is our version of heaven.

These myths do not go away. This rationalism turns out to be another irrational cult, just another ideology, another form for class consciousness. The problem of reembodiment, therefore, is the only religious, intellectual, and technical question we need to ask

ourselves. The body is both the mystery and the key to the mystery at the same time. Cyberspace doesn't happen in the body. The "Body without Organs" is a phrase from Deleuze and Guattari--and they are strangely ambivalent about the moral aspect of this body. I understand their "machinic consciousness," that it is not necessarily evil. I could talk about the psychedelic experience as an imaginal machine. My quarrel with machinic consciousness comes when it posits that the body is evil and that the mind is good. And do not forget that the Catholic Church loved Descartes. This Cartesian consciousness we now think of as machinic, modern, and scientific, was at one time hailed by the Catholic Church as a true religious philosophy.

Neurospace also involves hallucinations. You think you are in the Palace of Memory, but you aren't. You're just sitting in your room, stoned on acid: you're in an imaginal space, just as with cyberspace. And yet, where is this event taking place--but in

the body? Neurospace is a space of embodiment. Cyberspace is a space of disembodiment. I don't want to sound like a moralist... We can add terms like "complexity," "chaos," or "the karmic web of jewels."

The latest developments in machine consciousness have a "Deleuze- Guattarian" aspect of subversion, as with the Internet--activism--with a certain psychedelic flavor. While "drugs" are produced out of a "second nature" that is nothing if not machinic. The whole "drug crisis" is very much a crisis of machinic consciousness--and heroin and cocaine are very much machine products, just like LSD. However, an oppositional aspect also appears, a "second psychedelic revolution", a dialectic of re-embodiment ("neurospace") as opposed to the tendency toward false transcendence & disembodiment in "cyberspace."

One of the great "rediscoveries" of this new entheogenesis is the dialectical nature of ayahuasca or yage--that is, that organic DMT can be "realized" in

combination with an MAO-inhibitor like harmine, and that plant sources for these two substances are globally diffused, widespread to the point of ubiquity, impossible to control, and free. Preparations require only low kitchen tech. Neo-ayahuasca, unlike computer technology, is not a part of capitalism or any other ideological control system.

Is it fair to make this comparison? Yes, to the extent that entheogenesis and cybertech are both concerned with information and therefore with epistemology. In fact, we could call both of them "gnostic systems"--both are implicated in the goal of knowing that emerges from the gulf that seems to separate mind/soul/spirit from body. So the entheogenic version of this knowing, however, implies enlarging the definition of the body to include neurospace, while the cybernetic version implies the disappearance of the body into information, the "downloading of the consciousness." These are

perhaps both absurd extremes, images rather than political situations; they are also potent myths, powerful images.

We need a politique here--not an ideology but an active cognizance of actually persisting situations, as clearly as we can grasp them in our modeled, stoned condition. We need a strategic sense of where to apply the nudges of our material art, the little martial, Zen moves, whereby even a weak person can win a battle. Whereby even we, despised marginals, could actually have self-empowerment and thereby influence on history. All of this leads to a vision of amusingly apocalyptic nonsensical self-importance, like "Neuro-hackers vs the New World Order" Well, it's at least a nice idea for a science-fiction novel.

(transcribed and edited by Geert Lovink and Ted Byfield)

Media-Space! Opening Speech

By Peter Lamborn Wilson

Speech at Public Netbase Media-
Space! Opening
28th of February, 1997

Up till a few years ago—no, up till last year, well, up till ten minutes ago—there was a very religious feeling surrounding the Internet. I call it the mumbo-jumbo factor, a kind of magical aura that surrounds any new technology. There is an old saying that any technology that you don't understand is like magic. In other words, how many people could fix that television if it broke? Maybe there are actually a few people here who could do that. But, by and large, it is magic. The Internet is so new, the computer itself is so new that it has this kind of magic aura, a halo around it. Out of that feeling, there came certain expectations that were almost messianic: the feeling that the Internet was going to save us, that the Internet was out of control (that's the title of a very popular book). Because it was out of control, that no government could control it, just by existing it was going to be a factor for liberation. Over the last few of years, there were a number of conferences and a number of publications and quite

a lot of thinking along these lines.

It turns out that that there were two different kinds of people who had these expectations. One is what we call in America "extropians," people who think that the machine is the next stage of evolution, and that the intelligent machine will somehow replace human intelligence. This is science fiction. It might be; one never likes to make predictions about technology. Maybe someday there will be artificial intelligence. But there certainly isn't any now. In fact, the question is whether there is any un-artificial intelligence.

The other type of person who talked about the Net as freedom basically had an antigovernment line. The idea was that the Internet could not be controlled by government. It was somehow going to create this wonderful anarchy in the world just by existing, just because of the strange horizontal network aspect where there is no control center for the Internet.

When you come to think of it, all communications systems are out of control in this way, including language. Language itself, after all, is the original communications technology, and language is out of control.

Governments try to control language, especially in the 20th century, but they find finally that language is out of control. There are always poets, there are always people who use language in

creative ways. I don't mean people who write poetry as uneven lines on the page. I mean poets in the ancient Greek sense of the word: creative people.

The idea that the Internet would free us from government actually meant that it would give us to capital. In other words, if government can't control the Net, then it should be free as a space for money to circulate freely. In this sense, the Internet is really just a mirror of capitalism, or capitalism if you want to use the old term. I don't like to like to say capitalism because I don't think it is an ideology anymore. In the 20th century...I think the 20th century is over, it ended in 1989 or perhaps in 1991... the 20th century was the century of government. The 21st century began with the collapse of communism in the USSR and the idea that now there is only one true force in the world, and that force is capital. It may look very different in Europe, I should really only speak about America. In America, the perception is that capital itself is free, is liberated. It no longer has to deal with communism or with any aspect of the social movement. All the arrangements, the deals that were made between capital and various other forces in the world are finished. In America, for example, there was a deal made with the working class in about 1950 or 1948. The deal was basically: we will lift you up, we will make sure that you live

well, we will recognize the unions, and the price of this is that you will not become communist. Or religion, for example, was brought into the crusade against godless communism, so a deal was arranged between capital and religion.

Now, after 1991, these deals are not necessary for capital any longer. They do not have to have allies in the struggle against the movement of the social because there is no movement of the social. There are many remnants of the social movement but there is no cohesive resistance against capital unless it might come for government. This is very interesting because the struggle that is now around the Net, to a certain extent, is a struggle between government and capital. You see this in the attempt of governments to censor the Net. This happens in America, but other countries it is much more severe. In Iraq, for example, I understand that there is no Internet access at all. In China, the access is severely restricted, perhaps non-existent. Governments that still consider themselves ideological and strong, that is, the few remaining communists governments or some Islamic governments, they want to censor the Internet. Also the American government would like to be able to censor the Internet.

It seems that, technologically, this is impossible. You cannot finally censor a

system that does not have a center. For example, you probably know about the Scientology case where somebody put some secret documents on the Net, and the Scientology Church succeeded in closing down the access company in Finland that had allowed those documents to be published. As soon as they did that, in fifty countries around the world the same documents were posted on the Net and they are completely available. You can have a stack like that of secret Scientology documents if you can struggle through such boring crap. Bad science fiction. It was a complete failure. The Church of Scientology can hire as many lawyers as they like. They will never be able to suppress this information. Same thing with McDonald's. The "McLibel" case which has been going on in England for years is the longest court case in English history. That, too, centers around the Internet. No matter how many times McDonald's could succeed in crushing these poor people for telling the truth about their lousy food, somebody else will post the same material.

The Internet is technically out of control but, socially, it is a different matter. There will always be some area of freedom on the Internet but it can be surrounded by vast cyberspace city of high-rise multinational corporations which will dwarf the tiny little settlement of hackers and pioneers and artists. In fact, that little space of freedom where the artist and

hackers congregate is even rather useful to capital because it spins out many ideas, it discovers new technologies which capital can use.

The other point is that when the Internet has a few thousand or even a couple of million people on it, most of those people were fairly well informed. Probably most of you belong to that group. But now there are millions and millions and millions of new subscribers to the Internet. As far as they are concerned, it is just another entertainment medium. In America, I would say the average user of the Internet is waiting for America On-Line to come up and is looking forward for some chat-line about their favorite sitcom on television or their favorite music group. They are not interested in freedom or discussing the theories about freedom of information. They are not interested in issues of censorship and control. They are simply interested in being entertained. As the Internet and television come together, which is what is happening now, with systems such as point-to-point or pointcasting as it is called a program can be designed just for you. You can have your own channel that will entertain you. Intelligent search engines will go and look up the kind of news or entertainment you are interested in and feed it to you everyday along with little advertisements that run in the upper right-hand corner at the same time, thus proving that human being can do

two things at once. They can read news and look at advertisements at the same time. It is a great step forward.

The future of the Internet in this sense is simply to become a mirror of capital because capital, like the Internet, has no borders. If capital discovers that shoes can be made more cheaply in Indonesia, Taiwan or Mexico, they take the shoe factory there. The jobs in New York, Chicago or Vienna go away. There is no border for capital. In the same way, there is no border for the Internet. If I send e-mail to somebody in Finland, it is the same. It practically costs the same to send mail to someone in my neighborhood in New York. So there are no borders on the Internet. If the Internet is out of control, so is capital. There is no center for capital. There is no hope of capital. There is no king of capital. There are just 200 or 300 major corporations fighting it out for the market. We could probably map this mathematically as a pure chaos. Capital is a pure chaos. Well, so is the Internet.

In my opinion, any technology has this mirror relationship with the society or the economic reality that brings it into existence. Technology doesn't come from God. Technology doesn't come from outer space. We human beings make technology, and then technology makes us, and then we make more technology, and then that influences

us, and so on and so forth in a very complex multiple feedback situation which essentially a chaos. What I see now is that the problem is that the people who are interested in an "Internet activism"—people who look on the Internet as a revolutionary possibility or tool—must ask themselves where they are going to situate their work or desire in this context of the mirror of capital, this mirror of production as Baudrillard said in an early book before he became a hopeless pessimist.

The question is, to a certain extent, which side are you on? Are you going to go with capital? Are you capitulate to capital and accept the comfortable world that capital offers to people like you and me? Because we are very privileged people. We don't live in Iraq. Or the other alternative: are we going to re-invent ourselves in some kind of oppositional framework? Are we going to be the opposition to capital?

Right now, capital presents itself as a single world, a globe. They talk about global markets. The neoliberal idea is that there is a global market and that money should be free within this system. As far as they are concerned, there is only one world. There is no Second World. That was communism. So, certainly, there is no Third World, because if you don't have a Second, you certainly can't have a Third. It is one world and, in that world, there are

areas of inclusion, there are areas of exclusion. There are areas of security, there are areas of depletion, of debt, of sucking away all vitality. The world will be divided on this basis. Instead of two clashing ideologies, there will be simply capital and that which is excluded from capital. Including even perhaps government. This is a very curious business. As an old anarchist myself, it is difficult to make this mental adjustment: that it is no longer government that is the number one problem. In fact, in a strange kind of way, there may even be political possibilities. I don't want to say more about this because it is very fuzzy in my mind. The future is going to be very strange indeed. We are now beginning the 21st century. Most people are so tied to the clock that they haven't realized that yet. They think that the 21st century will begin in 2000 or 2001, but it has already begun and it is really just getting under way. As we go into this new century and into this new situation, we have to ask ourselves, as workers in media, which of these directions are we going to go.

That doesn't mean that if I decide to oppose capital that I necessarily mean that I would physically or politically remove myself entirely from the flow of money. You can't do anything without money. So that is impossible. But it does mean that I would have a strategy. I would have not just have tactical thinking but some kind of

overall strategy with a long term goal to oppose the injustice and imposed debt that capital sees as our future. In this case, I think that the Internet will take on a new meaning. We know it is not going to save our souls. We can be pretty sure that we are not going to be replaced by intelligent machines. That would solve a lot of problems, of course. We could all just retire to Florida and enjoy ourselves. But now I'm afraid we're stuck in the human condition. We could either capitulate and become part of that comfortable world, or we could somehow move into opposition.

Moving into opposition doesn't mean giving up any potential certain strategic advantage. In this sense, all technology represents potential strategic advantage. It is not a question of giving up the Internet. I think it is more about growing up around the idea of the Internet not as a divine answer to our problems, not as a magical system which will help us to achieve freedom simply by existing, but as a tool like a hammer or something even simpler like a stick with a sharpened point, going back to the earliest tools that human beings used. As long as we can see the Internet from this perspective and not expect it to save us and not expect us to save it either, but simply to be aware of it and its possibilities as a tool, then it could become very interesting for those who wish to be in opposition to capital. Of course, it will

also continue to be a tool for capital. The situation on the Net will not be clear. It will not be clear which is the good and which is the evil side. It's not going to be like that. Each situation is going to be different. We have to bring in a strategic awareness so that we can decide in each situation what the correct tactic would be. I look at the next couple of years as a very interesting period of strategic thinking. I myself do not have any easy answers to this question. I'm looking also. But what I wish to do is to pose the question. I'd like to sharpen the discourse in order to ask the question in a very specific way.

How could we use these new technologies in a strategic overall movement? Yes, I would even use that word: movement. With very specific goals. Empirical goals, not ideological goals. We are not talking about the triumph of an idea. We're not talking about the triumph of a political system or a philosophy, be it capitalism, Marxism, or anarchism even. Each situation has its own strategic necessities and each situation will have to be approached in a situational manner to decide what power there might be in that situation. Some people use the word "self-empowerment". That sounds perhaps more New Age, softer than the word "power". But I'm not afraid of the word "power". I think that this is what we're looking for. Power. Yes, power for ourselves, not power over other

people. Not power over money, or power over God or over fate or over anything. Power for ourselves, yes, self-empowerment, but it's still power. In this search, we must make us of whatever weapons or tools lie to hand.

I think I like to say that I'm not an optimist because that would be fatuous and stupid. And I'm not a pessimist because that would be even more fatuous and more stupid. I do like to say that I'm an anti-pessimist. This at least leaves open a few doors. I would like to make a call for an "international non-centered think tank" kind of activity: more conferences, more meetings, more talk on the Net, about strategy and about the basic situation that we find ourselves in. There are people living as if it were still 1989. In America, we have the right wing who no longer have communism to worry about so they are worrying about the U.N. They have just taken all that old communist symbolism and pasted it on the U.N. so that they can worry about that. Or it's the Arabs, or it's drugs, or something. There is an attempt to find an enemy, to find some kind of focus. There is no enemy in that sense. The enemy is simply the unopposed rule of money over human values. No human being represents that. Think about it. If you are a stockbroker or a currency exchange person, you have your computer programmed to make certain decisions. You don't make those decisions anymore because it is

all happening too fast. It is all happening before you can even think. No time, no space. You don't have time to think, so you have your computer programmed to buy and sell.

Who is in control? Actually, nobody is in control. There is not even what you would call a ruling class anymore. I read that 432 people in the world control 50% of the money. Of the 500 wealthiest entities in the world, about 250 of them are not governments. They are corporations. It's a completely different world and it is stupid to act as if it is still 1950. As if the world is split into two opposing camps. This is not the case. It may become the case again. I don't look forward to it myself. I think will be a very, very ugly situation when capital is finally opposed with violence and the anger it deserves. Nevertheless, at the moment, there is no such thing. There is no schizophrenic split in the world.

I would like to see the next year or two devoted to a very intense discussion about that situation. What is the world now? What is the economic situation? What is the political situation in the world? How has it changed radically in the past five six years? To give an example, five or six years ago about 40% of all money in the world was not related to production. It was all related to currency exchange and arbitrage. That figure is now 94.2. 94.2% of the money in the world not only does not

exist as cash, but it also bears no relationship whatsoever to production, not even to building computers. Not shoes, not food, nothing. It is just money relating itself to more money. In that system, they say about \$2 trillion moves around the world every day. I can't even tell you how many zeros go in to making the figure one trillion. It is just a virtual figure to me, it doesn't mean anything. These are the kind of changes: from 40% to 94.2%. It is one of these curves. If you look at other curves—economic and social curves—they probably also follow this kind of trajectory in the last five years. It is very hard to keep up it this. It's hard to have the facts and it is even harder to have the consciousness.

I think there is very interesting work ahead of us in places like this. A "think tank" is perhaps not the right word. I don't know what the word is, really. That is the kind of thing. We must put our hearts and heads and souls together and work on this because otherwise we are going to be left behind. We will live in a world where we don't have any choice to even consider strategic possibilities. Many people already live in that world, the former Third World, perhaps. Zones of exclusion.

That is my anti-pessimistic message. But there is something to do, at least, and that something is very interesting. Whether that will save us or not, I

doubt also. But, after all, one must live one's life some way and not just lie around by the side of the swimming pool wearing mirror shades.

That is how I see the future for Public Netbase and for all the other interesting radical centers or non-centers concerned with communications technologies. I think it should expand beyond just the Internet and should become a study and a critique of all communication and communications theory. That is a very busy work proposition and it will keep us from being bored. I hope.

Thank you.

Globalism, Tribalism and Autonomy

Peter Lamborn Wilson and Konrad Becker are having coffee on the occasion of [Alpbach Technology Forum 95 on Networks](#) in Tyrol, Austria, August 1995

Konrad Becker: You had been in Forum Alpbach 95. What is your impression of an alien coming to this Tyrolian village in that point of time and space?

Peter L. Wilson: Well, since you put it that way, I was alone for half an hour at one point and - I shouldn't say this - I smoked and I was looking at the valley; I was sitting in a hotel that had a view that looked over the valley and watching the way the morning mist was going circled around the valley, very slow marvelous ghosts going around. And I remembered that the last time I was here I'd gone to the museum and saw the Hallstatt collection. So I know that the Celts came from Hallstatt, which is somewhere near Salzburg, and that they ended up in Ireland, and so suddenly I had a sort of vision of Celts going through this valley on their way to Ireland from Hallstatt.

And later I asked a guy who studied the prehistory of this region, whether that could be, and he said absolutely, this is exactly where they probably went. So I really liked the valley. Alpbach village was like a postcard, very self-conscious, very touristic, and once you get out of that Alpbach village it's wonderful. Sort of like Switzerland but not so neat and clean; like Switzerland with wildness . And at the same time the wonderful thing about the landscape is, that it is shaped by human culture of, who knows?, four thousand years minimum. So that even though it's wild it's also in a sense soft. And the sort of combination of wildness but many thousands of years of human culture making a kind of ...- so it's very Chinese, a feeling of a Chinese landscape thing from the Sung dynasty. So - that's so much for Tyrol.

The conference feels like something old and finished. The reason why I was there, was to try to recapture some of that, whatever it must have been like in the 40's, when people like Adorno, Heidegger, Feyerabend and Popper were there. There were three interesting groups - one group was on tribalism and globalism and then there was the cypherpunk or cryptography group, and the consciousness or psychedelic group, but the other five groups, I can not even remember what they were. They were incredibly bureaucratic and boring and stupid: Something about highways and jobs in the future, I mean any subject could be interesting, but judging by the summaries, that we were hearing on the last day: this was government, bureaucratic old businessman.

So I guess the idea was to get some hot topics in there, so that there could be some cross-fertilization, but there couldn't be any fertilization, because each one of these workshops was at the same time and separated. So we couldn't go to any of the other workshops and none of the other workshops could come and visit us. The audience could move around. But it remains to be seen whether this produces any kind of cross-fertilization for Austrian culture, cause nobody was talking to anybody else. Morgan's friends of course - we all know each other or wanted to know each other so we hung out together.

K.B.: You were not introduced to each other by the administration?

P.L.W.: No - not at all. Nobody thought to try to bring us together socially. I mean there was one buffet supper, but there was nobody moving around saying come on I want you to meet the Nobel prize winner or taking the Nobel prize winner and saying come on I want you to meet Albert Hoffmann. It didn't seem to me that there was any attempt to cross these groups. So they were like strange weirdos and Austrian bureaucrats and never these groups came in contact with each other.

K.B.: What about the audience? Was there a clear distinction between people who follow the traditional

boring seminars and ...

P.L.W.: I think so. The people I talked to were moving amongst our three workshops. And they had nothing to say about the other workshops. Those of the people who were talking to me.... maybe ten people. Our group was - what was the name of this guy?

Mr. Lendvai. Right, he was the chair person and there was Jude Millhon (St.Jude) and me, we were the anarchists. And then there was Sir Colin McColl who was the former head of MI6 which is like the CIA of England and Eric McLuhan who is the son of Marshall McLuhan and John Gage who is the head of Sun Computers, a 6 billion dollar man.

Actually Sir Colin was great, the British spy, everybody loved him, he was charming and unpretentious a real gentleman and perfectly willing to talk about his work from many different points of view - really a very pleasant person and smart.

McLuhan, I also liked him as a person but it was kind of strange that he was having the Marshall McLuhan philosophy. It was the air of his father, representing the global village, the medium is the message, everything - brought up to date for the Internet. I mean McLuhan's media theory is still very useful on a certain level but I actually found myself - and also Jude thought the same way - to disagree on almost everything he said. For example: He painted a picture that people get the wrong idea about the global village and that McLuhan never thought that it was a good idea. Of course I understand this. And then he went on to say that the village is a very constricted place and there are no individuals in the village, that everyone is prying into your business and so on. That global, I think in his mind, means urban culture where one is a true individual or whatever.

So obviously this is not my take on the situation. I pointed out that in the paleolithic era the tribes person is not saying to itself: "Oh I wish was in Paris!". In its true form the tribe with the village is a self contained cosmos - the tribe is the cosmos, every

tribe is the whole cosmos. ... It's not true you can't be an individual in this situation. And the cosmos has room for everybody. So if you are an intellectual then you become a shaman, if you are an artist you might become a maker of spoons or painter of the outside of the tent or whatever. If you are a violent son of a bitch you get to be the war-chief, when there is a war. And if there is not a war everyone make sure - keep that guy out of trouble. There is room for every kind of marginal person in the tribe. It's not true that the tribe is restricted or the individual.

K.B.: It touches this aspect that it is very hard to disappear in a religion or in a tribe but it is very easy to disappear in a crowd.

P.L.W.: Sure, that's why I live in NY I mean I understand what you are saying. The point is, it's true for the modern world where the village or the tribe is in fact under attack by the center. The little village in east Tyrol or wherever - if any intellectual was born in one of those villages of course he would move to Vienna - no question about it. Because this village is under attack from Vienna. Vienna sucks out all its energy, takes all the taxmoney. I mean I assume this is true, because it's true in every other country I have ever been in. So I am simply using Vienna as an example. I say that Iran is an example. Teheran just sucks all the money and energy and all the artists, intellectuals. And anyone got to be nineteen years old and had two ounces of brains - went to Teheran.

So the village is a bad place to be now, because the village is under attack. On the other hand there is of course a reaction against this. People are leaving the city and not wanting to go to the suburbs, because the suburbs that's a failure, a historical failure, and so they go to the village. As someone also pointed out, with the net you don't have to be so isolated in the village. It's not the same as having a brilliant coffeehouse where you can go and meet all the people and really interact in the real world. But it's something anyway. I know people in Wisconsin, Wyoming or places like that who have gone back to the village but they are on the net - a

sort of "satisfactory balance" between what the village is good for and the village is not good for. Anyway that was one aspect that we covered. We didn't really focus very well, and that was the fault of the chair person.

I think that a different moderator would have just allowed the flow to go anywhere, maybe something interesting would come out. It wasn't a bad group but he had this idea that we had a subject we had to talk about - globalism, tribalism.

I talked about those Zapatistas as a tribe doing something very postmodern and I talked about the Winnebagos in Wisconsin that I happened to have some knowledge about. A tribe of Indians who have a casino and make a lot of money so instead of spending a lot on booze they got organized and they have a 100% employment in their tribe and they are using the net - Their language has never been a written language so they are using the net to become literate in their own language. So they are leaping over the whole imperialist alphabetical stage of literacy and jumping - maybe, I don't know - over the whole industrial age into the postindustrial age in some strange way. So the net can be very good for tribal activists.

And these Zapatistas are also very much represented on the net. They don't put it up themselves, because they don't have the machines, but people in Mexico City will do it and translate all their stuff into English - instantly the same day that it came out - and put it on the net. So the North American press wasn't doing shit, wasn't covering the story at all. If you wanted to know the story you had to go into the net. That was interesting. The situation is going on in Mexico. I don't know what's happening with the net. I mean now the books are coming out, some serious assessment of what is going on, but for a few weeks the net was the only source, in North America. On my radio show I was putting as much as I could on the air.

Since I didn't get to the other groups I'm not exactly sure what they did but the consciousness group had Alexander and Ann Shulgin. He developed MDMA

(Ecstasy) and he has done a lot of work with drugs. Albert Hoffman and his wife were there, very charming marvelous people. Very strange to meet the guy who invented LSD, considering my life - sort of like meeting Jesus or something, who turns out to be this nice Swiss gentlemen who puts back the Schnaps like a twenty year old.

Ruth Inge Heinze the expert in Asian shamanism and also very knowledgeable about Buddhism and other subjects - very nice lady who teaches at Berkeley.

Then there was the cryptography panel with Eric Hughes who is one of the founders of the Cypherpunk movement. Whitfield Diffie who invented public key cryptography and John Perry Barlow, an old friend of mine. So we had a great time - socially. We had three dinners together, very nice.

K.B.: You were in one of the more politically related groups there?

P.L.W.: Yeah, unless you think of highway-administration as politics.

It would be interesting to see what the ORF (Austrian State TV) put on the air. They were making videos of the three workshops.

K.B.: Is there anything like a new political theory emerging from the US? What is the role of Noam Chomsky? Did you see his movie?

P.L.W.: No I did not. I do not think Chomsky is making a major contribution in theory. I don't see him as the American Baudrillard or something - no. And I think he conceives his own function in a different way - he is a watch dog. He gets information and passes it on. He had this obsession about getting information on certain subjects in a way where other people don't have the time or don't have the money. He's a tenured professor at MIT. His usefulness will never cease in that respect. He has worked as usefully as anybody, any shade of left or dissident. I know he is an anarchist, he even

said this a few times in print, but he doesn't talk about anarchist theory which is too bad, because a lot of people would respect him or could learn something from him.

K.B.: What are the effects of US subculture politics entering the mainstream, popculture conspiracies and the like?

P.L.W.: Well, a number of points. First off all - each of these subjects we are talking about had a movie. Chomsky had a movie, conspiracy had a movie, that stupid, idiotic JFK film, and unfortunately a lot of Americans believe that if you get a movie or five seconds on the evening news now you are visible, but I don't think this is true. I'd like to know what Chomsky thinks about this, whether he feels he got anything out of this movie. Did it put his message across to more people really, for more than ten minutes? The Crumb movie for example, which I also haven't seen but I heard that Crumb was horrified, he wishes he had never done it. So it is not doing him any good, it is just making his life miserable, people tracking him down. The movie apparently makes his whole family look like really insane people. So crazy people are after him now. All the conspiracy people said: "Ah, at last... we've made it into the public discourse!" - as if there is a public discourse and three months later... nothing, back to where it was before.

The spectacle if we can still use such a word is very eager for anything that will give of anybody ten minutes of increased heartrate and glandulary flow and they eat it up and shit it out.

Again this goes back to our subject whether to disappear or not: wouldn't it be better in the long run not to make this appearance? Because the result is, that everyone thinks: o.k. that's over, we've done that and so anything which comes above the surface and enters into this pseudo discourse of the media - that's it, that's the end. When everybody is talking about something, that means it's dead. And ten minutes later it really is dead and nobody is talking about it anymore. So wouldn't it be better in the long run not to make these

appearances, these pseudo appearances - wouldn't it be better to make a real disappearance than a pseudo appearance? Well anyway, that is a question.

K.B.: Do you see a convergence of mythology and politics?

P.L.W.: Well, on the mythological level all the stuff is working but that has a relationship with the media which will be very complex to try to track in detail.

Well every once in a while these mythological memes also make their appearance in the media as well . And in that way some of them can be killed, if you know what I mean. But the source, the unconscious storehouse for all this stuff is never emptied - are never empty. The human consciousness or imagination.

And all the more so, because it penetrates into a world which still believes in the rational, in unified consciousness, in history - in the negative sense that I would give to that word. In other words we basically are still living, despite the romantic movement, despite modernism, in the 18th century.

In this respect the public discourse is assumed to be rational, assumed to be secular, separated from religion through some quasi-linguistic fiction. These mytho-memes are not received in this world of pseudo sunlight in a religious sense anymore, the way they would have been in the past, let's say in the 17th century or going on back to the stone-age. When they make their appearance they don't appear in the world of religion, they don't appear in this recognized separated sphere of spirituality. They penetrate everything including the secular consciousness. For example: satanic abuse, the UFO, abductions...

These things make an appearance in the rational media and people talk about abuse and they get panic stricken and they don't know why they get panic stricken. Because we are now anti-modernist, not postmodernist.

Anti-modernist in the sense that for example Freud has been chucked out of the window and we don't deal with the unconscious any more. That only happened for a few years. Maybe in the 40's, 50's, people tried to deal with the unconscious. A lot of people - fascinating stuff came out of that. And now that's finished. A friend of mine said we don't need the unconscious, we have advertizing. Now we don't even have advertizing so much, even advertizing is finished. So whatever this unconscious is - I mean it's sort of spread out in supermarket newspapers, home videos, mallculture..... and basically a lot of this stuff does not appear and can not appear and will never appear in the media, in a sense, it's too freaky. There are some things that the monster can't eat.....

K.B.: Conspiracies seem to make it on prime time TV these days. O.J. Simpson, The Fu Man Chu/Shoko Asahara thing, Oklahoma Bombing, Waco...

P.L.W.: That reminds me to go back to what we said about if we ever get the true story. I think that the point is that nobody really trusts the media - we are used to hear that people don't trust politicians. I think it's gone to the point now, on an unconscious level if not on a conscious level, no one trusts the media, with obviously very good reasons because all we have to do is spend a lifetime plugged into the media. And no - this is not real live and if you can't think that consciously you simply can feel it on a cellular level.

So the immediate assumption about Oklahoma is that we won't get the true story and we haven't got into the true story. And there are a lot of strange things about it for example the second perpetrator. I may have the details with the story mixed up so I'm not presenting myself as an expert in the case but as I understand it a second figure was arrested and then immediately released on orders of the military.

So in a sense - yes I think there is a vogue from all this stuff into, maybe not a new theory, but into new applications of theory, or maybe a new theory.

The idea that paranoia is not necessarily a form of madness, but it could be a form of criticism. So from that point of view this is already a well established part to a theory and definitely important. I don't have any theories about conspiracies in connection with Oklahoma or Waco it's just very apparent to anybody that we are not getting the story. And I'm sure that the Waco story is not going to emerge, everybody is certain that the truth is not going to emerge except for 10% rich white males who vote and actually run the country and at least pretend to believe it :Yes the truth will come out.....

But if you are black - there is the whole Move story, in Philadelphia. Mumma Abu Jamal is about to be executed for.

He was a member of Move and he was also a journalist in a radio show in Philadelphia and he was not actually charged with a crime in connection with Move, the burning and bombing at Move. He was charged with killing a policeman. It's a very, very bad story.....

If he is going to be killed it is to show that the government was justified in blowing up a lot of black women and children, burning down the whole neighborhood in Philadelphia, simply because these people were autonomous and rude, everybody agrees they were really rude, but the point is that they were autonomous. The point about Waco was that they were autonomous. Whether we agree with these groups or not is not the issue. The issue is that they were behaving as if they were free to be what they wanted to be as groups. You don't have to like David Koresh's ideology, he was a crackpot and probably a dangerous crackpot. But for example he wasn't a racist. A lot of liberals in America just assumed that he was a racist, it's not true. There were Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, all kinds of people in that compound. They assumed that he was a fundamentalist, but that's not exactly true. He was a believer in the Book of Revelation which is not at all the same thing as being a fundamentalist like one of these television preachers. It's a whole different religious universe. Most of the liberals are not prepared to understand this.

These are not really evil right winged bastards these were a bunch of religious weirdos and they wanted to be left alone, basically to be weird -by themselves. And this is what outrages a lot of people in America.

The Oklahoma bomb - The first thing they said: the Arabs!

within in a couple hours out was the word: white Americans! The whole overground press, Time magazine, NYTimes, all the editorials and articles they went : White people hate the government?! We didn't know that. Bullshit ! - there are millions of people. White, black, yellow, red, you name it out there in America who are completely dissatisfied with whats going on. But they don't vote. They are not part of the economy. And people who are falling out of the boundaries of the middle class, which is a classic situation for the emergence of some form of fascism. At the moment it isn't fascism precisely, it's more like confused populism, which could go either right or left, take alliances to the right and the left. It doesn't necessarily have to be racist and reactionary.

I know plenty of anarchists and people on the left who are extremely upset about Move and Waco. They are not just upset about Move, because of the black people, they are not just upset about Waco, which is as I said before, not white people anyway. They are just upset - upset that this kind of thing happens in America.

Of course since 1989 all sorts of things have changed since the death of the evil empire, lots of little evil empires, evil kingdoms to make up for the one big empire that is no longer there.

America doesn't have the money or the political strength to be the head of the one power in the world - it thinks it does and a lot of people think it does but it doesn't. Up to 1971 people owned money to America, since 1971 America owns money to - I don't know the national debt.

And the truth is America is churning up out of its subconscious, political subconscious, churning up all these enemiesfilthy Arabs, crazed terrorists, kiddy porn on the internet and all this - choose your favorite symptom, some symptoms are noticed by people of the right, some symptoms are noticed by people on the left but the subject is pathology. And there is a pathological search for the scapegoat, the enemy, and naturally a society like that is waging war on itself.



Irish Soma

By Peter Lamborn Wilson

Many scholars believe that the Indo-Europeans used an entheogenic or psychedelic drug in their rituals -- called soma amongst the Vedic people of India, and haoma in Iran. The ancient Greeks also used an ergot-based preparation in wine as the entheogenic trigger of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Soma has been identified as *amanita muscaria* or the fly agaric mushroom; haoma may have been the same, or it might be "wild rue," a harmaline-containing shrub (see Bibliography under Flattery and Schwartz). If there's any truth to these theories, we would expect to find that other Indo-European peoples also used such drugs shamanically or ritually. Terrence McKenna believes that psilocybe was once even more widely distributed than it is now, and therefore must also be considered in the soma context. Certainly entheogenic religions are far more thoroughly attested today than when Wasson launched ethnomycology with his "wild" speculations, which now seem rather conservative. Even if we cannot accept the "psychedelic experience" as the origin of religion, I believe that we must certainly see it as one of a complex of "origins", a complexity which might best be expressed in a palimpsest of theories about those origins; in short, I would maintain that the failure to consider entheogenesis

("birth of the god within" by ingestion of psychotropic substances) must be considered a serious flaw in any integral History of Religion.

I consider it strange that in all the writing I've read about psychedelics, and about Ireland, not one text has connected the two subjects. My reading is of course far from complete, and my first query concerns this point. I can scarcely believe that I'm the first to consider the question of a soma cult amongst the Celts, those old-fashioned Indo-Europeans so loyal to ancient ways -- and so fond of intoxication. An immediate presumption would be that the Celts lost soma, if they ever had it, when they migrated West from the Indo-European heartland; at best, they may have developed mead as a substitute. I know of no reference to intoxicants other than alcohol in use among the Celts, who in fact quickly became major importers of Mediterranean wines. We know, however, that a vast amount of orally-transmitted Druid lore is lost beyond recall, and we als/o know how entheogenic cults can thrive under the very nose of "civilization" and not be noticed (as in Latin America). Wasson and his school have demonstrated how mushroom language tends to be euphemized, masked, coded, buried in etymologies and even "false" etymologies. If we are to speculate about the possible existence of a Celtic - specifically Irish -- soma, we must exercise a bit of detective work. Using

some of their findings as possible structures for our exegesis, we can go back and read our texts over again and hope for a few glimmerings or clues.

Irish myths and legends were not written down till the Christian era, and then only by monks who might well have misunderstood or even censored any references to a soma-type substance or cult. By that time, any entheogenic knowledge or ritual once possessed by druids might well have already vanished (or retreated into folklore), and the memory of soma distorted beyond recognition. Any mushroom lore that survived till the ninth to twelfth centuries A.D. would be the province of illiterate peasant wise-women and wizards -- not of literate monks. For this reason we can expect that the myths and legends of the monkish manuscripts will be hard to read from our special perspective. But Irish folklore, as distinct from myths and legends, may prove a much clearer source. For reasons known to folklorists, Ireland is a special case of the survival of Indo-European lore, comparable perhaps only to India. In fact, Indian material should be used to throw light on Irish material where areas of darkness exist. From this point of view I think we can take for granted that whatever we may find in Ireland that looks like soma, and smells like soma, so to speak, might very well be soma, although we may never be able to prove the identity. But the well-known affinity between Celtic and Vedic cultures should pre-dispose us to at

least a certain open-mindedness.

The Irish material abounds in references to magical substances which bestow knowledge and/or pleasure when ingested. Perhaps the best-known are the hazelnuts of wisdom, eaten by the Salmon, fished up by the Druid, and cooked by young Finn--who, as "sorcerer's apprentice", burns his thumb on the Salmon's skin, sticks thumb in mouth, and attains all the wisdom in his master's stead. The "shamanic" overtones of this story are quite obvious. Turning to the older manuscripts, we have the enigmatic "Geste of Fraoch" [1], concerning the hero Fraoch who is half-fairy (Sidh) in origin. His sister is the nymph of the River Boyne. He seeks to marry Find-abair, daughter of Aillil and Maeve, the witch-queen. He arrives at their kingdom with his retinue and impresses everyone with his beauty, and his skill at music and chess. Find-abair falls in love with him. They meet secretly and she gives him her gold thumb-ring. Aillil and Maeve agree to the wedding, but secretly plot the hero's destruction. Maeve invites Fraoch to bathe in her magic spring. Growing on its bank is the rowan tree.

Every fourth and every month
 Ripe fruit the rowan bore:
 Fruit more sweet than honey-comb;
 Its clusters' virtues strong,
 Its berries red could one but taste
 Hunger they staved off long.

Rowan Berry juice could preserve life and cure dread disease. Maeve, sitting on the shore, begs Fraoch to swim over and pluck some berries for her. As she well knows, the rowan-berries are guarded by a dragon (or water-serpent), who attacks Fraoch. In one version, the beast kills him. In another version, as Maeve, her daughter, and the court ladies enjoy the sight of Fraoch sporting naked in the pool, Aillil steals the gold thumb-ring from Fraoch's purse, shows it to Maeve, and throws it into the water. Fraoch notices this, and also notices that a salmon gulps down the ring. Without anyone seeing him, he catches the fish barehanded, and hides it "a hidden spot by the brink" of the water. Thereupon Maeve demands the rowan-berries; Fraoch complies; the monster appears. Find-abair strips to the buff and leaps into the water with a sword, which she tosses to her lover. He slays the beast. Aillil and Maeve now plot the death of their own daughter. A ritual bath is prepared for Fraoch, "of fresh-bacon broth and heifer-flesh minced in it," a sign that he will be raised to royal status. Afterwards a feast is organized. During the feast Aillil orders that all his treasures be brought out and displayed. In order to complete this vulgar show, he demands that Find-abair produce her gold thumb-ring; when she fails to do so he threatens her with death. But Fraoch has meanwhile retrieved the salmon from its hiding-place and given it to Find-abair's maid to cook. The girl brings in the fish, "broiled..., well prepared with

honey dressing." The ring is of course discovered. Aillil and Maeve are foiled.

In this version the tale ends happily. Ignoring the temptation to unpack too many clues from this story, we should confine ourselves to asking whether or not it can be read for possible ritual content. The sacred pool, the sacred tree, the combat (which can be seen as a sacrifice, either of Fraoch or of a substitute, the salmon, or of the monster), the beef-and-bacon bath -- during which a chorus of fairy women (Fraoch's sister Boyne and her maidens) appear and sing. All these motifs suggest that our legend is (at least in part) a masked ritual. In that case, the berries may also have a ritual significance. The salmon (with honey) and the thumb ring remind us of the shamanic complex again. The old manuscripts also preserve a number of imrama, or sea-going voyage-tales: the voyages of St. Brendan, of Bran, of Maeldun, and of the O'Corra brothers. The sailors in these romances find many marvelous islands, and on some of these islands they find marvelous fruits -- some poisonous, some euphoriant, and some which stave off hunger. In "the voyage of the sons of O'Corra," for example, they visit an island whose trees are "laden with fruit, and the leaves dropped honey to the ground. In the midst of the island was a pretty lake, whose waters tasted like sweet wine. But after a week of rest by its shores, a "monstrous reptile rose up from the lake, and looked at them." The monster, however, disappears

without harming them. [2]

Maeldun and his crew also experience an "Isle of Intoxicating Wine Fruits: "

They were now a long time tossed about on the great billows, when at length they came in view of an island with many trees on it. These trees were somewhat like hazels, and they were laden with a kind of fruit which the voyagers had not seen before, extremely large, and not very different in appearance from apples, except that they had a rough, berry-like rind. After the crew had plucked all the fruit off one small tree, they cast lots who should try them, and the lot fell on Maeldun. So he took some of them, and, squeezing the juice into a vessel, drank it. It threw him into a sleep of intoxication so deep that he seemed to be in a trance rather than in a natural slumber, without breath or motion, and with the red foam on his lips. And from that hour till the same hour next day, no one could tell whether he was living or dead. When he awoke next day, he bade his people to gather as much of the fruit as they could bring away

with them; for the world, as he told them, never produced anything of such surpassing goodness. They pressed out the juice of the fruit till they had filled all their vessels; and so powerful was it to produce intoxication and sleep, that, before drinking it, they had to mix a large quantity of water with it to moderate its strength.

St. Brendan seems to have visited the same island but, being a saint, he failed to experience the deep trance and euphoria of the more worldly Maeldun. [3] Note that the color of the magic substance is usually red. Even hazelnuts are "reddened" by association with salmon-flesh. Maeldun sees red apple-like or nut-like fruit with a rough rind -- which could be an accurate description of a fly-agaric "toadstool" or its dried cap. Maeldun's squeezing of the juice reminds us directly of Vedic soma-ritual, and the warning to cut the juice with water reminds us of the Greek injunction to mix certain "wines" twenty-to-one with water, lest they be too powerful -- obviously not wine as we now know it, as C. Ruck points out in *Persephone's Quest*. [4]

Persephone's Quest is the book which sparked my intention to draft this query. The specific impetus rose from Ruck's brilliant essay on "The Offerings from the Hyperboreans," i.e., the votive

offerings sent from the semi-mythical land of Hyperborea to Apollo's shrine oracle at Delos. In this text, Ruck makes no mention of the often-repeated but not very convincing identification of Hyperborea as Ireland, or the insular-Celtic lands in general. The route taken by the offering (a sheaf of wheat hiding some other plant, apparently), is traced by three ancient authors, who all place Hyperborea beyond the Danube and beyond Scythia, near the Altai Mountains. This might locate Hyperborea somewhere near the vague (and controversial) origin-point of the Indo-Europeans and hence of the Celts. A Siberian origin for the Indo-Europeans is strengthened by Vedic references and a mass of other material which must not detain us here; suffice to say that the "Hyperboreans" are very close to the area in which *A. muscaria* still provides the entheogenic juice for shamanic practice. Ruck marshals a great deal of circumstantial evidence to identify the offerings as fly agaric, dried and wrapped in straw.

A possible historical connection between Hyperborea and the Celts, however fascinating, will not serve our purpose so well, however, as Ruck's discussion of a certain tribe living along the route of the offerings and involved with their delivery, the Arimaspeans. Their name, in the Scythian language, supposedly describes them as a one-eyed people, akin to gorgons and griffins. A number of other one-eyed

and/or one-legged races appear in the story of Apollo and the Hyperboreans-- for example, the Telchines, magic metallurgists "with a reputation for sorcery and drugs" [5], masters of herbalism and the "evil eye". Ruck explains:

"The fungus of the Hyperborean homeland would have come ... from the wooded slopes of the Altai Mountains, where conifers and birch abound, an environment, therefore, where *Amanita muscaria* is commonly found. Presumably, it would have fruited in the autumn and been preserved by drying so that it could be conveyed over the long journey, wrapped in straw, to arrive on Delos in late spring along with the other offerings of first fruits. Is there anything, we must now ask, in the Apolline traditions that might suggest that this was the identity of the secret plant?

The one-eyed Arimaspeans, who, as we have seen, were either just another name for the Hyperboreans or, as a separate people, were the first intermediaries in the transmission of the subterranean gold that was mined by the griffins. [They] are a personification of one

of the attributes of soma as the "single eye." So, therefore, are the Cyclopes, whose murder as primitive surrogate occasioned Apollo's expiatory sojourn amongst the people of his northern homeland. There were two versions of these Cyclopes, and the Anatolian ones probably arose from a separate dissemination of the metaphor through Asia Minor, where the later discredited Lycian Telchines display the same attribute as their evil eye. These one-eyed creatures are a variant of another attribute of soma as the figure with a single foot, a characteristic of a supposed race of people called the Shade-foots, who came from the Indus valley and were fancifully implicated, according to Aristophanes⁶ in a profane celebration of the Lesser Eleusinian Mystery. It appears that the Arimaspeans may have come from the same general region, for Herodotus's supposed Scythian etymology of their name is probably not correct, but they were really an Iranian tribe, called the Argempaioi or Argimpasoi. All these fabulous creatures can be traced to fungal

manifestations and testify strongly that it was some kind of mushroom, if not actually Amanita, that was originally the Hyperborean plant. In its Hesperidean version, the plant bears still another attribute of soma as the 'mainstay of the sky', which is the role that Atlas plays as 'pillar of heaven' in the west [7], just as his Titanic brother in the east, Prometheus, when presented as a Shade-foot, impersonates the sacred plant as a "parasol," which is the same Sanskrit word as mushroom. The single-footed trait can also be seen in certain Greek heroes who, like Oedipus, have mythical roles as Apolline surrogates."

The Shade-foots were also known as Monocoli or "One-legs". [8] This latter name is particularly interesting because when we find these people in modern times, they will be a particular plant involved in Asiatic shamanism. Monocoli in Greek was an epithet of plants⁹. In modern times, the prodigious strength of their single leg will also be remembered from ancient traditions.

In his own essay, "Persephone's Quest," Wasson also discusses a number of one-eyed, one-footed beings from various folkloric and iconographic

sources, including the Cyclopes, and soma itself, which is described in Vedic Sanskrit as Aja Ekapad, "Not-born Single-foot." Mushrooms are "not born" because they have no seed; they are caused by lightning bolts. And mushrooms are single-footed, of course. The penis is the "one-eyed serpent," and the mushroom is a penis. Folklore can be scoured endlessly to rake up further examples; Wasson's point is that one-eyed one-legged beings are to be decoded as mushrooms, at least in certain contexts.

The Irish also have a one-legged one-eyed race in their past: the Fomoiré or Fomorians. In some legendary histories they seem to be the very oldest inhabitants of the island, but still they come from elsewhere, either "from the sea" (but "sea" is probably a false etymology for their name, fomorian); or else they invaded Ireland from Africa. In some tales the Fomorians live under the sea (like Chinese dragons) or else more prosaically on Tory Island. Sometimes they are giants, and moreover they can appear as one-eyed one-footed giants. Sometimes they appear to be a race of wizards, "human" enough to inter-marry with the Tuatha de Danaan (who, however, aren't all that human themselves). In fact the half-breed King Bres, who causes war between the two races¹⁰ is described as the most beautiful youth in Ireland -- even though the Fomoiré are usually depicted as ugly, low, hideous, deformed, etc. One gets the

impression that the Fomorians represent a pre-Celtic Irish race, and that we are seeing them through the texts of the Celts, who invaded their land and subdued them, and now wish to present them as villains, boors, snake-worshippers, or even nonhuman monsters. This is a universal theme in folklore, which often seems to harbor memories of an archaic "us/them" situation. Ultimately it may lead us back to the emergence of agricultural peoples and their "conquest" and enslavement of hunter/gatherer tribes -- i.e., back to the very beginnings of civilization and history. The Fomorians, who are connected with the megaliths by folklore, and who survive to play roles as ogres and giants in Irish fairy tales, may have been remnants of the great Atlantic Megalithic peoples, who created the culture of New Grange and Stonehenge long before the Celts arrived in Europe. The marginalized "race" or "caste" survives as tinkers (primitive metallurgists, perennial outsiders), minstrels, vagabonds, fortune-tellers, herbalists, servants, grooms, prostitutes, wizards. Much later in history the Celts will undergo the same marginalization by new "invading races" -- the FomORIZATION of the Celts, as it were.

What interests us here, however, is not the fate of the Fomorians but their special role as one-eyed shade-foots -- i.e., their role in folklore. Whatever their other qualities in history, myth, or legend, they are clearly "Arimaspeans", and hence are to be suspected of

kinship with mushrooms. And if hazelnuts, or red berries, are used to "mask" the mushroom in Irish tradition, we should look for Fomorian lurking somewhere in the underbrush near the sacred tree.

Just such a conjunction occurs in the saga of Dermot and Grania, which in turn forms part of the Finnian Cycle. [11] The hero and heroine are fleeing from the jealous wrath of Finn himself. Their flight takes them all over Scotland and Ireland, where many dolmens are still called "beds" of Dermot and Grania. At one point they come to the Forest of Dooros (a name containing the Celtic word for "oak" and thus identifiable as a druid grove) in the district of HyFicra of the Moy (later known as the barony of Tireagh, in Sligo). At this time the forest was guarded by Sharvan the Surly, a giant of Lochlann.

"Now this is the history of Sharvan the Surly, of Lochlann. On a certain occasion, a game of hurley was played by the Dedannans against the Fena, on the plain beside the Lake of Lein of the Crooked Teeth. They played for three days and three nights, neither side being able to win a single goal from the other during the whole time. And when Dedannans found that they could not overcome the

Fena, they suddenly withdrew from the contest, and departed from the lake, journeying in a body northwards.

The Dedannans had for food during the game, and for their journey afterwards, crimson nuts and arbutus apples and scarlet quicken berries, which they had brought from the Land of Promise. These fruits were gifted with many secret virtues; and the Dedannans were careful that neither apple nor nut nor berry should touch the soil of Erin. But as they passed through the Wood of Dooros, in Hy Ficra of the Moy, one of the scarlet quicken berries dropped on the earth; and the Dedannans passed on, not heeding. From this berry a great quicken tree sprang up, which had the virtues of the quicken trees that grow in Fairyland. For its berries had the taste of honey, and those who ate of them felt a cheerful flow of spirits, as if they had drunk of wine or old mead; and if a man were even a hundred years old, he returned to the age of thirty, as soon as he had eaten three of them.

Now when the Dedannans

heard of this tree, and knew of its many virtues, they would not that any one should eat of the berries but themselves; and they sent a Fomor of their own people to guard it, namely Sharvan the Surly, of Lochlann; so that no man dared even to approach it. For this Sharvan was a giant of the race of the wicked Cain, burly and strong; with heavy bones, large thick nose, crooked teeth, and one broad, red, fiery eye in the middle of his black forehead. And he had a great club tied by a chain to an iron girdle which was round his body. He was, moreover, so skilled in magic that fire could not burn him, water could not drown him, and weapons could not wound him; and there was no way to kill him but by giving him three blows of his own club. By day he sat at the foot of the tree, watching; and at night he slept in a hut he had made for himself, high up among the branches"

The Fena or Finnians or followers of Finn are Milesians, the last Iron Age Celts to arrive in Ireland. The Tuatha De Danaan are an earlier people, perhaps also Celtic but Bronze Age. The De Danaan have magical power, and

after their final defeat by the Milesians they will retire into the megalithic mounds, such as the Brugh na Boine at Newgrange (which in this tale is the Castle of Angus, the god of love, patron of Dermot and Grania). They are in fact the fairies. The land of Promise or Land of Youth or Tirnanog, etc., is the mundus imaginalis or fairyland, Isles of the Blessed, Hy Brasil, etc. -- the spirit land where the De Danaan are also "at home". This is the origin of the various "crimson nuts and arbutus apples and scarlet quicken berries," which are not native to Ireland but to the "other world," the place where shamans go in trance. The quicken tree is the "quicken beam or mountain ash, or roan-tree; Gaelic Caerthainn," a tree holy to the druids. The tree with its red fruit guarded by a giant recalls the Golden Fleece and the Golden Apples of the Hesperides; it is thus the world-axis, the shamanic ladder, and also the tree beneath which one finds fly agaric; it is the beanstalk, Alice's tunnel to Wonderland, and all other liminal structures or gateways between levels. The fruit of the tree, like that of the tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil in Genesis, is the principle of transformation and realization; it is the sacrifice; and it is soma. This will become more clear as the tale unfolds.

Dermot makes a peace-pact with Sharvan the Surly: refuge in the Forest, so long as Dermot keeps his hands off the quicken berries. For a while all goes well. Meanwhile, Finn receives an offer of fealty from two former enemies, the

sons of Morna. Before he forgives them, however, he demands an erc, or blood-price: either "the head of a warrior, or the full of my hand of the berries of a quicken tree."

Finn's son Oisín takes pity on the sons of Morna and explains the situation to them; nevertheless they undertake the quest and set out for the Forest of Dooros. Dermat easily overcomes them. Meanwhile Grania has developed an overwhelming obsession with the berries: she must taste them, or perish. Reluctantly Dermat sets out to find Sharvan, taking the sons of Morna along as witnesses. The giant is asleep; Dermat whacks him on the head and rouses him. The hero asks for berries, the Fomor refuses. They fight a ferocious duel, and Sharvan is slain by three blows of his own club (just as the soma was sacrificed by pressing or "wounding" the plant). Dermat orders the sons of Morna to bury the corpse while he goes to fetch Grania. Dermat then satisfies Grania's desire, and also gives berries to the sons of Morna, who thank him profusely for sparing their lives, and set off to return to Finn. Dermat and Grania take over Sharvan's tree-house high in the branches of the fairy-quicken, and settle down in bliss again.

Finn explodes with fury, rouses his loyal and not-so-loyal followers, and sets out to capture Dermat and Grania in their lair. They arrive at the Forest and find the tree, but no sign of the

lovers. They gorge on fruit, and then settle down to wait. Finn and Oisín play chess beneath the tree. Time passes. Finn tells Oisín that he can win in one move, but Oisín can't see the move. He ponders endlessly. Suddenly a quicken-fruit falls ripely onto the chessboard, as if to show Oisín the correct move; he makes it and wins. They play again, and the same thing happens: wisdom falls from the tree as fruit: Oisín wins. And a third time!

Finn finally realizes what's up. He calls up into the tree, and Dermot answers from the treehouse. In a fury, Finn orders his men to surround the tree -- then offers a huge reward for the head of Dermot O'Dyna. At this point nine men, all called Garva (and all hailing from various mountains around Ireland) attempt the coup against Dermot, but they all fail. The love-god Angus -- *deus ex megalitha* -- has flown invisibly from Newgrange to save his worshippers, Dermot and Grania. As each Garva climbs the tree, Angus casts a spell over him so that he appears to be Dermot. Each Garva is then pushed from the tree by the real Dermot, falls to the ground, is mistaken for the enemy, and at once beheaded. The Garvas might be related to the Ghandarvas, who appropriated soma from the gods and became its guardians. [12]

Angus then wraps Grania in his cloak of invisibility and flies off with her to Bruga of the Boyne. Dermot decides to stay behind, do the honorable thing

and fight his way out. He makes a speech in in self-defense, and the great hero Oscar is converted to sympathy with him. Oscar offers his life as surety for Dermat's, but to one dares to fight him. Dermat leaps lightly out of the tree, lands on his two spear shafts, pole-vaults over the heads of Finn's circle, and escapes with Oscar. He and Grania will live to flee Finn again and again -- and eventually die at his hands.

On the assumption that the fairy-fruit of the quicken-tree is indeed soma, and that as soma it must be associated with a ritual, with a sacrifice (of itself), and with transcendence (either ritual or pharmacological), this charming tale would appear to function as a "mask" for just such a ritual. The berry is constantly equated with the head. The Celts were head-hunters, very much like the Dyaks of Borneo, the Guarani of Paraguay, etc. All wisdom and power are in the head. Because Dermat has taken on (or stolen) the wisdom of Sharvan by "dashing out his brains" (no doubt beheading him), Dermat acquires insight. In this heightened state, he plays the near-magic trick with the fruit and the chess-board, thrice-repeated. This foreshadows the thrice three heads of the Garvas, which will also (in a sense) fall ripely from the tree.

The one-legged one-eyed Fomor loses his head like a berry. Dermat should be the next sacrifice (like Gawain after the Green knight) but a substitution is

made "at the last moment" (as usual). Nine mountain-men's heads are sacrificed -- nine more berries, as it were -- in Dermat's place. In the original tale, Dermat (like Grania) would no doubt have ascended the tree and escaped into the "other world"; instead another substitution (or "rationalization") is made, the acrobatic spear-leap. The point is, Dermat flies. He goes above. He transcends. He has shamanic powers, gained (or reinforced) by his overcoming and absorption of Fomorian/Fairy magic.

The tale of Sharvan the Surly is just that, a tale, not the text of a ritual. Nevertheless folktales have been known to "mask" myths, which in turn may serve as aetiological legends for certain rites, which in turn may derive in part from earlier myth, ritual, or lore. This particular tale seems to contain such ritual elements. The structure of the tale and many of its details might well pre-date its inclusion in the Finnian Cycle; any hero might experience such an adventure. And the Finnian Cycle itself seems to have roots in a past so distant that agriculture has not yet appeared, a world of pastoralism and hunting/gathering. Finn and his "merrymen" are anachronisms, free forest guerrillas held by only a slender link of reciprocity with settled society, and perilously close to that taboo realm of sorcery and alien otherness, the Forest. The world of Sharvan the Surly seems an archaic one indeed, ancient enough to contain traces of the soma ritual once common to all Indo-

European people, as well as to the Semites, the Siberians and the New World Indians, etc.

That's my hypothesis. I wouldn't even begin to argue that we have "detected" an Irish soma. What we have here is a mere suspicion, not a case. I'm looking for support and/or refutation. A number of queries must be directed to specialists. From philologists we need exhaustive comparisons of mushroom and soma/haoma vocabulary from all the relevant languages, such as that which Allegro carried out for the Semitic languages in *The Mushroom and the Cross*. Celtic, Persian, and Sanskrit should be the main candidates for word-sleuthing. The Vedic soma ritual needs to be compared in detail with all texts and fragments from Celtic sources relevant to magic substances.

Ethnomycologists should investigate Irish (and insular Celtic) mushroom lore. Does *Amanita muscaria* grow in Ireland, and might it have grown in Ireland in ancient times? I've never come across any written material on this, but during my last trip to Ireland (May, 1993) I made a few discoveries. At least one magic mushroom grows in Ireland, the "Liberty Cap," a type of *psilocybe*; I saw it grown at a mushroom farm in County Cork, but it is also found wild. Subsequently, in a village on the coast of the province of Munster, I interviewed a certain well-known shanachie or traditional storyteller, who must remain anonymous

here due to his involvement in gun-running and pot-farming (neither very successful). "Mick" is said to speak the purest Irish in the southern Gaeltecht--and (somewhat magically) is reputed to live on nothing but pigsfeet and Guinness. In response to my query, he stated that magic mushrooms were known in Ireland in the time of the druids, and he agreed with me that "this explains a lot" about the druids! Since I'd been introduced to Mick by an old friend of his, I doubt he was trying to pull my leg; certainly he failed to elaborate on his statement, which he appeared to think was rather unexceptional.

Yes, it would explain a lot--but itself needs to be explained! Therefore, I ask for collaboration. The answer (however tenuous) seems genuinely worth knowing.

Peter Lamborn Wilson,
c/o Autonomedia, Box 568 Brooklyn,
NY 11211
dmandl@panix.com

FOOTNOTES

1. v. the Celtic Dragon Myth, J. F. Campbell and G. Henderson [Edinburgh, 1911]; Lemma Publisher, New York, facsimile, n.d.

2. Joyce, 421; see bibliography.

3. The Voyage of St. Brendan, translated by J. O'Meara [Dolmen Press, 1976], pp. 46-47.
4. Persephone's Quest: Entheogens and the Origins of Religion, a collection of essays by Wasson, Stella Kramrisch, J. Ott, Carl Ruck, and Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty (Yale, New Haven, 1986)
5. Ruck, p. 236
6. Birds, 1553 ff.
7. Aeschylus, Prometheus 351
8. Pliny, Natural History 7.2.23; Aulus Gellius 9.4.9
9. Theophrastus, How Plants Grow, 2.25, Enquiry into Plants, 9.18.8
10. In the Cath Maige Tuired, or Second Battle of Mag Tuired, ed. E.A. Gray [Irish Texts Society, Naas, Co Kildare, 1982])
11. Joyce, 313 ff
12. See "The True Identity of soma" in M. T. Greene, Natural knowledge in Preclassical Antiquity (J. Hopkins University, 1992), p. 116.]

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Interview of Peter Lamborn Wilson

by János Sugár

@ Metaforum II, Budapest, October 95'

Peter Lamborn Wilson is an editor at Autonomedia, which publishes the magazine Semiotext(e). He is also a writer, teacher and New York radio personality, as well as a longtime student of the history of religion. János Sugár is a media artist, filmmaker, and a founding member of the Media Research Foundation, which organizes the Metaforum conference series in Budapest. The international series is dedicated to the examination of both the theoretical and practical impacts of technology on culture.

JS: Could you tell us a few words about your own writings?

PLW: Well, as I said I come out of the history of religions, specializing in Sophism, esoteric or mystical Islam. I've also written about communications theory and media ecology. Somehow or other I've become involved with going to these sort of conferences on the internet even though I'm not a computer programmer, in fact, I don't even own a computer.

I'm probably the only person at this conference that's not on-line. In a way this serves a useful function, for I watch the net and I watch communications and media in general, but I keep to the side of things, and that gives me an outsider's view which I think can be useful, especially since I come at it from the history of religion point of view.

JS: That's exactly what I wanted to ask you about, what do you think the relationship between the history of religions and the so-called new media is?

PLW: Well, we could talk about that from a hundred different angles, but there are two things in particular which interest me. One is the question of the mind-body split - if I can put it into such a simple term - this split begins in the very human condition itself. Otherwise we're animals, for as soon as we have consciousness, there's a split between the mind and the body, and religion comes to deal with that split, and try to heal it.

In the area of the split is where technology appears, and language then, in a sense, is the first technology because it's language that wants to heal that wound, to close that split. In that sense, writing becomes the first technology, it's the techne of the logos, the machine of the word. Then the internet and the computer, in this sense, is just another stage in the development of writing. First you have

pictures, then you have pictography, then a phonetic alphabet, which is actually still based on pictures, and finally with computers, you have language reduced to yes and no, a plus and a minus. This is still language though and it is still writing, and the computer is essentially a conscription machine.

So we're dealing with consciousness - it's a kind of technology that is especially clear to the fact that we're dealing with consciousness - if we're talking about a hammer or a saw it's not so clear anymore that these are in fact a prosthesis of consciousness, but of course they are. With a computer it's very easy to see how it is a prosthesis of consciousness or a metathesis even. So then the religious problem of split consciousness becomes very acute in the realm of communications technology. We see this in the idea that as each technology comes and replaces older technology, it is reified - to use an old Marxist term - it becomes a thing, an autonomous thing. People think that society is the creation of technology, not that technology is the creation of society, and in this sense the computer and the net and cyberspace and all this type of thinking lead to what I call a false transcendence - the idea that we will transcend the body, we will arrive at a heaven of pure information in which immortality essentially of consciousness will be achieved. I know that your familiar with these sort of people, extropians, cybernetfreaks and

technomaniacs who truly believe, in a true religious sense, that the computer is the final frontier of human consciousness. I'm just not convinced, I don't see any way the body is being transcended, it is still sitting in front of the keyboard, the eyes are still looking at the screen. William Gibson has a wonderful image of the hacker plugged in to the computer and dying while his consciousness is still living on in cyberspace.

This is the fantasy that we can download consciousness and somehow achieve immortality inside the machine - at best I would say that this is a very hypothetical supposition, at worst it could turn out to be a total falsehood. If it is a total falsehood, then what we are looking at here is a bad parody of religion, a parodic consciousness or a conciseness which is simply a parody of itself, this I think is where the danger lies.

We can talk about the net as a military space and that is my second point, if we understand that the net is still a military space or a militarized space this also gives us an interesting approach to the religious problem. The internet was created for struggle and if there is a struggle now inside the net, then it's no accident in history, for it's exactly what had to happen. What the military did was to create a space, a virtual space that could not be destroyed by an atomic bomb, very simple, but in doing this they made a very interesting mistake and the only

way to describe this mistake is to make a comparison between primitive and modern warfare. Primitive warfare, and here I'm quoting the French anthropologist Pierre Clastres, is completely different from classical warfare in that in primitive societies warfare disestablishes or deconstructs power, it's what he called the "centripetal effect," a fleeing out from the center. Whereas modern warfare, in complete contrast, is a "centrifical effect," it's a concentration of power. If you look at primitive and hunter gather societies you'll see that there is no class structure, no permanent leadership, the pyramid is not there. Every act of war in that situation is to prevent that pyramid from appearing, the war chief, as soon as he's finished, is out of a job, he does not become the paramount chief and in fact in hunter gather societies the war chief is always a suspicious character. So the primitive warrior has glory, he has adventure, but he has no power. On the contrary, the classical warrior is very interested in power, he wants a centralization of power.

Now if we analyze the net from this point of view, we'll actually see that the net is a space for primitive warfare, it's a space where power is going to be decentralized, in fact that is the way it was designed. So I think an interesting historical error was made by the military, in that when they designed this system they didn't realize it wasn't a classical system, that it was in fact a pre or post classical system.

So immediately a struggle for this system began, it wasn't a safe space for the military, and the struggle which is going on now is between centrofrugality and centroprudality. Will the net centralize power or will the net disperse power, that is the question. If we don't understand that this is the question we can never hope to use the net for freedom, for self expression, or for autonomy.

Kevin Kelly says that the net is out of control, this is true if you look only inside the net, if you look outside the net you can see that there are many ways in which the net can be controlled. The primary way would be terror, and what I mean by that is very simple, if you can't control what someone is doing electronically you can come into their house and beat them up, smash their computer, take out their phone and make them pay thousands of dollars to go to court and prove that they're innocent, by the time they're finished, they might as well be dead. That kind of control of the net is very possible, if the technology is out of control, politics is not out of control, if the technology is out of control, corporate capital is not out of control. Between the government and the corporations the possibility exists that in one or two years the net will not be a space of freedom at all, but will once again be a completely military zone.

So far the resistance to this is coming

from within, not outside, the net has been what I call virtual resistance. It's all very well to talk about freedom of information, but how do you have free information and an information economy at the same time? The problem is that the only resistance comes from within the net, there is no organization outside the net, from a political point of view on the one hand or an economic point of view on the other. In this way those people who are trying to preserve the net are in a primitive warfare zone, where power is disestablished - they are fighting a losing battle because they're only fighting from within the space, and unfortunately the primitive warrior always loses against the classical. The classical warrior always has a bigger gun.

JS: One of your recent writings has the title "Against Multi-Culturism." I would like to ask about this, especially as many people say that we are currently living in a multi-cultural environment. Here in Hungary it is a very different experience for us, this multi-cultural experience, the multi-cultural environment. At the same time we see Japanese boys with dreadlocks there are a few, or unfortunately not a few, religious wars going on especially in this the post-socialist, post-communist area. Why are you against multi-culturism?

PLW: Because I'm in favor of what I call a 'radical tolerance' - which is not a multi-culturism. Multi-culturism - or at

least in America for I can not say what political resonance such a term will have in Hungary or anywhere else for that matter - is a false spectacle of tolerance. In other words, society says yes you can have your little local culture, in fact it looks good decorating my living room, you can have your little folk art, your little language, your little this and little that, but all this multi-business are like the spokes of a wheel, arranged around a center or hub which is the main stream consensus dialogue.

What I'm interested in is the possibility of creating a chaotic situation, a creative chaos in which there is no center, but in which there is a multitude of relations between more or less equal powers. But to be included on this condescending level into a pluralistic society which has no intention of honoring your true values, but only the secondary decor of your culture, where the center of the culture is going to remain militaristic, chauvinistic, capitalistic, communistic or whatever ideology is using multiculturalism as an excuse to placate the natural rebellion against the center.

Now there is an important point about communism - which is since 1989 there has only been only one world according to the winners of the cold war, its called the global market, it's called the new world order, by whatever name you want to call it they claim that ideology is finished, that it's the end of the social, that it's the end of history.

Now in order to resist this false unification there must be true diversity, what I call non-hegemonic particularism. We can look at the Zapatistas in Chiapas, Mexico, where there are people who are saying, look we are Mayan Indians, we want to be Mayan Indians and have our own culture, our own personality, our own personhood, we want our own language taught in our own schools, we don't want to become Mexicans or North Americans, we want to be Mayans, but we're not telling you to be a Mayan, we want the freedom to be who we are, we're not telling you that you have to be like us. That's what I call non-hegemonic particularism, and I don't see anything wrong with it.

Communism proposed a single world, a single ideology, a single culture, and now communism is gone and in its place we have a new hypothesis of a single world, a single culture, a single economics. Always this purity, this simplicity has to be challenged.

Any kind of false unity is a false transcendence, what we want is a real imminence in which to oppose any false transcendence - so from this point of view, even ethnic particularism to me does not seem to be an evil thing, what is evil is to try and impose it on other people. This is very simple, it's not a very complicated idea, I don't know why people have trouble with this idea. If in America, as radicals we have had contact with the Native American groups, we sympathize with their struggle, we can even hopefully help

them in their struggle, but it's not a struggle to have them become us, it's not a struggle for them to become like white Americans, it's a struggle to say we have a real culture, we are a real people, we even have our own faith, our own spirituality about nature, and so on. We white Americans have a lot to learn from these people, but we don't have to become Indians and they don't have to become us, why can't people become free and different, I don't see where the problem is. I know I'm being falsely naive, of course I see where the problem is, the problem is that hegemonic forces will always misinterpret, will always create a false pluralism in order to placate peoples desire, for I don't know what, let's say - their desire for their own favorite chocolate desert, or their own folkloric dance. These are only secondary aspects, the real issue is to be yourself, that's to be free.

JS: What are the chances of this radical tolerance in a media rich or a global medium - a global communication network?

PLW: If we take the net as a metaphor for that global society then it's inevitable that Coca-Cola and Disney World will take over. Because that is the one world - if the net retains its anarchic quality, its egalitarianism, its horizontal structure, as opposed to its pyramidal structure, then a plurality of different personhoods are possible. True communicativeness, not so much communication as communicativeness,

a quality of communication not just a spectacle of communication, with a deep heart to heart or what Sufi called a 'breast to breast.' It's possible the net could be a tool for this, and that is why I have retained some interest in it, though I have become more and more cynical and pessimistic. In as much that the net will be taken over by the Coca-Cola culture, it's just going to be another medium like all other media. If the net can resist the centralization of capital and the centralization of militarism then it could fight against false globalism for a real solidarity of peoples, but is this going to happen I don't know.

JS: The internet is based basically on the immediate response, a sort of textural conversation, so you find mainly contemporary texts, you cannot find classical text, especially religious texts, but there are some initiatives in certain religions and churches to put classical religious texts onto the net.

PLW: This is going to work very well for them - I'm not saying its going to be a good thing - for instance right now there's an interesting phenomenon going on in America, where tribal groups, Indians who ten years ago had 70% alcoholism, 90% unemployment, were suddenly able to have gambling casinos and they made a lot of money, and they're using this money to go on-line, they're getting web pages, they're computerizing languages that were never even written. They're skipping

over a vast leap of industrial society, and getting to some -I don't know let's say some sort of post-industrial thing - and the tribes are plugging in. This has happened with the Zapatistas who're fairly well plugged in. Anything that's spiritual is going to work very well on the net, because the net as I said is a religious space, also the net is ideal for gnosticism, for anything that makes that mind-body split - so if Christian crazy groups that everyone is afraid of, or if nazis, if Islamic countries get onto the net, don't forget if it hadn't been for cassette recorders there would have been no Iranian revolution in 1978, something could very easily happen with the internet. I think it almost happened in Mexico, and next time who knows.

JS: Aren't you skeptical of this professional use of the net by churches?

PLW: I didn't say that this was a good thing, I just said that they were going to be successful. Yes, for sure we're not going to like it, on the other hand let a thousand flowers bloom, why not. What I would like to see is a philosophy which reestablishes what Bakhtin called the "interior bodily principle," as a spiritual teaching I would like to see this Rabelaisian celebration of the body as a counter weight to all this "gnostic escape and hatred of the body," if I can use Nietzsche's term. For example the net could be used to trade real goods outside of the money economy, that's the most obvious and logical thing, why

isn't someone doing this.

If I have something that I produce and you have something you produce, we can skip money, we can skip governments if we had a real barter network on the net. Why doesn't this arise, why hasn't this happened, it's a very interesting question, the reason in my view is false transcendence.

People don't think about the body on the net, they don't think about desire, they don't think about pleasure, it's all a mental game, and as long as it remains a mental game there is no true resistance against oppression. Because only the body truly resists against oppression, this is the final battlefield, this is the terminal.

JS: Another characteristic of the network is the huge amount of appropriation, so if something appears on the net it is immediately available for millions of users - hypothetically for every person in the world.

PLW: Hypothetically is the correct word there.

JS: You also are publishing under the pseudonym of Hakim Bey and your writings are available on the net, free for all translators. What's your personal opinion on copyright and intellectual property?

PLW: I don't have a clear opinion, what happened with that material is that we

put it out with an anti-copyright, we called it an anarchist anti-copyright, and the idea was that this was my free gift. I encouraged people to copy it and put it on the net. Other books I do copyright, as far as I know I've never made a single dollar from the copyright laws, but some publishers like to do it and I'm not an ideologue about this. I thought it was an interesting experiment, I wanted to see what would happen, and here is what happened, the book sold very well. We actually made more money without the copyright than if we had the copyright. What happened is that people opened the book and said cool anti-copyright, I'll buy three and give them to friends, and they published zines, and they reproduce it and they put it onto the net, and it actually turned out to be good business. This is what the old fashioned types can't understand, who think of intellectual property as something that you can build a castle wall around and defend. What they don't realize is that this is actually irrelevant even from a capitalist point of view - you can actually make more money without copyright. So I don't know, I'm actually in a state of confusion, but my experience is that getting away from copyright works very well, it doesn't stop you from any level of success. Ask any writer here if they ever made 50 bucks from the copyright law, I'll bet you that nobody here has. It's just an outdated law, it's irrelevant and yet people are fighting huge battles over it for what, I suppose that when you're talking about a piece of software

that's potentially worth six billion dollars there's something to really fight about, but I only wrote a book.

JS: Just recently Bill Gates visited Hungary before launching Windows 95, do you think the whole strategy has a religious aspect or can it be analyzed from a religious perspective.

PLW: I haven't tried this, but my hypothesis is that everything, especially attached to technology, can be so analyzed. There's something religious about snake oil which is what essentially Bill Gates is selling, if you believe in it, it actually works, it has a psychosomatic or placebo effect, a lot of shamanism is based on this, so there's always a religious analysis. In this case though, we're looking at religion in the cause of making Bill Gates the richest and most powerful man in the world, it's as if the pope has started to sell indulgences again. If you want a religious analysis of windows 95 - it's that the pope is selling indulgences.

JS: So peter, thank you for the interview.

This interview was broadcast in a shortened version on Mediamix, (Hungarian Television, edited by J. Kopper) and a complete version was published in the *Élet és Irodalom*. This is the first English publication, edited by Noel Villers. Copyright 1996, Media Research Foundation, free for non-

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Transcript: Hakim Bey / Mordecai Watts Telephone Interview June 25, 1995

MW: I just got the *T.A.Z.* album-- after listening, I dreamed of a commercial for an amusement park ride that carried its passengers through a rapid sequence of images appropriated from Dali and other surrealists.

Bey: There was such an amusement park. It wasn't really appropriated from surrealists. The other way around, if anything. It was called Dreamland, and it was at Coney Island around the turn of the century. Jim Koehline knows a lot about it. I don't know if it was deliberately meant to be surrealist or not, but the effect certainly was. There's a book about old New York, or old Coney Island, that has some pictures.

MW: I believe Kim Deitch did something about it in one of his comics...

Bey: Yes, he did. You're absolutely right. He's a fan of it, too.

MW: One of the points in *T.A.Z.* and on the album is that imagination has been co-opted by the media, almost as if people no longer have imaginations of their own... imagination is now something people are fed, as opposed to what they used to excrete by nature. You mentioned virtual reality in passing, referring to it as the latest form of entertainment the least amount of imagination to date...

Bey: It just seems to become more and more apparent to me... I have to admit I felt a certain intense interest, perhaps even amounting to a potential enthusiasm, when this tech was first being discussed. I'd read Gibson like the rest of us, and I certainly understood his dystopian point, but nevertheless, when Tim Leary and people like that began to get enthusiastic, I had to investigate on that level. I haven't seen much evidence that what Uncle Tim thought was going to happen is really happening. Once again, any technology could be democratic if it were distributed, you know what I mean? It's a simple Marxist thing about means of production. There's nothing inherently authoritarian-- at least at first glance-- to any technology, although one could argue about how technology then shapes the society that has already shaped the technology in a kind of feedback loop that can move towards greater and greater authoritarianism/lack of autonomy. And in fact, I think that something like that

is what's happening with communications technology. The potential for what, back in the '50s and '60s, people were calling electronic democracy, is obviously still there as a potential structure, and you can see certain elements of it in the Net, but when you're talking about the high tech involved in virtual reality you're really talking about something that is not accessible to most people. And I think it probably never will be. There's never going to be any cheap VR kit that's going to allow a dock worker in Manila to get on some kind of cyberspace Internet, much less a dock worker in Atlanta-- or me, for example. So to talk about electronic democracy when you're still dealing within a capitalist framework that deliberately prices things along class lines, you know, we're going to have an information highway but it's going to be policed by the likes of the Democrats and the Republicans. It's not going to be any more of an electronic democracy than America is now a legislative democracy.

Also, on the subject of the recuperation of the imagination, I would say that my thinking has gotten more gloomy over the past few years in relation to VR and VR type technology. I think that even the Internet-- although I've had some enjoyable moments myself in connection with the Internet, and I certainly don't want to put it down in and of itself-- it's a fascinating phenomenon-- and it does show some

features of what an autonomous, non-hierarchical Web could be like in cyberspace-- but it's also under assault from power, as we all know. And eventually, power will win, because power has the power. It actually owns the kilowatts, not to mention the big battalions, as Stalin said in relation to the Pope. So I'm a little gloomy about the future of the Internet if Carter-- not Carter, I keep calling that asshole Carter-- Clinton and his assholes are really serious about the information highway and about the policing of the information highway, I think you'll see that even the smiley-faced liberal Democrats will act in no wise different from cyber-fascists. In fact, they are one and the same thing. So there's still room for contestation, room for struggle, whatever you want to call that, and the Internet is an interesting area of contestation, but 90 per cent of what goes out over the Internet-- correct me if I'm wrong, I don't play on the Internet myself-- my impression is that 90 per cent of what goes out over it is completely unrelated to any kind of freedom interests or autonomy proposals or projects, or struggles for genuine non-hierarchical, non-authoritarian group dynamic. Most of it is just chit-chat-- banal chit-chat that could just as easily be carried out over an old fashioned party line phone. You're probably not old enough to remember those, when there would be five or six people on a phone line, there'd have to be signals so you'd pick up when it was for you, and so forth... I don't see that there's been any kind

of great advance there over my dear old Aunt Janice who used to pick up the phone and listen to other people's conversations when she wasn't supposed to. If that's autonomy then we've had it.

MW: Now you can do that with cellular phones. That's supposedly how they tracked O.J. Simpson, through cellular phone transmissions. Did you catch any of that media fiasco?

Bey: I didn't. I heard about it from other people. I don't own a television.

MW: Lucky man.

Bey: Not luck. Foresight.

MW: I had the feeling that something was terribly wrong here, and that I was a part of it by watching it.

Bey: That's exactly what my friend who told me about it said. For some reason, he turned on the game-- he hadn't looked at sports on television for decades-- and there was this weird thing going on. He was just sucked in and couldn't get away, couldn't get out of it, started feeling really terrible, couldn't turn the TV off. Must have been weird.

MW: The news crews were basically waiting to see if he was going to shoot himself in the head...

Bey: Of course. As Jerry Mander [sp?]

pointed out years ago, death makes the best TV. And that's what everybody on TV is waiting for. It's the most exciting moment.

[Here **MW** brings up the **Hakim Bey** Web site maintained by Marius Watz (similar name, but no relation!) and must explain the basic notion of the WWW to **Bey**....]

Bey: That's why the stuff is out there in anti-copyright. I encourage people to distribute it by any means that they can.

MW: How are you handling anti-copyright with the *T.A.Z.* album?

Bey: At the minimum, there will be a statement from me that, as also representing the publisher of the book, Autonomedia, that the text is anti-copyright and can be copied and distributed at will. We're still working on the legal thing with the people who own Island/Axiom. I'm hoping that we can get the whole thing out with some kind of very obvious invitation to copy freely. Bill [Laswell] and everybody I've been working with with Bill is entirely in agreement with this, but on the other hand it's not worth their jobs. So they're not putting their jobs on the line over this, but they're trying their best to get rid of all the usual copyright bullshit. Even from a marketing point of view, in my mind that kind of stuff is largely irrelevant. People copy anyway. What we found out-- oddly enough,

this is something I didn't expect-- but I think putting an anti-copyright on the book actually made the book sell better. When people got hold of an outtake from the book, and then saw there was an anti-copyright, they said, 'Oh, I can copy this,' so they went out and bought a copy of the book and then copied it. That way, three and four more people maybe got to read bits and pieces of the book, or the whole book, but it also sold one more copy of the book. I explained all this to Laswell and his crew, and they saw the logic of it, and I think it very is much the logic of the Net at work.

Intellectual property, as a legal problem, might just evaporate if the net really behaved in this truly non-hierarchic fashion that we were talking about earlier. And as long as there is a net or a counter-net that does behave that way, it can raise its own money.

MW: Do you have any thoughts on how one could best realize the Internet as a T.A.Z.?

Bey: I'm led to believe, through conversations with people who are much more techie and active than I am, that cypher-- unbreakable code-- is the key. So the cypher-punks are the people to keep an eye on at this moment. And they also tend to be the ones who are most active around freedom of speech issues and so forth, whether legal or extra-legal. If Clipper were to prove impossible due to an ever-receding technological horizon of

impenetrability, then this would-- God knows what they would do, I suppose they would have to try to physically break down the technology in the households, and the actual people who were key and central to such a system. There certainly would be a declaration of war of some kind or another, I should think. I think there's one now. I think Clipper was a declaration of war on the Net. Now that the egg is on their face, because within ten minutes some hacker figured out how to beat the Clipper, is sort of an indication of-- oh, let's call it an area of chaos. Within areas of chaos, either horrible destruction and disease and death occur, or, if you're flowing the right way, and if all hearts are beating in unison to a certain degree, then that area of chaos can become the T.A.Z. Now I've said over and over again, that there's no such thing as a T.A.Z. that's only on the Net, and I maintain that that's true. In order to have autonomy, you have to have physicality. Autonomy is not something that can only exist in the imagination or in the world of images. I think that it involves the entirety, the whole axial being, and that is rooted in the earth and concerns physicality, materiality, the body, mortality, if you like, as contrasted to the spurious immortality of cyberspace. But I still maintain that, at least in theory, the net could be an adjunct to the T.A.Z., could be a tool or a weapon, even, if you want to look at it that way, for the construction of the T.A.Z.

MW: There was recently a net hoax about a Clipper-type rider to congressional bill-- the goal was to make people realize that they should question the info they got on the net.

Bey: [laughs, assumes sarcastic tone] Well, gee, thanks! Gee. I never thought of that.

MW: But a lot of people, enthusiastic about the Net as an information resource, bought the story hook, line and sinker.

Bey: Well, sure, and it's going to lead to all kinds of spy story bullshit. But when the Zapatista thing started down in Mexico, I was desperate for information because the *New York Times*, which was the only paper that was reporting it that I knew of, was clearly lying about everything. I found better information on the net. That's actually the one example I can give you of when I felt that I was getting something concrete and solid out of the net. Of course, a few weeks later it was all in print, in various 'zines and underground magazines, *Covert Action Review* and all that sort of stuff. But at least I had it a couple of weeks early.

MW: Speaking of the *NY Times*-- do you get *Lies Of Our Times* ?

Bey: I see it from time to time. I know Marty Lee [sp?] pretty well.

MW: Regarding power and VR: David

Blair has pointed out that VR technology actually emerged from military flight simulation technology.

Bey: Absolutely. Everything's always emerging from military technology. I just found out the other day... you know what Taylorism means? [It's] the rationalization of factory production by rationalizing the workforce with time clocks, what have you... the guy who invented it, Taylor, figured it all out while he was working in an arsenal for the army, around the post-civil War era. Do you know the work of Manuel Delanda [sp]?

[**MW** sheepishly confesses his ignorance.]

Bey: *War In The Age of the Intelligent Machines*. This is a major thesis that Manuel is working on, and I think a very, very important one, that we have to question all technology if we're questioning the militarization of consciousness, because all technology is suspect from that point of view. It's not all guilty, maybe, but it's all suspect.

MW: Have you launched the Atlantean Society yet?

Bey: Well, we've been trying. I have to admit I've been remiss. I expect to get it going some time soon, God willing.

MW: Has James Koehline put out more issues of the *Mad Farmer's*

Jubilee Almanack?

Bey: Yeah. I'm working on a couple of Atlantean projects. I've got a project going about the European converts to Islam who fought with the Barbary Pirates in the 17th Century in Morocco in a kind of pirate Utopia that lasted for about forty or fifty years.... There's an Irish connection there, so it's a North African-Irish connection there from the 17th Century. I'm also working on the thesis that the ancient Celts had some kind of soma ceremony, some kind of ritual psychedelic, which would conceivably also involve the indigenous, non-Celtic people, who we believe-- we Atlanteans believe-- are the same people as the Berbers and the Iberians. So my work is going on... but unfortunately, the Society hasn't really quite emerged from the world of the unseen yet.

MW: Is Bob Quinn's book [*Atlantean: Ireland's North African & Maritime Heritage*] available in the US?

Bey: I've never seen it here. I could give you the address of the publisher.

MW: I have it in the the *Almanack*. [Quartet Books, 27/29 Goodge St., London WP LFD.]

Bey: Are you interested in the subject particularly?

MW: Yes.

Bey: There's another book that you really should know about called *The Black Celts*, subtitled *An Ancient African Civilization In Ireland and Britain* by Achmad Ali and Ibrahim Ali. It's published by Punite Publications, Box 478, Cardiff, Wales, UK. It costs about nine English pounds, I think. It was reviewed in the newsletter of the London Psycho-Geographic Society, which is a great little publication. It's a very valuable addition to the Moorish Empire in Ireland thesis. A very disorganized book, but full of interesting stuff.

MW: I recently spoke to a musician named Stephen Kent, a British musician who started out as a French horn player. He grew up in Africa, wound up working with Circus Oz in Australia, and he's now, after fifteen years of practice, a didgeridoo virtuoso in a group called Trance Mission, as well as a semi-defunct group called Lights In A Fat City. He told me that a female shaman aborigine told him that in ancient times the didgeridoo had actually been given to the aborigines by Tibetan lamas.

Bey: Good grief.

MW: They do play horns which use similar breathing techniques....

Bey: I've seen them...

MW: He was also very interested in the Atlantean theory when I told him about

it... but in Ireland, sometime in the past, they found a cache of ancient Bronze age brass instruments in a tomb... nobody could figure out how to play them until someone had the bright idea of applying digeridoo techniques to them. Apparently there is now an album out that has some fellow playing these ancient instruments along with a pair of Australian digeridoo players, one white, one aboriginal. If I ever track it down, I'll get back to you on that.

Bey: I could arrange to have that played on the radio. That would be fun. The strings of the original Irish harp were also metal, and apparently this puzzled people quite a long while to how to reconstuct the original Irish harp. I think Derek Bell from the Chieftains finally achieved that. Or at least he used an all-metal-stringed harp in some of his recordings. But these were wind instruments?

MW: They were horns.

Bey: Without holes?

MW: I don't know... I presume not.

Bey: Well, I'd love to know more.

MW: Any other projects?

Bey: There's another book of essays in the works, in which the "Immediatism" pamphlet would be included, and then on from there, another two or three

times more. Three times more material. I hope that will be ready for press by autumn. Other than that, you know, Hakim Bey leads a a pretty shadowy existence.

MW: How deeply rooted is your work in Islam?

Bey: Well, personally, it is. No one has to interpret it that way if they don't want to, but for me, it is rooted in heretical Islam.

[Here mysteries are discussed. Media blackout in effect. We resume with a discussion of matters Irish...]

Bey: There's an Irish legend that says you can get the gift of eloquence if you drink water from the river Boyne in the month of June. I think maybe I should go next June, but I'd like to go before then.

MW: Sounds easier than doing the Blarney Stone routine.

Bey: That's clearly worn out. In fact, I don't think that ever was a real Irish tradition. I think it was invented by some English landlord. I'm not sure, I've never actually studied it. It's one of those things that annoys the Irish when you mention it, like leprechauns, so stay away from that...

MW: I'll bear that in mind if I'm ever there. Speaking of that, have you ever encountered any belief in that yourself?

Bey: My very shallow experience of Ireland is probably not worth much, but yes, a few individuals... I've met a few individuals who took all that stuff seriously, but I think at root everybody in Ireland takes it seriously. It reminds me a lot of Java in some ways, which is a country where the spirit lurks close to the surface at all times, but it's still very much part of the culture. In Ireland it's been suppressed as part of the obvious, open culture, but I think it's still very much there in the psyche. So to me, the whole place feels edgy and magical. But this could be entirely subjective. You could talk to some Irish person and they would say I was completely wrong. Maybe that's just my romanticism.

MW: I just read in the *Fortean Times* that the city planning department of Reykavik, Iceland actually has an alleged psychic who provides an up-to-date map of areas where spirit folk dwell.

Bey: Yes, I saw that article. The other article I liked in that issue was the one about the 50-year-old Irish cow. It turned into this icon of worship. And if you go back into Irish folklore, you find mythical cows.... this cow is obviously a model of the mythical cow.

MW: Well, Cuchullain spent a great deal of his time rounding up cows.

Bey: Exactly. There's a famous cow from that legend, the name of which I

can't remember, who was supposed to have lived to be a thousand years old, and the mother of every cow in Ireland... all this kind of stuff... it's obviously just a kind of rhetorical exaggeration of a famous cow like that Big Bertha that was written up in the *Fortean Times*.

MW: The film *The Field*, an Irish film, involved cows in a rather spectacular fashion.

Bey: I've head a lot about that film. I'd like to see it. It was a very successful stage play before it was a film.

MW: I don't think they could have done on stage what they did with the cows in the film.

Bey: Ah-hah. It's about two brothers who quarrel over a field, about an inheritance or something...?

MW: No, a different story... although it involves a similar land-lust situation. Basically, Richard Harris is a crusty old farmer who's obsessed with the land he's been working all his life, and can't cope when the owner decides to sell it to an American for development... very involved with strangeness about the land.

Bey: Yes, that is indeed still very strange... since there's only four million people in Ireland, it isn't as intense as it must have been in, let's say, 1830, when there were about 12 million

people in Ireland. Which is funny to think about.

MW: While the population everywhere else is going up...

Bey: And it never does in Ireland, not since 1848, when they had the potato famine and most of the population either left or died. Ever since then, Ireland's been underpopulated. That's why... you know this deal?... if you had an Irish grandparent and could prove it, you can get an Irish passport.

I think the Irish are so eager for people that if you said, 'Well, I don't have a grandparent but I'd like to apply for citizenship,' they'd say, 'Well, that'll take you two weeks longer.' They seem to be very, very eager to have people go and settle there even for part of the year-- to the extent that if you're an artist, and you're making your money through your art, and you live in Ireland six months and a day every year, so that you can become an official resident, then they'll exempt you from income tax. In fact, from all tax, on the assumption that just having an artist in Ireland is worth it.

MW: Does Robert Anton Wilson still live there?

Bey: No, but that's why he went there in the first place. I think he got a little lonely or something... actually, the decisive factor for his leaving was medical problems that couldn't be dealt

with there. His wife was unwell.

MW: Getting back to the Internet, a while back there was the hoax obituary for R.A. Wilson... How did he feel about that?

Bey: Well, when I rang him up the day I heard, he was laughing. I hadn't heard him in such an exalted state for a long time. To survive one's death, after all... but that was a nasty stunt.

MW: It was. It provoked a lot of commentary. After the truth was announced, the controversy kept going on because people started claiming that was a hoax... carried it on to ridiculous extremes.

Bey: Well, let people get used to it, man. They were trusting what they heard on the news? What kind of idiots...? Everything is dubious. All information is potential disinformation, even when it's true.

MW: A lot of the behavior on the Net is fairly petty and infantile. Particularly in any of the groups that deal with sex.

Bey: Well, I've heard some of the ridiculous stories that go on here. And I really don't know where it's all leading, as I was saying before. I have no idea. I wouldn't want to predict that it's all leading toward some utopia or dystopia .Or if it's just going to be a kind of complicated telephone, just become part of our lives the way the telephone

has, hot and cold running water and the telephone. Hard to say, really.

MW: You expressed some distaste for Clinton a little while back. Any further thoughts on him and his administration?

Bey: Absolutely. Just gets worse and worse, doesn't it? The worst thing I know is this bullshit about decriminalization of pot, this stupid rumor that *High Times* spread that Clinton and Gore were going to favor decriminalization and that all the potheads should vote for them. What a crock of shit!

MW: I was not aware of this...

Bey: The rumor that went around amongst hemp activist types that at some event, and details were given-- who knows whether they were made up-- some event where hempoids were tabling, and Gore showed up. It was some kind of political event and they were tabling outside, so Gore sidles up to the table and leans over and whispers to them a 'be of good cheer' kind of message. And then he slinks away. So then *High Times* printed this story, and I presume all the potheads dutifully went out and voted for Clinton. And I think that Clinton had advisers about every interest group in America. One day the adviser came who covered this kind of thing and said, 'Bill, you know I think you've lost a lot of credibility with this non-inhaling

business, you've got to do something to get the potheads back. There's millions of them. And some of them are well-to-do, and they vote.' And so they said, 'Well, send out Gore to spread some disinformation.' And this is the way this regime has behaved on every point. On every point it's betrayed the interest groups that it claimed to represent, in the most obvious and nasty way. Furthermore, any president who can come in on an anti-Bush line and then immediately bomb Baghdad again in order to revenge some insult to Bush-- what the fuck is going on? Well, business as usual. It's just one scumbag after another. I hope I've gotten **Beyond** the point where I get upset to the stage of losing control of myself the way I did during the Gulf War, which really just blew my mind, and I couldn't function. So I hope I learned something from that, not to let these bastards get to me on the personal level. But my joke is that Clinton is simply a plant by the CFR/Bilderberger/Rockefeller/Kissinger types who are running reality for us, and they put him up there for four years to take the heat off of the Republicans because Bush had acted like such an asshole proclaiming himself the 46reemasonic messiah. They told him, 'Look, you have four years to make liberalism stink like shit in the nostrils of the nation.'

MW: He's way ahead of schedule.

Bey: Way ahead! So I figure, in '86 it's

Quayle and Noriega. And then we have Clinton to thank for that. And somewhere there's a Swiss bank account building up for the little creep.

MW: What about the other obvious candidate--?

Bey: Ollie [North]?

MW: He got the senatorial nomination in Virginia.

Bey: He did, did he? He's tarred with the brush of the extreme right to the extent where those powers, those central powers that I referred to as the Bilderbergers-- which is just a joke, really, but who knows?-- are not going to go with Ollie. They pensioned Ollie off long ago, and now he's out there bouncing around like some ping-pong ball from the Liberty Lobby to God knows what, with the cranks. So I don't expect him to win any more than Duke won. He's just a paper tiger now. He's just to keep everybody's eyes off what's really going on.

MW: Speaking of Gore, as we were, have you ever read anything by a novelist named Steve Erickson?

Bey: Yes... no, wait a minute... remind me.

MW: His most recent book was *Tours of the Black Clock*.

Bey: Go back a little.

MW: *Rubicon Beach*... well, no, his most recent was actually *Arc d'X*, which was about Thomas Jefferson. Or, it started out being about Thomas Jefferson, but it leaps into alternate realities, and involves Jefferson's relationship with Sally Hemmings, his slave/lover.

Bey: I've heard about that one, and I think I read *Rubicon Beach*, but I can't remember anything about it. Why?

MW: Well, he wrote a book called *Leap Year*, which was basically, in a sense, non-fiction, although there is a good deal of fiction in it too, about him attending both major political conventions in 1988. He has a lot to say about an unnamed senator who is obviously Al Gore.

Bey: He fictionalized it, you say?

MW: There's a lot of reportage in it of him at the conventions, describing things, but also, throughout the entire book, the ghost of Sally Hemmings-- her first appearance in one of his books-- keeps haunting him, looking for her long lost lover, Thomas Jefferson. Which represents, to him, I guess, a metaphor for the conflicts inherent in America: love/hate, slavery/freedom, et cetera...

Bey: So he had some interesting take on Gore, per se?

MW: Yes, and not a very flattering

one... he basically describes him as a pretty ambitious guy who's desperate to be president and to get into power.

Bey: Well...

MW: Since then, of course, Gore turned Green, you know, wrote his little book...

Bey: And thereby positioned himself to be the specialist in betraying everyone with Green interests, from the environmentalists to the hemp activists.

MW: There's one interesting scene where Erickson is in a bar-- I imagine it's fictional, but you never know-- and a drunken woman begins hitting on him and follows him back to his hotel room. One of her great ambitions is to be a rock singer, so she starts belting out some Janis Joplin song, while he's trying to get rid of her. There's a knock on the door, she crawls under the bed, and it's her husband, the Senator, looking for her. So this woman was Tipper... who the media seems to have forgotten was the spearhead of...

Bey: Oh yes, the satanic rock thing.

MW: Of course, maybe the scene wasn't fictional. I don't know. He blends fantasy and political reportage quite skilfully in that book.

Bey: It sounds like an interesting experiment.

MW: It's far more interesting than any of the semi-official "Making of the President" books that used to come out after every new president.

MW: I don't read those. It's a bunch of media jerks congratulating themselves on how close to power they got.

[At this point we wound down our conversation and said our farewells.]

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Hakim Bey Talks with users of Public Netbase March 18.1995

Hanging out with Morgan Russell, Sebastian, from the Spiral Tribe technopagan Free Party collective (joining in at 4 p.m. from a still ongoing rave), an official from the UN Drug Controll Department, a lecturer at University of Vienna WU, artists, writers, tech-heads, political activists, Konrad Becker and some t0 crew. Names withheld to protect the innocent.

Media Commodified Ideas (Start transscript:)

X:

There is a position that it's absolute necessary to commodify our ideas, because this is a way of communicating them beyond the reach of our personal time and presence in space time. The other position is: that's not good, it's better that people meet and come together in person and share space and time together, by talking, touching, dancing,

whatever. All commodifications of those things that happen in this specific situation should be banned, and there should be a glass-ball around these temporary events of realness.

H. BEY :

There is nobody to ban anything. There is no pope of the Temporary Autonomous Zone to say what's doctrinal or dogmatic. But I don't believe that the best way to communicate ideas is to commodify. I think there is a trend now which is called anti-media and the idea is to even actually reach more people without being recuperated into the medium. There, once you are taken in by the media, your ideas are no longer alive. They are precisely commodities which are going to be sold by somebody. They are representations of their desires.

I would resist the idea that jumping into the media as if it were just a neutral ocean of discourse, is always the best tactic. Right now it seems to me to be a

particular bad tactic, because the mediaworld is eager for false images of dissidence and resistance. I think this is because people everywhere feel disgust with the commodity "deal" and they would like to have something different, but they are still susceptible to believing that a commodity or a lifestyle item, like a T-shirt, is the thing itself instead the representation of the thing. It's in this area that I perceive some danger in promiscuous embrace of media.

S:

There is this issue of how do you start to create a change within the system. An important element that has been overlooked. For example a musician, who creates a piece of music and puts it on a record himself, the responsibility is always kind of finished once he got it on record, if he goes up far. He doesn't seem to realize that going from spiritual to material, you must follow the flow of your commodity - if you like - right to the people you wanna give it to. And that is something that is very

important to the future of changing the way the creativity is mediated. In particular when you focus on creative things that have the ability to wake people up, Trance-forms of music for instance. It's the same with creatin anything. Am I gonna give it to Sony for a deskjob, or am I gonna try to create my own independence? I have seen a lot of people who have been getting a record label together, they get a lot of artists on their label and when they day comes to pay this artists they do not pay these artists. This is happening with Techno, actually a lot of the artists have suddenly realized that, once again a music scene is created of the back of the underground musicians who never got paid for what they did. Bringing music back to what it originally was. Here we are at this great revolutionary musict, where we use cristalls and electricity to create soundenergy. We have suddenly got this massive change in music, where you can use any sound you want in the world. And you've broken the mould that the piano set up, and you

suddenly enter into a realm of pure frequency again - rhythm and frequency, from which to build a new structure. But where is our reference point in the western world? Where is that reference point for why I'm gonna make this kind of music?

And that's why the filter becomes cloudy and that's where it's important to attain an independent network for musicians and creative people.

X:

And it has to be commercial in the end!

H. BEY :

Let's not be too puritanical about it. There is absolutely nothing wrong with making a honest living as an artist. That's a different proposition than whoreing yourself to a big label who's just gone alienate you from the very people that support that creativity. And they will eventually kill you as an artist - we've seen that over and over again. That is the most common story within the music industry. I totally agree with you,

with the idea that you play this by situation, not by some kind of dictate or ideology. And in each case you come up against as a performer and a recorder, you gonna make this decisions all over again new, because everytime it's a new situation. So there are no rules, maybe it's even conceivable at a certain point, if everything is perfect. If you've been really, really clever and devised your strategy in the most impeccable way, then you can even enter into the major media and have the effect you're interested in having. But I see very few examples of that, and so I think that very few people have impeccable strategies in this sense. Most of us have to struggle against our own impurities and imperfections as well as the impurities and imperfections that are inherent in any creative activity. So on the whole I support your statement.

Space * Raves * Music

S:

On that point for me it's interesting living in a communal group. The way

that suddenly you realize that the whole process of what you are doing is in fact an ego game, that you are working out amongst all the other people involved - we all come from western society.

It took me psychedelics to wake up to be honest. And it took me being in a situation whereby Britain had an underground movement which lasted for four years solid. And this movement was a Free Party movement. This was coming together thousands of people and all dancing underneath the stars for sometimes periods of two weeks. This were serious nights of partying. This brought us to the edge where we suddenly realized where our freedom lay. Everyone thinks we are free, we were told that - and I believed it all the way - but suddenly when you push out and find out that by expressing your freedom you got riot police coming in and beating people up, suddenly you find out that your freedom doesn't stretch so far.

There is this issue in Britain of Commonland. I remember when we were in

Leeds we were looking for a place to do a party. The traditional place in Britain is Commonland. I went to Leeds to have a look at the maps of Commonland, and all the land that was given to the people, there were only two pieces left. I checked both places. First was a field for a farmers corn and the second place was an airport... This is land that was given to the people for specific parties and festivals, put it's not there anymore, it's been sold off.

X:

This shows us that in the end you need physical space. If you want Immediatism, you want physical space.

XX:

Maybe we should go to virtual space.

X to H. BEY :

But this is a contradiction to immediacy, cause immediacy claims that you shouldn't use the media to come together but you use physical space. And in the end this is inconsistent.

H. BEY :

This is not exactly what I've said. What I said was that there is no Temporary Autonomous Zone without physical space. I didn't say that there is no interrelationship between cyberspace and physical space. Of course there's a relationship - there are many different kinds of relations. But what I'm talking about, how I'm defining freedom for the time being, if it doesn't include the body it is an illusion. If my eyes are free but my nose isn't, so this is not what I call freedom. I say there is no festival inside cyberspace. If it doesn't interpenetrate with the physical world, then it's simply another form of representation. Everything which was once lived, has now moved away into representation. And if this is felt to be a form of unfreedom, than it is precisely representation which we find ourselves in a struggle against.

In this sense it may be necessary to ultimately take up a very hostile stand toward cyberspace, or we

may find it is a useful
weapon, but we will not find
our freedom in a machine.
We won't find our freedom
as a representation in a
machine. I can turn myself
into a cartoon figure going
to virtual reality and act all
kinds of fantasies but that
won't be live, that would be
representation. A
representation of myself to
the space and a
representation of the space
to myself. In that circularity
there is no exit - there is no
escape from that kind of
viscous circle. So that's why
I don't say that there's
some dichotomy between
the physical and the non
physical but the one without
the other is not freedom.
You see what I'm saying?

XX:

No that's not true! Because
you can leave this material
world. It's not so easy but
it's possible - you can go
into immaterial, antimaterial
world.

XXX:

For me that's an interesting
point. All live is
representational anyway,
we are living in a type of

illusion or cyberspace reality where we have these meat machines to walk around. Cyberspace doesn't exist yet. In the moment the closest space that we have to cyberspace is innerspace, where creativity - perhaps - ultimately comes from.

H. BEY :

Well, we all know, that there is no absolute direct experience - that the body itself is a medium, that proprioception is mediated by the nervous system etc. etc. But I still maintain that it is possible to construct a hierarchy of values in which certain things are more and certain things are less embodied. To simply take some kind of Berkleyan idealism, which is what I'm getting from you - to say that the body has no reality and therefore there is no difference between virtual reality, whether it be virtual or actual virtual reality, is something that I have to reject.

I don't see this lack of distinction. I know that there is a great platonic, mystical, gnostic dualist tradition, which you guys seem to be here today to

represent, which really does believe, that we are going to leave our body, that there's some real eternal entity inside the body, which is going to escape and is going to heaven when you die. I don't know this shit and frankly I don't believe it - it's finished - I might as well go become a Christian.

XX:

I can show you this concept mathematically - you can proof it. Matter, antimatter - other forms of energy. The last human chess master - if the computer is better in chess than the best human chess master the same can happen to literature and music.

H. BEY :

First of all I've never met anybody from the antimatter world. So I don't have any opinion about the existence of consciousness within the world of antimatter.

Second chess can be reduced to mathematics, we know that this is true, but we don't know that literature or life or flesh can

be reduced to mathematics. That has not been shown to my satisfaction and if it's shown to yours I would appreciate some references.

S:

On this issue, for me, you would help me if you would clarify the difference between meditation, the psychedelic experience, the trance dance, what happens at rave parties. I think on these lines as a backup to what I'm doing with the techno side and also looking at creativity and the idea of clearing the ego from the process and allowing pure source energy through. What is the difference?

H. BEY :

Possibly we're talking about different states of consciousness. My inclination is to think everything is real, which of course means reality becomes a very fuzzy concept. But I have experience of the world of the imagination too. It's on the level that one experiences it. It's of course very very real. It can change your life and

through it you can change the world. So the imagination is clearly something which is as real, in this sense, as anything else. Virtual reality is as real, in this sense, as anything else. But I would go back to the idea of a practical hierarchy, which has to be ultimately, subjectively based. Is it doing it for me, or is it not? On the bases of the only possible values, that we can create for ourselves - this kind of gradation of media, by which I mean language, body, everything, can arrange in some kind of a useful program for oneself, where certain spaces are more liberated. Certain modes of consciousness are more joyful. That's really the best I can say. .

S:

What about the idea of improvisation, the whole idea of reflecting the moment. How that is necessary to the development of the consciousness, it does seem to have the ability to pull the mind in and take it somewhere. This whole process is very important

for culture and has been obliterated in the west for the past few hundred years but does seem to emerge through the subcultures and always has done.

H. BEY :

I think improvisation is a good key to this. If you can develop a kind of Zen-approach to this levels, so you need not use a hard and fast religion, ideology or philosophy to prejudge the utility of one level over the other that would be the appropriate modus operandi. The best way to go would be what I call a psychic martial artist.

XXXX:

What about the interfacing of creativity and technology?

H. BEY :

I think what we need is critical consciousness. Critical consciousness towards the entire construct of technology. Technology is not neutral, it's not God-given, it doesn't come from the burning bush, it doesn't emerge from the world of

antimatter. It's something that human society makes. So all of human society is inscribed in the machine in this sense - and then the machine becomes a force to reinscribe something on society. And you can have the negative aspect of this, and you can be truly creative - why not. I'm absolutely not denying anyone's creativity. All I'm asking for, for myself, is critical consciousness about technology.

X:

But where is the original critical? If I have to be in tune with everything and this reconciling and peaceful and enjoying... Where comes the critical stuff...?

H. BEY :

You trying to force me to be a 1964 hippie - I was a 1964 hippie and so those kind of ideas are very much in my work, but you're only picking on those ideas.

X:

When I look at your essay on Immediatism it's an archetype of ideal

immediate contact and exchange. This is what you describe. And as kind of an opposite I see the mass-produced gift that one hands over at a potlatch. This is what you suppose in this paper.

H. BEY :

But you missed the most important sentence, that this is not a dictate - this is a game. You wanna play the game? Enjoy the game. This is not the Communist party.

X:

Sure, but you want something critical, so I wanted to know where is the source of being critical - where is my potential to disagree?
And this body is against something that is just purely abstract and constructed, socially true. And there is a chance to become critical, if there is a difference between what happens in my body and what happens on the street. No? I think we need this tension, this opposition, these dichotomies to create a possibility for freedom.

H. BEY :

You do have a dogma. I don't. Your dogma is dichotomy, is conflict. You're saying no progress without conflict.

X:

No, I say no progress without distinction. This is the basic stuff and there is always this difference emerging. So I think if we want to create some Immediatism, as an extra capitalist entity, we must have a capitalist skin for that, otherwise it will just come apart.

S:

No I disagree - I think if you look at the way youth-culture evolved in the 60's, especially in Britain you had a lot of hippies with seeing a different side to reality, and their reaction was not to get involved with big business. They didn't want to become a commercial entity. The next thing that came along was punk. Punk does seem to be imparted on commercial entity. But every underground scene learns

from the one previously.
You will see that the balance of those two polarities there does seem to be a will to go into the commercial zone, cause you know when you get in there you have the reference point to keep you straight.

Weather Reports

XXXX:

You have been talking about the weather...

H. BEY :

The weather reports are always to me the most charming way of catching up on the massmind. The attitudes which are expressed on the weather channel are apparently neutral. But in fact they are deeply influenced by cultural attitudes. I just noticed last winter, when we had a lot of snow in N.Y. This wonderful kind of manichean mythology of good and evil began developing around the weather. And then I realized, that it has always been that way. It has always been a good day or a bad day. If its a bad day

they tell you with long faces
and if it's a good day they
are smiling and are happy.
But I think the I Ching says:
Every day is a good day.
Every kind of weather has
its beauty and there is
certainly a great beauty in a
storm. There is a vast dis-
ease on the fact, that we
have not yet subdued
nature; We haven't finished
conquering nature. I get
this gnostic dualist flavour
from the weather report and
I can go and take that
analysis into the news-
report where it is even more
apparent
For me the metaphor of the
living earth is marvelous, I
like all that goddess stuff,
whether it is literally true or
not does not actually
concern me. One could feel
so much in tune with
material reality that it would
take on spirit in a very real
and vivid way. One would
come to feel the earth as
the great goddess on or even
inside we all live. From this
point of view the weather is
actually the skin of the
goddess and we are living
inside the skin, not on the
surface. The myth of the
living earth which has a lot
of political use now, a use
for struggle.

The ecological and environmental movement has a lot of positive aspects. But we've also seen how it can be coopted by the forces of reaction, even by the forces of corporate hypocrisy - Earthday is sponsored by Monsanto and Exxon. First of all the concept Earthday sucks, and second if we had an Earthday, we would never allow Exxon to hijack it. But it's because we don't understand even something simple as the weather, that these things happen. I guess that's my little moral for that fable.

Secret Societies

K. B. :

I included your essay on the Chinese secret society the "Tong" on Zero News because I find it relevant in respect with how to work from a heretical, autonomous position. Are you suggesting to have new secret societies?

H. Bey :

It's one of my most experimental ideas and I feel on shaky ground, because many secret

societies have been used for many different things.

Well, specially Vienna as one of the hot spots of conspiratorial Freemasonry through all history would be a good place to talk about secret societies. It's one of my most experimental ideas and I feel on shaky ground, because obviously many secret societies have been used for many different things not all of which we would approve of.

But actually what kicked me off on thinking about this was William Burroughs in an interview he did with a very small zine called Homocore. They talked about the Tong as a possible model for homosexuals in an age where aids and neopuritanism would cause them to have to disappear tactically from certain areas of society for self-protection if nothing else. But it is also clear that early masonic organizations were mutual aid societies, rather than being run for the profit of an corporation, a genuine non-hierarchical mutual insurance scheme. The Tongs in China were originally revolutionary groups. They were supposed to restore native

Han Chinese autonomy against the Mongol invasion which became Djing dynasty. They wanted to restore the Ming. But they were soon historically diverted into crime which is also the fairly useful idea for a secret society because we all know how many nice and joyfull things are considered to be crime in our modern nations, which are in fact completely harmless. Like smoking pot. In America it's a terrible crime; There's half a million people in jail for smoking pot.

Perhaps, I'm asking, might it be better, instead of going out on the street, smoking a joint to become a martyr and get thrown in jail and make some kind of weird political point out of our own misery, maybe it would be better just to have a little "secret society" for the production and consumption of marihuana. That just would ignore the state and his hysterical bullshit.

Now extending that metaphor in other activities, social, economic, sexual or creative activities even, where you don't want, for one reason or an other, the incursion of outside powers

and forces, which are bigger and stronger and have all the guns and all the money - one way to do it is to disappear. The model for that would be a secret society.

I like to say that I don't believe in absolute secrecy; Virtual secrecy would be plenty. By which I simply mean, you don't make an ass out of yourself in the media. The worst example I've seen is Waco. Koresh the leader was a media hawk. And he went on television and boasted about the guns he was collecting and dare the Texas police to come and get him. He made a big splash at the local media and that was enough to reach the ears of people in Washington, who thought it would be very convenient to burn up some right winged Christians, right on that point of history, to show that Bill Clinton is the hero of left liberalism. So there was this woman Attorney General take the rap for what was essentially an act of political suppression. It was meant to terrify every autonomous christian right wing group in America, just the way two years before

the same tactics were used against a group in Philadelphia called Move - a black nationals group - who put loudspeakers on the roof of their houses and constantly broadcasting their back to Africa message to the whole neighborhood. They were not hurting anybody, they were just being noisy and obstraperous. So the city of Philadelphia came in and burned down 90 square blocks of the city and killed everybody, with one or two exceptions, including women and children who died inside the buildings. The same happened in Waco.

So it's not a right wing plug or a left wing plug. It's a plug of power against autonomy. Anyone who behaves an autonomous fashion is the villain. If you go and boost about it in the media, you are asking to be smashed. Cause they have the guns and the have the money. So I'm only suggesting the Tong as a possible model we need to explore. I'm not saying I believe in it. I don't think it's the solution to anything but I think it's a very

interesting model which needs to be explored again. In the 18th century the secret societies were the edge of the revolutionary wedge and we are maybe in a situation like that again now.

Conspiracies

K.B.:

How does this relate to conspiracy theory. It seems to be a very touchy item with liberals but is embraced by highly obscure right wing fanatics.

H.Bey:

I love conspiracy theory. I make some use of it in my work but I try to keep it on a metaphorical level and not to get carried away and become a literal believer in anyone's conspiracy for a number of reasons. Because first there is an old problem, with which even Tolstoi was dealing with - is whether history is made by great individual human beings, who act on history, or whether history is made by great unconscious surges of economic and social movements, that are far

greater and broader than any individual. So that Napoleon is simply the one who is carried on the front of this wave. Rather than being a leader he is actually pushed forward by the wave of history.

The great-men theory of history is a very dangerous trap and clearly if you believe literally in conspiracy theory, then you are believing in the great-men-theory. You are believing that a very small group of very brilliant individuals who can actually conspire to change history, usually to their advantage.

XXX:

Like Bill Gates?

H.Bey:

For example. Is he the leader of this thing or is he just pushed forward on the wave of some kind of techno-economic development and if it was not Bill Gates it would be someone else. Robert Anton Wilson likes to quote: "When it is steam engine time it steam engines." Like when it is time to rain it rains. When it is time for

steam engines some vast IT produces the steam engine. In fact we know plenty of examples where the same scientific discovery is made simultaneously by five or six people within minutes around the world. Not because of some Jungian archetypal anima floating around but because science got to that point. And five or six people were smart enough to realise it right away. There is also the point that the first working steam engine was actually built on an incorrect scientific theory, if I am not mistaken. It was made by someone who thought he was doing one thing but actually did something else altogether and it just happened to be a steam engine. That happens plenty of times too.

The problem with conspiracy theory is to believe that there is one particular group of human beings who are in control of my destiny. That's a philosophical extreme to which I don't wanna go. On the other side it's obvious that people do conspire. That there are conspiracies, secret forces behind outward political

shows of power.

It is clear that there is not one single known politician in America who has any real power at all. They are simply working for big corporations and economic interests like oil, or the global market itself. The best model is, that there are many, at least several conspiracies and that they interlock, that they compete, that they melt into each other, that they separate from each other. If we wanna know what's going on, if we wanna understand history as it is happening we should know something about these conspiracies. Again critical consciousness is a useful tool here.

Archetypes and Raves

S.:

Maybe there could be some common denominator that would create a collective behavioral pattern that people seem to follow. It could show itself materialy when it is actually guided by conscious individuals minds.

H.Bey:

Absolutely but would it make any difference? I often think it does not matter whether these conspiracies are conscious or unconscious, there could also be an unconscious conspiracy. Consciousness is maybe not always that great a force in this.

S.:

The real interest for me again lays in the creative process and its function within the translation from spiritual to material. Because if we are getting into the level that maybe these things are unconsciously orientated. Then that would imply that by opening yourself to whatever these unconscious entities are and building a relationship towards those. Your creative flow can actually increase in its potential to have an effect on the material.

H.Bey:

The archetypes obviously do have their real side and their unreal side. I'm not a deep student of C.G. Jung, but I wonder if he didn't come to reify the

archetypes and give them a more solid basis in real reality, some categorical reality, then they deserve. Never the less there is an aspect of the archetype which is "real". No one who has worked a spiritual path would ever be able to empirically deny this fact. The point is again surfing - can you serve the archetypes or are you gonna be swampt by the waves. Pardon the California talk. Jung is of limited use for me, because I feel he made these creatures too powerful. It's also necessary to rebel against the archetypes.

S.:

To put it into a modern idiom - again to use the Ravescene - surely all of this is something everybody experiences, when they go to a Raveparty. This is something that is the buzz of being at Ravepartys. Suddenly there you are building a much better relationship with whatever this is - this creative flow is. And I think the way that all underground techno music actually is progressing towards the idea of

anonymous music for the white label single, which was absolutely the main vehicle for the music in the beginning. I mean recently once again we see the trend towards commercial music, but I think the original vibe of Techno was purely anonymous white label music that was rhythm and frequency based. Now, this came flooding through with the advent of the technology that happened and occurred at that time. And all these elements coming together to create the individual moment seems to have launched this new vehicle for exploring consciousness. Now the question I have - the best point I can find as an improviser within that medium is to look to these archetypes whatever they are. I don't have any words for them. I am not gonna try and put them into any kind of bracket from any person who came previous to me. Because I learn all of this direct from source at a party. Now this is the point I am trying to get: What was that then? If that wasn't something that helped not only in my creative flow, but also

brought me to a deeper
understanding of myself.

H.Bey:

Well, if I understand the
ideal structure of the Rave,
if I can put it that way,
there's no hard and fast
separation between the
musicians and the dancers -
there's no hard and fast
separation between any of
the components of the
Rave. And yet the structure
itself is contained and there
is supposed to be a co-
creation, which is a slimy
word but let's use it in
quotes again, that the
experience you are
discussing arises, is
emergent in co-creation.
And this would seem to me
to be a guaranty against
any kind of malign position.
And you would have to tell
me from your own
experience, whether you
see people freaking out and
getting possessed by the
devil or whether you see
them joyful and sensual
possessed by lets say... I
don't know...aphrodite and
the muses.

S.:

What about a possible

progression into a situation whereby we can actually transcend the necessity for using a psychedelic drug and progress to the level of using music as a means to do the same job?

H.Bey:

I just remembered some friend of mine in the 60's who said that he was gonna through magic and occult meditation, he was gonna recreate the same effect that he got from marihuana. So he could save 5 \$ a week. He did it, he succeeded. But he said it was too much trouble so he went back to smoking pot.

S.:

But don't you think that propably came back through the idea of behavioural patterns and the way people react to that kind of situation. Is the western world finding it so hard to kind of attain the same kind of discipline on consciousness that was known through - I suppose - other cultures, you know ?

H.Bey:

Clearly there are analogies to be drawn between the Rave and something like the Sufi musical and dance ceremony, or indeed any kind of trance or meditation music, dance, action theater scenario in any traditional culture. The difference there is that the forms are predetermined to some extent. But the idea is always within those forms is to achieve spontaneity and lift off. Ultimately the goals are not too different. Our position is, we find ourselves distrustful of all those structures, because we know what other baggage came along with them historically. Even the Christians had this at one point and maybe some of them even still do - some of the more ecstatic sects, even the ones that we think of as right winged Bozos. Snakehandlers, protestant waccos in America who handle snakes and drink poison.

S.:

Maybe that's why it is so necessary for it to come into a modern day medium like the Rave culture, where the same pieces of information

can be picked up direct from source, rather than having to go and check out the history of this situation. This is the interesting element. And if that is the case, that does seem to imply that there is some information that is available to anyone who goes through this process. And if that is the case, then that really does imply that dance dream of material consciousness that is this level, which does seem to have some pretty archaic information. That does seem to be available to anyone who's disciplined enough to push in that direction.

H.Bey:

I would say that we don't wanna have to reinvent the wheel every ten years. So it is possible for us to look at these historical models, whatever you wanna call them. At the same time we don't wanna become the slaves of those models. We want our own model - we want a model which is continously not finished, because any model which is finished then you become a slave of your own system. Blake said, that he had to

have a system of his own or he would become a slave to somebody else's system. I say, your own system must be unfinished or you become a slave to yourself.

Mafia

XXXXX:

And what do you think about the world wide increasing repression from the Mafia that becomes bigger and kills more and more people like us?

H.Bey:

I think that's a function of the global market. Up until 1989 there was a dichotomy between communism and capitalism. It might have been a false show, a pseudo spectacular illusion. But never the less it defined the discourse. The evil empire here and the evil empire there in contradiction with each other. Then in 1989 suddenly this discourse collapsed and there's no more dichotomy. Instead there's a false unity built on a - what seems to me to be a multiplicity of misery. And within the inelectable process of dialectics, the

global market will also produce instantly its own negation. And that negation, you could say, has a positive form and a negative form. The positive form of the negation might be these Zapatista uprising in Mexico. Which I look on as the first true revolutionary action taken against the global market. But the negative result of this - the "negative negative", if I can put it that way, would be a phenomenon like the mafia, which is moving into the vacuum of power, left by the collapse of the discourse of '89. I don't know whether this is the future we are looking at. If you study certain reports from Russia these days you might think this is actually the future we are looking at.

Again conspiracy theory. I have been fascinated with Mafia related Freemasonic, you know the Italian Propaganda Due lodge and all this kind of thing. It is conceivable that this is in fact the new negation. And we haven't even realized that yet, that we are in a new war and we haven't even seen what the war is. But other than that, I can't

answer your question,
because I can't read the
future.

XXXXX:

There are other movements,
for example in Japan and
Italy that were
independent from this,
without the phenomenon of
the Soviet Union collapsing.

H.Bey:

Which phenomena are these
now? You mean like Yakuza,
Camorra, ... various forms
of the Mafia? We put too
much importance on these
different forms. It seems to
me that they are fulfilling a
very closely similar
functions in their various
societies, using various
cultural matrixes, that is
slightly different from Italy
to Japan after all. But the
functions being the
functions being served,
seeming very similar to me.
Let us not forget, that there
are reasons why the Mafia is
so popular. The Mafia
actually delivers what you
want, whereas the
government doesn't - the
Mafia actually delivers what
you want whereas religion
doesn't. I think Malcom Mc

Larren said: Drugs will always be popular because drugs actually can make you feel like the people on television advertisements appear to be feeling. And precisely this is where the Mafia comes in with the most brilliant commodity strategy in the modern world, possibly, which is that they deliver the drugs. Which is what people want. We can't just cup some moralistic stance here - that's the Mafia and this is us. We are implicated. We have to decide in what way we extricate ourselves from that implication or in what way we make use of it even. Who knows? It's a very mysterious, entangled situation.

Free Will and Freedom

XXX:

You seemed to argue almost against free will, you suggested that there's a negative aspect as the result of the outcome of this end of capitalism versus communism. You are saying that perhaps falling into the dualistic gnostic idea that this negative and evil and something else is positive or

good and you are suggesting perhaps also that all these movements, these Mafia antithesis to the free market economy is something which is something beyond the control of the individual human beings. Are you saying we are all caught up in this, we have no free will?

H.Bey:

No, absolutely not, although the whole question of free will is very dicy indeed. The son-in-law of the prophet Mohammed, was once asked whether he believed in free will or determination and instead of answering he jumped up and down on one foot and then jumped up and down on the other foot. And so it's like "yes" and "no". And between the "yes" and the "no", that's where heads fly off from their necks and stars fly off from heaven. That's a quote from a sufi poet, Ibn-Arabi. So, "yes" and "no", clearly for the most part we are swept along by these shitstorms of history, but every once in awhile, be it even only a room of this size, some kind of resistance, some kind of area, space of resistance,

space of dissidence occurs spontaneously or some crackpot philosophy, it doesn't much matter. So I don't think we are simply the passive victims, by the way I don't necessarily consider the Mafia to be the antithesis of the global market, I think it might be the apotheosis, I'm not sure, but there are some signs in that direction. So, I don't know, I don't think we are the powerless victims of history, not at all.

XXX:

But we have already argued that we the powerless victims of the weather. And that human technology hasn't advanced to this stage.

H.Bey:

No, I didn't say that we are powerless victims, I said we could be joyful participants with the weather, which is a little different, think. And I also don't believe that there's some kind of morality involved in like not shutting the windows when it rains, if you don't wanna get your etchings wet. we do what we do. And the

attempt always to draw a philosophical line to say "yes" on this side and "no" on that side, is to ignore that magical space is between the "yes" and the "no".

XXX:

Without wanting to appear a total fascist , isn't this something up to each individual to make judgment ?

H.Bey:

No, I don't think so, that's to deny the social. That's to reduce everyone to powerlessness, because there's fairly good evidence that the atomised individual in the modern world is not making it, is not achieving the overcoming of misery.

XXX:

So you are arguing against any type of synthesis ..

H.Bey:

... of individualism and social , yeah I argue for a new kind of synthesis between the individual and the social. That's what I do.

Internet and Virtual War

XX:

What do you think about the internet? Is it possible for you to see the humans using computer technology to organize human knowledge to communicate with each other? Should people have one common understanding of what is true?

H.Bey:

The internet works very well on an epistemological level. If we see the internet as an epistemology rather than ontology I think we would be on the right way. The internet is a great tool for knowledge but as a state of being it leaves something to be desired, perhaps. And knowledge after all is something that finally only exists when information is appropriated to the individual or to a group and becomes an actual active part of life. So I would be hesitant to - a modern hesitant, I think I would be distrustful of a global epistemology and that is to say system of knowledge,

because that would imply that each and every user of the net must experience the knowledge coming into their body and into their live in a more or less precisely the same way and that would bother me. The internet as a tool or even as a weapon for knowledge strikes me as the - why not - maybe the most exiting and interesting area of discourse that we have going right now this very hot little minute. But I see it as a field of struggle, not as a beautiful gift that we've been given, which has its own inherent profection in it - in some structural way but just as another kind of technology which has brought about some very very perculiar side effects having to do with chaotic pertubation, with actual - you know - chaos - bringing it to be in a chaos. And within that chaos there's a potential for the most hideous misery as well as the most - you know - amazing freedom and happiness. And it's a curious and interesting fact that the internet derives from military structure to begin with. It's a fact that the structure of the internet is already compromised in this

sense. And the task that faces us is, if we can go and consider ourselves netactivists.

XXX:

Hold on a moment though, the road system in the US, the federal Highway system was built for military purposes.

H.Bey:

Yes, absolutly. Most of civilization is derived from military purposes.

XXX:

But if you drive on a road it doesn't mean you buy out to the military philosophy ?!

H.Bey:

Does it not ? In a certain indirect way, it does. You know, how many people die in automobiles every year, on the face of the earth ?

XXX:

Would you rather walk?

H.Bey:

Actually, yes. But that's just

my taste.

XX:

But the military never do it by themselves, they always use scientists to do it for them.

H.Bey:

This is called pure war. We don't have Generals and armies and all that stuff. This is war in virtual space. This is war on a global space. This is war which can be hot or cold or luke warm.

XXX:

So where does that leave room for art?

H.Bey:

Resistance.

XXX:

Art as the tool of the resistance?

H.Bey:

Yeah.

**Wired magazine, Newt Gingrich
and Free Will**

XX:

What's about to go to these people that you think make all the bad and cooperate and try to establish my communication?

H.Bey:

The best of luck to you. Somebody mentioned Wired magazine which is widely known here but Wired magazine is a financial support of the Think Tank, which has some marvelous name like Institute for Peace and Justice or something like that - which is actually run by Newt Gingrich - so that he could have access to the people. So the cooperations can get access to mailing lists, where they can sell their products. What I'm saying is, that the cooperation with people, whom I'm not calling evil, but simply inimicable to my interests - o.k.? - is almost bound to involve me in a situation which can only increase my misery. If, for example, I were to believe that Wired magazine represents the hippest, coolest attitude towards the net - and many

people believe that because Wired magazine tells them it is, then you will find yourself upshit creek without a paddle, as we say in my homestate. You find yourself in a position where your energy will be coopted in ways that will not result in your increased happiness. It would be like the story that Sebastianis told about certain rockgroups who made certain music, that made that move to cooperate with global market forces and who in fact find themselves in a very sad and miserable situation and that drives some of them to suicide. While the millions of dollars they are making, they have no longer a creative relation with their listeners, they co-creatives. So, I would say: each situation is a new situation - there are no hard and fast rules to be made about these things. Every offer of a million pounds has to be read on its own merits. Every offer of a smack in the face has to be read on its own merits. But there's no forgone conclusion that will gonna choose the million pounds over the smack in the face. Because sometimes it's

necessary to resist. And you know whether this resistance ever comes to an end - I don't know and frankly I don't care. That's not what is important to me. The struggle is probably eternal. But on my small personal level there are definite ups and downs. There is a definite map that I could draw based on experience. If not on the future, which will lead me to make value judgments about who I'm gonna collaborate with - what actions I'm going to perpetrate, what art I'm gonna create - I'm not asking for socialist realism here, I'm not even asking for committed art or political art. I'm simply asking of myself on a critical awareness of these issues. So when Wired magazine comes to me, if it ever does, and offers to buy a piece from me, this is what they get from me. [shows his middle finger] I can't do other. The expense is too great.

XX:

Should they go to hell or what?

H.Bey:

Yeah, I'd like to blow the bastards up!

X:

Wouldn't that be more interesting to offer them a piece that would expose exactly what you think about?

H.Bey:

No, it wouldn't necessarily be a good thing. I just did an interview with High Times which is a magazine I have a lot of problems with, but ultimately I felt that the audience - it was going to reach - there might be some interesting things I could say for them. And so I swallow some distaste for High Times as a magazine and I do collaborate. That was a choice I made - might turn out to be a hideous mistake - I don't know. On the other hand I don't collaborate with Newt Gingrich. High Times is independently owned. S. Newhouse or Rupert Murdoch does not own it. S. Newhouse owns half of Wired and the other half is going to Newt Gingrich.

There's no space for me, even if they would publish my bitter, viscious critic of them and their politics. Even if they would put it in their magazine it would be contextualized in such a way, that they can say: See how cool we are? We even let this ranter come into our magazine. We can absorb those ideas - we are rich - we are big, we are bigger than he is, we are bigger than you are - we've got it all - baby! This is the only answer. [shows his middle finger again]

Strategies to Free Choice

X:

But the virus is more than the cell. The cell has all the productive facilities. Still it is the virus that kills the body.

S.:

These people focus on the product and the finished sold thing rather than realizing that the real gratification of going and buying a piece of commodity can actually be doubled when you create it yourself, and not only by

the buzz of independence - you start to wake up when you turn your vision into a different direction which might make you poorer in the long run, but it might bring you close that you actually really enjoying that object that comes up.

H.Bey:

Anyway, I don't also even use the virus as a symbol of total negativity. I think there is a positive virus too. It's something that goes through a membrane. It penetrates a membrane and crosses a border and a lot of border crossings are very useful.

X:

The question is: Are we creative enough to formulate phrases and texts that are subversive enough to value their inclusion in that text we basically oppose? That was basically the Pasolini line of argumentation. [H.Bey groans] And I think if we invest some thinking in what is the basic motivation of people to read Wired? Because they want to feel like being part of something

spectacular, and out of the norm and an innovation and so on. Maybe that's it and they want to be part of the community. So if anyone offers an alternative points of entry or points of access for the feeling of the immediate contact - so this might have an effect and it would maybe induce people to adopt the difference stand towards regulation of communications in Cyberspace.

H.Bey:

Yeah - maybe that's true. The spirit bloweth where it listeth, as the good book says. The spirit goes where it wants to go. And so if the spirit feels like making an appearance in a Tom and Jerry cartoon - somebody told me the other day on morning television - well the spirit is bloody well going to do it. If somebody wants to read Bugs Bunny as the eternal anarchist, that is in fact a possible reading of Bugs Bunny. And in fact a lot of popular culture is completely infested with subversive memes. And there are plenty people whose first turn on to the idea of resistance actually

comes from an area which is theoretically not where that's supposed to happen. After all, if school is supposed to socialize you for a lifetime of consumption and death, never the less some people sometimes inadvertently come across some poem or painting or mathematical formula in school, which has a different effect - and drives them away from the socialization process and education and into a field of resistance - you know, romantic rebellion or selfrealization or journeying to the east or whatever it might be. So far be it from me to dictate to the spirit, where it's going to manifest itself - HOWEVER! Right? There's a big "however". And that "however" is, that we have some brains, we have some taste and we can make decisions. There is absolutely no vast, monstrous force from the unconscious that is preventing us from making these decisions. We can actually make decisions. This is an area of freedom. Even if we get crushed for the decisions we make, we have that moment in which we can act freely. Or at

least within the parameters of our whole cultural, social conditioning or whatever you believe in along those lines - I'm not a behaviourist - I think there is a little sneaky area where freedom occurs. On that bases and on that bases alone.

There is ... I think pressing cause to distrust and even to despise certain areas of the media .. now.. today .. here. And on that bases I simply can't accept to be absorbed into every medium. I'm going to resist, because my little area of freedom is valuable to me. And I see it threatened through the media - I really do. Maybe this is because I'm a writer and a media worker and I overvalue the media but I really, literally think this is true for a vast numbers of people. There is such a thing as media trance, which is a negative form, there really is such a thing as brainwashing, as there really is such a thing propaganda. In fact every advertisement is a form of brainwashing and propaganda on some level even if it's very clever and it's very artistic. So - oh God - I'm forced - you

know, it's a funny paradox -
I'm forced to make these
choices about my freedom.

XXX:

But is freedom a position?

H.Bey:

Well, I said in the paper
that freedom is a
psychokinetic skill, by which
I meant its skill, which is
developed through the
selftraining of mind and
body. Its psychic martial
arts. Freedom is a process,
it's not closed and can't be
defined within closed
borders and it's in a
constant state of becoming.
So there's never an end or
beginning to it and there's
also never a definition to it.
Nevertheless something we
taste, something we smell,
it's something we make love
to.

XXX:

Talking about Wired
magazine which showed its
true colors by wanting to
copyright the "@"- sign. I
believe that's one of the
things that clearly showed
them for what they are.

H.Bey:

Sure and then everyone on the net who uses the "@" has to pay them and then, you know that's \$5 less freedom for you and me.

XXX:

Plus, High Times I think they are a great magazine, after all they encourage gardening.

H.Bey:

Yes, and they also encourage their readers to vote for Clinton. Which I thought was a terrible mistake, and they did that on the basis that some of them were at some political convention tableing some marijuana literature and Al Gore - our vice-president. I'm sure you never heard of him.

XX:

Yes, we did.

H.Bey:

Oh, yes you did? How very surprising.

XXX:

He wrote a book once.

H.Bey:

Yeah, it was on the environment. He wispered to them over the table: "Give us a chance." And so on this basis High Times actually urges their - I donit know, several million readers, as I understand it - to go out and vote for Clinton and Gore. Yeah, and a lot of "gardeners" have ended up in jail since then.

XXX:

But another thing I wanted to look at is that you suggested that each and every individual can make a choice through expression of free will. And it seems this can't be an individual thing, but it has to be social. It has to be media edited in some way. That the individual, now with equipment, technology - which can allow the individual to make music, to make art and to share it with many people without going through the big media machines, like Sony. Now we all have a change to make a difference to participate in our own

expression of art, of our
spirituality, of our
antimatter world.

H.Bey:

Well, after all we always -
there is nothing different
there - that possibility was
always there. Technology
doesn't change that in any
deep way.

X:

T.V. is the most one-way
medium there is. But now
we have a two way medium.

S.:

I really must make the point
at this moment. Connexed
with what happened in
Britain with the free party
scene. That exactly what
you are talking about us
now having this new
freedom to use this
technology, you know for
our own independent
purposes, let me to be in a
situation where thousand
Ravers getting threaten up
by the riot police for
expressing that exact same
thing.

XXX:

It's a threat to the establishment, but isn't that why we should be involved with?

X:

You need bandwidth to communicate in the first place, you need high tech to connect the bandwidth and then you need place to come together. So at three points in this life circle you need access to physical space, physical resources, money and competence.

H.Bey:

The Republican Party has no monopoly on those items in America . AT&T has no monopoly on those items, the 20th century has no monopoly on those items, T.V. has no monopoly on those items. All those things are available through other channels. So there is absolutely no dictatorship of reality that tells me which media I'm going to achieve these goals through.

X:

We can talk for free. I just use air and my own body to articulate. If we talk

through the media then I need some kind of background of my live, some worklive some heritage or whatever to be able to use these media.

H.Bey:

I'd like to make a distinction, and it's only an ad hoc distinction between what I call intimate media and what I would call commercial or mass media. And I've personally made a decision to work within the intimate media. By intimate media I include actually quite a wide range of things, most print although I would make certain political judgments about certain magazines; cable T.V., listener sponsored or public radio, which is different than the European state run radio. I work for a radio station in N.Y. which is supported almost entirely by their listeners. Twice a year we go on the air and make absolute fools of ourselves by begging and pleading for money. And that's the way the station has been kept going for 30 years. As a result the present government despises us. There have

been questions asked in the senate recently. They are trying to get a list of everyone in the national public radio who ever worked for our organization so they can purge them. And they are meanwhile trying to cut off every penny that might have gone to us from them.

S.:

It doesn't matter what medium you use for creativity. The reason why I'm so into Techno is because it's so easy. But it doesn't stop you doing a guitar and doing a record yourself - it doesn't stop you from doing anything. It's once you have that material piece of creativity - is how you get out to your public. That is the issue that needs to be addressed. Because the artist is forgotten. It is a two way process from spiritual to material and you must follow through all the way. Otherwise you are allowing other people to stamp their vibe on your thing.

X:

There are channel captains

that control whatever goes down to the customer. But if you want to own the media, own the channel at least for some enough packets to transfer your tune, then it is the question of what is the background to act your generating the cash. Is it just created by serving in the military all day saluting and then sponsoring a private radio that says military is shit?

S.:

No. No. No. - What it is, is using the medium and it is fortunately backed up by youth culture for one example. You have many individuals thrown into a backdrop of the youth culture. Now all these individuals are approaching creativity in whatever way they can. And there are all these different options as to which way they can put their music out. Now the thing about the individual moment of the music called the creativity is that we have a scene. And in that scene you have a particular style of music that gets born. And if it gets born you counteract the commercialization of the

one mechanism that came previously. Now what you have is a situation whereby the musicians at that point have got what Sony needs. And it's whether they give it to them or not - the point is it takes the musician to wake up to that whole thing on a big level before you can put a plug on that thing. And you can actually reverse the process by having musician or creative person run outfits, in whatever means you like, from coope ratives to tribal situations. But the point is that you are changing the way in which that former creativity goes out. And you doing at in a time when you are nipping it in the butt. And that's an important issue to get across to the creative people. Because we do have at this time a revolution in music, in technology, in internet, in all those different things. And they make it very easy for us to go up, but actually we don't wanna give it to them H.Bey: I think we gonna wrap it up in a few minutes. So in case anyone was saving up a different topic for the end run here - now is the time to bring it up.

Rich People

XXX:

The idea is, there are so many rich people supporting capitalist ideas. Do you have experience in trying to have access to some rich person?

H.Bey:

Charles Fourier, the socialist utopian thinker, used to stay in his house everyday at twelve noon, just to be home in case a millionaire would come and wanted to see him - never happened. He died a disappointed man. Then we've been talking actually a lot this week about Gyorgy Soros - he finances a lot of internet development in Eastern Europe and Africa and he is promoting a number of think tanks on drug legalization - but I haven't met him, either and I don't know whether what would happen if I did. No - the simple answer is no. I've never gotten any high finance from those directions. It's kind of a socialist tradition to accept

help from millionaires.
Robert Owen, the great
English socialist reformer
was himself an industrialist
millionaire. Lenin had
private help hand. It was a
mysterious German
millionaire who financed his
return to Russia. There are
many interesting historical
examples of a play between
millionaires and rebels. But
myself can't add any story.

XXX:

You don't have to attain
millionaires to develop the
bandwidth that is necessary
to reach people.

H.Bey:

That's what I said earlier. I
feel the internet is still on
this chaotic stage where it is
very much worth while
struggling for it. But I also
don't accept it as a given. I
think it began in war and it
will continue in war and it's
we are in the struggle, if we
are on the net we`re in that
struggle.

X:

Fight for peace!

HISTORY & CATECHISM of the MOORISH ORTHODOX CHURCH of AMERICA

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Exilarch of Persia)

&

ARIF HUSSEIN AL-CAMAYSAR (Imam
of Manhattan)

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A morning breeze
trails musk behind it
perfumes
from the street

where my love is
 Yes, and the world wastes
 while you sleep
 The caravan is leaving
 The sweet smell is dying
 Get up!
 ~*Jalaloddin Rumi*

Moorish Orthodoxy is not a new religion. Historically it began with the message of the American prophet Noble Drew Ali, born Timothy Drew in North Carolina in 1886, raised by Cherokee Indians and adopted into that tribe. At sixteen Drew began his wanderings as a circus magician, which took him to Egypt where he received self knowledge and direction from a priest, the last of a cult of High Magic practiced for centuries in the pyramid of Cheops. This magus recognized the young American as a reincarnation of a former leader of the cult, and saw him for the prophet he was.

From him Drew Ali learned the messages of The Circle Seven Koran, as well as much higher truths; he returned to America where he was told in a dream to found a new religion "for the uplifting of fallen mankind." He began the first mosque, or temple, in Newark --- but because he and his followers refused to fight in World War I he was forced to move to Chicago, where his movement, the Moorish Science Temple, began to grow. The Moorish Science Temple attracted mostly Black Americans. Noble Drew

however was no racist, though he held certain racial theories. Blacks, he said, are Moabites or Moors, and under this identity he taught pride to a race of oppressed sufferers. Moors are an "Asiatic Race" --but so are many others. For example, Noble Drew identified Celts as an Asiatic Race; later, when Whites of various sorts became interested in Moorish Science, he identified all such as "Persians", a sort of spiritual rather than factual identity. For Moorish Americans Morocco is a "promised land"; this shows the influence of Garveyite "Return" teachings, and provides an interesting link between Moorish Science and Rastafarianism. Moorish Orthodoxy (despite its name) gives all these teachings an esoteric significance. For us, "The Asiatic Nation of North America" includes all who embrace some form of the Oriental Wisdom, whatever their other affiliations, and "Morocco" signifies their goal, "illuminated" consciousness.

In Chicago Noble Drew issued many Moorish Passports, and it is said that some new converts, in the zeal of their newfound nationality, began to grow less and less subservient in their dealings with the oppressor empire ("Pharaoh" or "Babylon"). This culminated in a full scale attack on the Science Temple in which (despite the secret escape route, an essential feature of all Moorish Science temples) many of the faithful were martyred, including the Enforcer of the Law, a

man whom Noble Drew had recognized as a reincarnation of Jesus.

Shortly thereafter (in 1929) Noble Drew prophesied the hour of his death. He was "taken for questioning" by the Chicago Police, brutally beaten, and died soon after his release.

After this, the Moorish Science Temple began to split into sects or factions, one headed by Noble Drew's chauffeur another by Elijah Muhammed, who abandoned his Moorish Science origins and taught a pseudo-science of race hatred disguised as the "Nation of Islam". Until Elijah's death, many Moors expected him to recant.

In the 1950's in the Baltimore/DC area, some white poets and jazz musicians came into contact with the Science Temple and acquired passports. They formed another offshoot of Moorish Science, the Moorish Orthodox Church of America. At that early stage, the M.O.C. was seen as partly Moorish and partly Eastern Orthodox, and there existed certain ties with "Errant Bishops" of the Old Catholic Church, Syrian Orthodoxy, etc. Some of these founding fathers drifted eventually into Sunni Islam, others remained faithful to the M.O.C. and friendly to the Science Temple.

In the early 1960's on Manhattan's Upper West Side, one of the youngest of these, Walid al-Taha (Warren

Tartaglia), jazz saxaphonist and author of "The Hundred Seeds of Beirut", initiated some friends into the Church shortly before his tragic death (in his early 20's). A new temple was established in a basement on 103rd street off Broadway, along with a head shop "The Crypt", and a Moorish Science Reading Room. The Church maintained a M.O.C. Motorcycle Club at various neighborhood garages, and a campsite of 123 acres was acquired in northern New York. Close ties were formed with the Ananda Ashram in upstate NY. Members in Baltimore renewed ties with elders and missionaries of the Moorish Science Temple, including the Moorish Governor of Maryland, who ran a junk shop that smelled of rose attar and woodstove smoke, and talked like a Persian poet from Alabama -- an echo, no doubt, of Noble Drew's own perfect Moorish Voice. Ties were formed with the M.S.T. in Brooklyn, which provided copies of The Circle Seven Koran, Catechisms, etc.

When the Ananda Ashram moved into Milbrook NY with Timothy Leary's League for Spiritual Discovery commune, the M.O.C. also established a presence there. The M.O.C. is proud of its heritage in the Psychedelic Churches Movement of the 60's, when we shared many adventures at Milbrook till the Empire banished its Celtic guru into exile and prison. We still have a temple in Dutchess County, where the church is legally

incorporated.

At that time the Church more or less abandoned all "Orthodoxy" (though not the name) and found its true spirit in Sufism. What interested us most was Sufism of various unorthodox varieties, including Ismailism (the teachings of the Assassins). But many other strains were woven into the M.O.C. in the 60's, including Advaita Vedanta, Tantra, Neo-American-style psychedelic mysticism, Native American Symbolism, and insurrectionist activism.

The 70's and early 80's in retrospect seem a rather dim period in Church history. Members scattered around the world and interest waned. The "New Age" bogged down in various Greed Therapies, guru-scams and bland-outs. For a while only small groups in Manhattan and Dutchess Co. kept a shadowy existence and continuity. Recently however the time has become ripe for a Revival. New religions are appearing: Native American rites, Neo-paganism, Anarcho-taoism, the followers of Eris and others with whom we feel a natural affinity. We have launched a new edition of our newspaper, The Moorish Science Monitor (quiescent since 1967!) and many new conversions have resulted. The sudden upsurge of interest necessitated this revised edition of the M.O.C. pamphlet, out of print since the late 60's.

* * * * *

What is Moorish Orthodoxy? What is its "Catechism"? Many people have converted to Moorish Orthodoxy simply on hearing its name or seeing the photograph of Noble Drew Ali (frontispiece of the Circle Seven Koran) -- later, however, they may wish to learn something of Moorish doctrine.

In effect, there is none. Moorish Orthodoxy is like a mirror in which each seeker beholds a beloved form, each one different. We have no required ritual and no source of authority other than those the individual imagination provides. We do however perhaps share a certain "taste" or spiritual aesthetic.

Moorish Orthodoxy was founded originally to explore the esoteric dimensions of Noble Drew's teachings, discovered in such passages from the Circle Seven Koran as these:

"Now cease to seek for heaven in the
sky;
Just open up the windows of your
hearts and,
like a flood of light, a heaven will come
and bring a boundless joy."

"By the sweet breath of Allah all life is
bound to one; so if you touch a fiber of
a living thing you send a thrill from
center to the outer bounds of life."

"You are, each one, a priest,

Just for yourself."

"Allah and man are one."

"When man has conquered every foe
upon the plane of soul and the
seed will have full opened out,
will have unfolded in the Holy Breath.
The garb of the soul will then
have served its purpose well,
and man will need it never more...
and man will then attain unto a
blessedness
of perfectness and at one with Allah."

"I (Jesus) brought immortality to light
and painted on the walls of time a
rainbow for the sons of men;
and what I did all men shall do."

The antinomian and egalitarian aspects of lines like these have reinforced our position, in relation to all organized religion, of heresy; in relation to all liberatory teachings and beautiful imaginings we take up a posture of "rootless cosmopolitanism" that seeks out universal spirit hidden anywhere, revealed in all cultures, always occult and dissident, an "Invisible College" embracing East and West but rejecting all official stultifying Consensus Reality. A Moor might belong to any religion or none, "free either to take up a form or not take up a form... not bound to any. Forms are for use, not to make captives" (Hazrat Inayat Khan).

The idea of an American heretical

Islam is one such form. We appreciate the aesthetic of Moorish Science, of Noble Drew's unique and prophetic mixture of Afro-American, Native American, Magical, Oriental and Moorish symbolism and imagery. We admire his courage, his martyrdom, his revolutionary stance against "Pharaoh", his Americanizing of the prophetic spirit (he always wore a Cherokee feather in his fez). We reflect this aesthetic in our lives and creative work. But we are not bound by it. Like certain esoteric Javanese sects we reject the figure of the Master (guru or murshed) in favor of the teacher. Anyone can be a teacher in relation to someone; everyone has something to teach, something to learn.

To symbolize this attitude, all Moors are encouraged to create new names and titles for themselves. The Moorish Hierarchy is self appointed; anyone is free to print Passports, although the old Manhattan Lodge possesses certain seals and procedures which converts may appreciate. Popular titles include: Moorish Governor, Metropolitan, Deacon, Vicar, Exilarch, Imam, Castellan, Papessa, Contessa, Marshall or just plain Reverend. Moorish Science Temple adherents often add "Bey" or "El" to their names, others favor other traditions, and some use their own names. All Moors are entitled to titles, however, since all Moors have "authority".

The Moorish Orthodox Catechism,
then, consists of no rules or
dogmas, but only of adherence to the
"Five Pillars" of Moorish Science as
listed by Noble Drew:

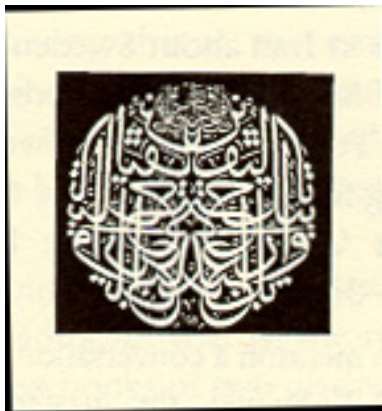
LOVE
TRUTH
PEACE
FREEDOM
JUSTICE

to which we add a sixth, "Beauty".

This bud opens into the red rose,
the nightingale is drunk for joy---
Hail, seekers! Lovers of wine;
wine for a thirsty world
like a slug under
the rock of repentance...
a rock smashed by a mere goblet---
and that is the announcement, the Miracle
Wine for the king! Wine for the slave
this banquet was set for everyone,
drunk or sober, and when
the Feast is over and night grows up,
and the inside door of the Tavern springs
open
Low and High together will bow down
under the Arch of the World
to meet what...outside?
~Hafez Shirazi

Mundus Imaginalis, or the Imaginary and the Imaginal

by Henri Corbin



In offering the two Latin words *mundus imaginalis* as the title of this discussion, I intend to treat a precise order of reality corresponding to a precise mode of perception, because Latin terminology gives the advantage of providing us with a technical and fixed point of reference, to which we can compare the various more-or-less irresolute equivalents that our modern Western languages suggest to us.

I will make an immediate admission.
The choice of these two words was

imposed upon me some time ago, because it was impossible for me, in what I had to translate or say, to be satisfied with the word *imaginary*. This is by no means a criticism addressed to those of us for whom the use of the language constrains recourse to this word, since we are trying together to reevaluate it in a positive sense. Regardless of our efforts, though, we cannot prevent the term *imaginary*, in current usage that is not deliberate, from being equivalent to signifying unreal, something that is and remains outside of being and existence-in brief, something *utopian*. I was absolutely obliged to find another term because, for many years, I have been by vocation and profession an interpreter of Arabic and Persian texts, the purposes of which I would certainly have betrayed if I had been entirely and simply content-even with every possible precaution-with the term *imaginary*. I was absolutely obliged to find another term if I did not want to mislead the Western reader that it is a matter of uprooting long-established habits of thought, in order to awaken him to an order of things, the sense of which it is the mission of our colloquia at the "Society of Symbolism" to rouse.

In other words, if we usually speak of the *imaginary* as the unreal, the utopian, this must contain the symptom of something. In contrast to this something, we may examine briefly together the order of reality that I designate as *mundus imaginalis*, and what our theosophers in Islam

designate as the "eighth climate"; we will then examine the organ that perceives this reality, namely, the imaginative consciousness, the *cognitive* Imagination; and finally, we will present several examples, among many others, of course, that suggest to us the topography of these interworlds, as they have been seen by those who *actually* have been there.

1. "NA-KOJA-ABAD" OR THE "EIGHTH CLIMATE" I have just mentioned the word *utopian*. It is a strange thing, or a decisive example, that our authors use a term in Persian that seems to be its linguistic calque: *Na-kojd-Abad*, the "land of No-where." This, however, is something entirely different from a *utopia*.

Let us take the very beautiful tales-simultaneously visionary tales and tales of spiritual initiation-composed in Persian by Sohravardi, the young shaykh who, in the twelfth century, was the "reviver of the theosophy of ancient Persia" in Islamic Iran. Each time, the visionary finds himself, at the beginning of the tale, in the presence of a supernatural figure of great beauty, whom the visionary asks *who* he is and from *where* he comes. These tales essentially illustrate the experience of the gnostic, lived as the personal history of the Stranger, the captive who aspires to return home.

At the beginning of the tale that Sohravardi entitles "The Crimson

Archangel, "1 the captive, who has just escaped the surveillance of his jailers, that is, has temporarily left the world of sensory experience, finds himself in the desert in the presence of a being whom he asks, since he sees in him all the charms of adolescence, "O Youth! where do you come from?" He receives this reply: "What? I am the first-born of the children of the Creator [in gnostic terms, the *Protoktistos*, the First-Created] and you call me a youth?" There, in this origin, is the mystery of the crimson color that clothes his appearance: that of a being of pure Light whose splendor the sensory world reduces to the crimson of twilight. "I come from beyond the mountain of Qaf... It is there that you were yourself at the beginning, and it is there that you will return when you are finally rid of your bonds."

The mountain of Qaf is the cosmic mountain constituted from summit to summit, valley to valley, by the celestial Spheres that are enclosed one inside the other. What, then, is the road that leads out of it? How long is it? "No matter how long you walk," he is told, "it is at the point of departure that you arrive there again," like the point of the compass returning to the same place. Does this involve simply leaving oneself in order to attain oneself? Not exactly. Between the two, a great event will have changed everything; the *self* that is found there is the one that is beyond the mountain of Qaf a superior *self*, a self "in the second

person." It will have been necessary, like Khezr (or Khadir, the mysterious prophet, the eternal wanderer, Elijah or one like him) to bathe in the Spring of Life. "He who has found the meaning of True Reality has arrived at that Spring. When he emerges from the Spring, he has achieved the Aptitude that makes him like a balm, a drop of which you distill in the hollow of your hand by holding it facing the sun, and which then passes through to the back of your hand. If you are Khezr, you also may pass without difficulty through the mountain of Qaf.

Two other mystical tales give a name to that "beyond the mountain of Qaf and it is this name itself that marks the transformation from cosmic mountain to *psychocosmic* mountain, that is, the transition of the physical cosmos to what constitutes the first level of the spiritual universe. In the tale entitled "The Rustling of Gabriel's Wings," the figure again appears who, in the works of Avicenna, is named *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* ("the Living, son of the Watchman") and who, just now, was designated as the Crimson Archangel. The question that must be asked is asked, and the reply is this: "I come from *Na-koja-Abad*."² Finally, in the tale entitled "Vade Mecum of the Faithful in Love" (*Mu'nis al-'oshshaq*) which places on stage a cosmogonic triad whose *dramatis personae* are, respectively, Beauty, Love, and Sadness, Sadness appears to Ya'qab weeping for Joseph in the land of Canaan. To the question,

"What horizon did you penetrate to come here?," the same reply is given:
 "I come from *Na-koja-Abad*

Na-koja-Abad is a strange term. It does not occur in any Persian dictionary, and it was coined, as far as I know, by Sohrevardi himself, from the resources of the purest Persian language.

Literally, as I mentioned a moment ago, it signifies the city, the country or land (*abad*) of No-where (*Na-koja*) That is why we are here in the presence of a term that, at first sight, may appear to us as the exact equivalent of the term *ou-topia*, which, for its part, does not occur in the classical Greek dictionaries, and was coined by Thomas More as an abstract noun to designate the absence of any localization, of any given *situs* in a space that is discoverable and verifiable by the experience of our senses.

Etymologically and literally, it would perhaps be exact to translate *Na-koja-Abad* by *outopia*, utopia, and yet with regard to the concept, the intention, and the true meaning, I believe that we would be guilty of mistranslation. It seems to me, therefore, that it is of fundamental importance to try, at least, to determine why this would be a mistranslation.

It is even a matter of indispensable precision, if we want to understand the meaning and the real implication of manifold information concerning the topographies explored in the visionary state, the state intermediate between waking and sleep-information that, for

example, among the spiritual individuals of Shi'ite Islam, concerns the "land of the hidden Imam" A matter of precision that, in making us attentive to a differential affecting an entire region of the soul, and thus an entire spiritual culture, would lead us to ask: what conditions make possible that which we ordinarily call a utopia, and consequently the type of utopian man? How and why does it make its appearance? I wonder, in fact, whether the equivalent would be found anywhere in Islamic thought in its *traditional* form. I do not believe, for example, that when Farabi, in the tenth century, describes the "Perfect City," or when the Andalusian philosopher Ibn Bajja (Avempace), in the twelfth century, takes up the same theme in his "Regime of the Solitary"³ -I do not believe that either one of them contemplated what we call today a social or political utopia. To understand them in this way would be, I am afraid, to withdraw them from their own presuppositions and perspectives, in order to impose our own, our own dimensions; above all, I am afraid that it would be certain to entail resigning ourselves to confusing the Spiritual City with an imaginary City.

The word *Na-koja-Abad* does not designate something like unextended being, in the dimensionless state. The Persian word *abad* certainly signifies a city, a cultivated and peopled land, thus something extended. What Sohravardi means by being "beyond

the mountain of Qaf is that he himself, and with him the entire theosophical tradition of Iran, represents the composite of the mystical cities of Jabalqa, Jabarsa, and Hurqalya. Topographically, he states precisely that this region begins "on the convex surface" of the Ninth Sphere, the Sphere of Spheres, or the Sphere that includes the whole of the cosmos. This means that it begins at the exact moment when one leaves the supreme Sphere, which defines all possible orientation in our world (or on this side of the world), the "Sphere" to which the celestial cardinal points refer. It is evident that once this boundary is crossed, the question "*where?*" (*ubi, koja*) loses its meaning, at least the meaning in which it is asked in the space of our sensory experience. Thus the name *Na-koja-Abad*: a place outside of place, a "place" that is not contained in a place, in a *topos*, that permits a response, with a gesture of the hand, to the question "*where?*" But when we say, "To depart from the *where*," what does this mean?

It surely cannot relate to a change of local position, [4](#) a physical transfer from one place to another place, as though it involved places contained in a single homogeneous space. As is suggested, at the end of Sohrawardi's tale, by the symbol of the drop of balm exposed in the hollow of the hand to the sun, it is a matter of entering, passing *into the interior* and, in passing into the interior, of finding oneself,

paradoxically, *outside*, or, in the language of our authors, "on the convex surface" of the Ninth Sphere--in other words, "beyond the mountain of Qaf The relationship involved is essentially that of the external, the visible, the exoteric (Arabic, *zahir*), and the internal, the invisible, the esoteric (Arabic, *batin*), or the natural world and the spiritual world. To depart from the *where*, the category of *ubi*, is to leave the external or natural appearances that enclose the hidden internal realities, as the almond is hidden beneath the shell. This step is made in order for the Stranger, the gnostic, to return *home*-or at least to lead to that return.

But an odd thing happens: once this transition is accomplished, it turns out that henceforth this reality, previously internal and hidden, is revealed to be enveloping, surrounding, containing what was first of all external and visible, since by means of *interiorization*, one has *departed* from that *external* reality. Henceforth, it is spiritual reality that envelops, surrounds, contains the reality called material. That is why spiritual reality is not "in the *where*." It is the "*where*" that is in it. Or, rather, it is itself the "*where*" of all things; it is, therefore, not itself in a place, it does not fall under the question "*where?*"-the category *ubi* referring to a place in sensory space. Its place (its *abad*) in relation to this is *Na-koja* (No-where), because its *ubi* in relation to what is *in* sensory space is an *ubique*

(everywhere). When we have understood this, we have perhaps understood what is essential to follow the topography of visionary experiences, to distinguish their meaning (that is, the signification and the direction simultaneously) and also to distinguish something fundamental, namely, what differentiates the visionary perceptions of our spiritual individuals (Sohravardi and many others) with regard to everything that our modern vocabulary subsumes under the pejorative sense of creations, imaginings, even *utopian* madness.

But what we must begin to destroy, to the extent that we are able to do so, even at the cost of a struggle resumed every day, is what may be called the "agnostic reflex" in Western man, because he has consented to the divorce between *thought* and *being*. How many recent theories tacitly originate in this reflex, thanks to which we hope to escape the *other* reality before which certain experiences and certain evidence place us-and to escape it, in the case where we secretly submit to its attraction, by giving it all sorts of ingenious explanations, except one: the one that would permit it truly to mean for us, by its existence, what it is! For it to mean that to us, we must, at all events, have available a cosmology of such a kind that the most astounding information of modern science regarding the physical universe remains inferior to it. For, insofar as it is a matter of that sort of information,

we remain bound to what is "on this side of the mountain of Qaf What distinguishes the traditional cosmology of the theosophers in Islam, for example, is that its structure where the worlds and interworlds "beyond the mountain of Qaf that is, beyond the physical universes, are arranged in levels intelligible only for an existence in which the *act of being* is in accordance with its *presence* in those worlds, for reciprocally, it is in accordance with this act of being that these worlds are present to it.⁵ What dimension, then, must this *act of being* have in order to be, or to become in the course of its future rebirths, the *place* of those worlds that are *outside the place* of our natural space? And, first of all, what are those worlds?

I can only refer here to a few texts. A larger number will be found translated and grouped in the book that I have entitled *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*.⁶ In his "Book of Conversations," Sohrevardi writes: "When you learn in the treatises of the ancient Sages that there exists a world provided with dimensions and extension, other than the pleroma of Intelligences [that is, a world below that of the pure archangelic Intelligences], and other than the world governed by the Souls of the Spheres [that is, a world which, while having dimension and extension, is other than the world of sensory phenomena, and superior to it, including the sidereal universe, the planets and the "fixed stars"], a world

where there are cities whose number it is impossible to count, cities among which our Prophet himself named Jabalqa and Jabarsa, do not hasten to call it a lie, for pilgrims of the spirit may contemplate that world, and they find there everything that is the object of their desire."7

These few lines refer us to a schema on which all of our mystical theosophers agree, a schema that articulates three universes or, rather, three categories of universe. There is our physical sensory world, which includes both our earthly world (governed by human souls) and the sidereal universe (governed by the Souls of the Spheres); this is the sensory world, the world of phenomena (*molk*). There is the suprasensory world of the Soul or Angel-Souls, the *Malakut*, in which there are the mystical cities that we have just named, and which begins "on the convex surface of the Ninth Sphere." There is the universe of pure archangelic Intelligences. To these three universes correspond three organs of knowledge: the senses, the imagination, and the intellect, a triad to which corresponds the triad of anthropology: body, soul, spirit—a triad that regulates the triple growth of man, extending from this world to the resurrections in the other worlds.

We observe immediately that we are no longer reduced to the dilemma of thought and extension, to the schema of a cosmology and a gnoseology

limited to the empirical world and the world of abstract understanding. Between the two is placed an intermediate world, which our authors designate as '*alam al-mithal*, the world of the Image, *mundus imaginalis*: a world as ontologically real as the world of the senses and the world of the intellect, a world that requires a faculty of perception belonging to it, a faculty that is a cognitive function, a *noetic* value, as fully real as the faculties of sensory perception or intellectual intuition. This faculty is the imaginative power, the one we must avoid confusing with the imagination that modern man identifies with "fantasy" and that, according to him, produces only the "imaginary." Here we are, then, simultaneously at the heart of our research and of our problem of terminology.

What is that intermediate universe? It is the one we mentioned a little while ago as being called the "eighth climate."⁸ For all of our thinkers, in fact, the world of extension perceptible to the senses includes the *seven climates* of their traditional geography. But there is still another climate, represented by that world which, however, possesses extension and dimensions, forms and colors, without their being perceptible to the senses, as they are when they are properties of physical bodies. No, these dimensions, shapes, and colors are the proper object of imaginative perception or the "psycho- spiritual senses"; and that

world, fully objective and real, where everything existing in the sensory world has its analogue, but not perceptible by the senses, is the world that is designated as the *eighth climate*. The term is sufficiently eloquent by itself, since it signifies a climate *outside* of climates, a place *outside* of place, outside of *where* (*Nakaja-Abad!*).

The technical term that designates it in Arabic, '*alam a mithal*', can perhaps also be translated by *mundus archetypus*, ambiguity is avoided. For it is the same word that serves in Arabic to designate the Platonic Ideas (interpreted by Sohrawardi terms of Zoroastrian angelology). However, when the term refers to Platonic Ideas, it is almost always accompanied by this precise qualification: *mothol* (plural of *mithal*) *aflatuniya nuraniya*, the "Platonic archetypes of light." When the term refers to the world of the eighth climate, it designates technically, on one hand, the *Archetype-Images* of individual and singular things; in this case, it relates to the *eastern* region of the eighth climate, the city of Jabalqa, where these images subsist preexistent to and ordered before the sensory world. But on the other hand, the term also relates to the *western* region, the city of Jabarsa, as being the world or interworld in which are found the Spirits after their presence in the natural terrestrial world and as a world in which subsist the forms of all works accomplished, the forms of our thoughts and our desires, of our

presentiments and our behavior.⁹ It is this composition that constitutes *'alam al-mithal*, the *mundus imaginalis*.

Technically, again, our thinkers designate it as the world of "Images in suspense" (*mothol mo'allaqa*). Sohravardi! and his school mean by this a mode of being proper to the realities of that intermediate world, which we designate as *Imaginalia*.¹⁰ The precise nature of this ontological status results from vision any spiritual experiences, on which Sohravardi asks that we rely fully, exactly as we rely in astronomy on the observations of Hipparchus or Ptolemy. It should be acknowledged that forms and shapes in the *mundus imaginalis* do not subsist in the same manner as empirical realities in the physical world; otherwise anyone could perceive them. It should also be noted that they cannot subsist in the pure intelligible world, since they have extension and dimension, an "immaterial" materiality, certainly, in relation to that of the sensory world, but, in fact, their own "corporeality" and spatiality (one might think here of the expression used by Henry More, a Cambridge Platonist, *spissitudo spiritualis*, an expression that has its exact equivalent in the work of Sadra Shirazi, a Persian Platonist). For the same reason, that they could have only our thought as a substratum would be excluded, as it would, at the same time, that they might be unreal, nothing; otherwise, we could not discern them, classify them into

hierarchies, or make judgments about them. The existence of this intermediate world, *mundus imaginalis*, thus appears metaphysically necessary; the cognitive function of the Imagination is ordered to it; it is a world whose ontological level is above the world of the senses and below the pure intelligible world; it is more immaterial than the former and less immaterial than the latter.^{[11](#)} There has always been something of major importance in this for all our mystical theosophers. Upon it depends, for them, both the validity of visionary accounts that perceive and relate "events in Heaven" and the validity of dreams, symbolic rituals, the reality of places formed by intense meditation, the reality of inspired imaginative visions, cosmogonies and theogonies, and thus, in the first place, the truth of the *spiritual sense* perceived in the imaginative data of prophetic revelations.^{[12](#)}

In short, that world is the world of "subtle bodies," the idea of which proves indispensable if one wishes to describe a link between the pure spirit and the material body. It is this which relates to the designation of their mode of being as "in suspense," that is, a mode of being such that the Image or Form, since it is itself its own "matter," is independent of any substratum in which it would be immanent in the manner of an accident.^{[13](#)} This means that it would not subsist as the color black, for example, subsists by means

of the black object in which it is immanent, The comparison to which our authors regularly have recourse is the mode of appearance and subsistence of Images "in suspense" in a mirror. The material substance of the mirror, metal or mineral, is not the substance of the image, a substance whose image would be an accident. It is simply the "place of its appearance." This led to a general theory of epiphanic places and forms (*mazhar*, plural *mazahir*) so characteristic of Sohrawardi's *Eastern Theosophy*.

The active Imagination is the preeminent *mirror*, the epiphanic place of the Images of the archetypal world; that is why the theory of the *mundus imaginalis* is bound up with a theory of imaginative knowledge and imaginative function--a function truly central and mediatory, because of the median and mediatory position of the *mundus imaginalis*. It is a function that permits all the universes to *symbolize with one another* (or exist in symbolic relationship with one another) and that leads us to represent to ourselves, experimentally, that the same substantial realities assume forms corresponding respectively to each universe (for example, Jabalqa and Jabarsa correspond in the subtle world to the Elements of the physical world, while Hurqalya corresponds there to the Sky). It is the cognitive function of the Imagination that permits the establishment of a rigorous *analogical knowledge*, escaping the dilemma of current rationalism, which leaves only a

choice between the two terms of banal dualism: either "matter" or "spirit," a dilemma that the "socialization" of consciousness resolves by substituting a choice that is no less fatal: either "history" or "myth."

This is the sort of dilemma that has never defeated those familiar with the "eighth climate," the realm of "subtle bodies," of "spiritual bodies," threshold of the *Malakut* or world of the Soul. We understand that when they say that the world of Hurqalya begins "on the convex surface of the supreme Sphere," they wish to signify symbolically that this world is at the boundary where there is an inversion of the relation of interiority expressed by the preposition *in* or *within*, "in the interior of." Spiritual bodies or spiritual entities are no longer *in* a world, not even *in* their world, in the way that a material body is in its place, or is contained in another body. It is their world that is *in* them. That is why the *Theology* attributed to Aristotle, the Arabic version of the last three *Enneads* of Plotinus, which Avicenna annotated and which all of our thinkers read and meditated upon, explains that each spiritual entity is "in the totality of the sphere of its Heaven"; each subsists, certainly, independently of the other, but all are simultaneous and each is within every other one. It would be completely false to picture that other world as an undifferentiated, informal heaven. There is multiplicity, of course, but the relations of spiritual space differ

from the relations of space understood *under* the starry Heaven, as much as the fact of being *in* a body differs from the fact of being "in the totality of its Heaven." That is why it can be said that "behind this world there is a Sky, an Earth, an ocean, animals, plants, and celestial men; but every being there is celestial; the spiritual entities there correspond to the human beings there, but no earthly thing is there."

The most exact formulation of all this, in the theosophical tradition of the West, is found perhaps in Swedenborg. One cannot but be struck by the concordance or convergence of the statements by the great Swedish visionary with those of Sohrevardi, Ibn 'Arabi, or Sadra Shirazi. Swedenborg explains that "all things in heaven appear, just as in the world, to be in place and in space, and yet the angels have no notion or idea of place or space." This is because "all changes of place in the spiritual world are effected by changes of state in the interiors, which means that change of place is nothing else than change of state.... Those are near each other who are in like states, and those are at a distance who are in unlike states; and spaces in heaven are simply the external conditions corresponding to the internal states. For the same reason the heavens are distinct from each other. . . . When anyone goes from one place to another . . . he arrives more quickly when he eagerly desires it, and less quickly when he does not, the way itself being lengthened and shortened

in accordance with the desire.... This I have often seen to my surprise. All this again makes clear how distances, and consequently spaces, are wholly in accord with states of the interiors of angels; and this being so, no notion or idea of space can enter their thought, although there are spaces with them equally as in the world." [14](#)

Such a description is eminently appropriate to *Na-koja-Abad* and its mysterious Cities. In short, it follows that there is a spiritual place and a corporeal place. The transfer of one to the other is absolutely not effected according to the laws of our homogeneous physical space. In relation to the corporeal place, the spiritual place is a *No-where*, and for the one who reaches *Na-koja-Abad* everything occurs inversely to the evident facts of ordinary consciousness, which remains orientated to the interior of our space. For henceforth it is the *where*, the place, that resides in the soul; it is the corporeal substance that resides in the spiritual substance; it is the soul that encloses and bears the body. This is why it is not possible to say *where* the spiritual place is situated; it is not situated, it is, rather, that which situates, it is situative. Its *ubi* is an ubique. Certainly, there may be topographical correspondences between the sensory world and the *mundus imaginalis*, one symbolizing with the other. However, there is no passage from one to the other without a breach. Many accounts show us this.

One sets out; at a given moment, there is a break with the geographical coordinates that can be located on our maps. But the "traveler" is not conscious of the precise moment; he does not realize it, with disquiet or wonder, until later. If he were aware of it, he could change his path at will, or he could indicate it to others. But he can only describe where he was; he cannot show the way to anyone.

II. THE SPIRITUAL IMAGINATION

We will touch here on the decisive point for which all that precedes has prepared us, namely, the organ that permits penetration into the ***mundus imaginalis***, the migration to the "eighth climate." What is the organ by means of which that migration occurs—the migration that is the return ***ab extra ad intra*** (from the exterior to the interior), the topographical inversion (the ***intussusception***)? It is neither the senses nor the faculties of the physical organism, nor is it the pure intellect, but it is that

intermediate power whose function appears as the preeminent mediator: the active Imagination. Let us be very clear when we speak of this. It is the organ that permits the transmutation of internal spiritual states into external states, into vision-events symbolizing with those internal states. It is by means of this transmutation that all progression in spiritual space is accomplished, or, rather, this transmutation is itself what spatializes that space, what causes space, proximity, distance, and remoteness to be there.

A *first postulate* is that this Imagination is a pure spiritual faculty, independent of the physical organism, and consequently is able to subsist after the disappearance of the latter. Sadra Shirazi, among others, has expressed himself repeatedly on this point with particular forcefulness.¹⁵ He says that just as the soul is independent of the physical material body in receiving intelligible things in act, according to its intellectual power, the soul is equally independent with regard to its *imaginative power* and its *imaginative operations*. In addition, when it is separated from this world, since it continues to have its active

Imagination at its service, it can perceive by itself, by its own essence and by that faculty, concrete things whose existence, as it is actualized in its knowledge and in its imagination, constitutes *eo ipso* the very form of concrete existence of those things (in other words: consciousness and its object are here ontologically inseparable). All these powers are gathered and concentrated in a single faculty, which is the active Imagination. Because it has stopped dispersing itself at the various thresholds that are the five senses of the physical body, and has stopped being solicited by the concerns of the physical body, which is prey to the vicissitudes of the external world, the imaginative perception can finally show its essential superiority over sensory perception.

"All the faculties of the soul," writes Sadra Shirazi, "have become as though a single faculty, which is the power to configure and typify (*taswir* and *tamthil*); its imagination has itself become like a sensory perception of the suprasensory: its *imaginative sight* is itself like its sensory sight. Similarly, its senses of hearing, smell, taste, and touch—all these *imaginative senses*—are themselves like sensory faculties, but regulated to the suprasensory. For although *externally* the sensory faculties are five in number, each having its organ localized in the body, *internally*, in fact, all of them constitute a single *synaesthesia* (*hiss moshtarik*)."
The Imagination being therefore like the *currus subtilis* (in Greek *okhema*,

vehicle, or [in Proclus, Iamblichus, etc.] spiritual body) of the soul, there is an entire physiology of the "subtle body" and thus of the "resurrection body," which Sadra Shirazi discusses in these contexts. That is why he reproaches even Avicenna for having identified these acts of posthumous imaginative perception with what happens in this life during sleep, for here, and during sleep, the imaginative power is disturbed by the organic operations that occur in the physical body. Much is required for it to enjoy its maximum of perfection and activity, freedom and purity. Otherwise, sleep would be simply an awakening in the other world. This is not the case, as is alluded to in this remark attributed sometimes to the Prophet and sometimes to the First Imam of the Shi'ites: "Humans sleep. It is when they die that they awake."

A second postulate, evidence for which compels recognition, is that the spiritual Imagination is a cognitive power, an organ of true knowledge. Imaginative perception and imaginative consciousness have their own *noetic* (cognitive) function and value, in relation to the world that is theirs—the world, we have said, which is the *'alam al-mithal, mundus imaginalis*, the world of the mystical cities such as Hurqalya, where time becomes reversible and where space is a function of desire, because it is only the external aspect of an internal state.

The Imagination is thus firmly *balanced* between two other cognitive functions: its own world *symbolizes with* the world to which the two other functions (sensory knowledge and intellective knowledge) respectively correspond. There is accordingly something like a control that keeps the Imagination from wanderings and profligacy, and that permits it to assume its full function: to cause the occurrence, for example, of the events that are related by the visionary tales of Sohravardi and all those of the same kind, because every approach to the eighth climate is made by the imaginative path. It may be said that this is the reason for the extraordinary gravity of mystical epic poems written in Persian (from 'Attar to Jami and to Nur 'Ali-Shah), which constantly amplify the same archetypes in new symbols. In order for the Imagination to wander and become profligate, for it to cease fulfilling its function, which is to perceive or generate symbols leading to the internal sense, it is necessary for the *mundus imaginalis*--the proper domain of the *Malakut*, the world of the Soul--to disappear. Perhaps it is necessary, in the West, to date the beginning of this decadence at the time when Averroism rejected Avicennian cosmology, with its intermediate angelic hierarchy of the *Animae* or *Angeli caelestes*. These *Angeli caelestes* (a hierarchy below that of the *Angeli intellectuales*) had the privilege of imaginative power in its pure state. Once the universe of these Souls disappeared, it was the imaginative function as such that was

unbalanced and devalued. It is easy to understand, then, the advice given later by Paracelsus, warning against any confusion of the *Imaginatio vera*, as the alchemists said, with fantasy, "that cornerstone of the mad." [16](#)

This is the reason that we can no longer avoid the problem of terminology. How is it that we do not have in French [or in English] a common and perfectly satisfying term to express the idea of the '*alam al-mithal*? I have proposed the Latin *mundus imaginalis* for it, because we are obliged to avoid any confusion between what is here the *object* of imaginative or imaginant perception and what we ordinarily call the *imaginary*. This is so, because the current attitude is to oppose the real to the imaginary as though to the unreal, the utopian, as it is to confuse symbol with allegory, to confuse the exegesis of the *spiritual sense* with an allegorical interpretation. Now, every allegorical interpretation is harmless; the allegory is a sheathing, or, rather, a disguising, of something that is already known or knowable otherwise, while the appearance of an Image having the quality of a symbol is a primary phenomenon (*Urphanomen*), unconditional and irreducible, the appearance of something that cannot manifest itself otherwise to the world where we are.

Neither the tales of Sohrevardi, nor the tales which in the Shi'ite tradition tell

us of reaching the "land of the Hidden Imam," are imaginary, unreal, or allegorical, precisely because the eighth climate or the "land of No-where" is not what we commonly call a *utopia*. It is certainly a world that remains beyond the empirical verification of our sciences. Otherwise, anyone could find access to it and evidence for it. It is a suprasensory world, insofar as it is not perceptible except by the imaginative perception, and insofar as the events that occur in it cannot be experienced except by the imaginative or imaginant consciousness. Let us be certain that we understand, here again, that this is not a matter simply of what the language of our time calls an imagination, but of a *vision* that is *Imaginatio vera*. And it is to this *Imaginatio vera* that we must attribute a *noetic* or plenary cognitive value. If we are no longer capable of speaking about the imagination except as "fantasy," if we cannot utilize it or tolerate it except as such, it is perhaps because we have forgotten the norms and the rules and the "axial ordination" that are responsible for the *cognitive function* of the imaginative power (the function that I have sometimes designated as *imaginary*).

For the world into which our witnesses have penetrated—we will meet two or three of those witnesses in the final section of this study—is a perfectly *real* world, more evident even and more coherent, in its own reality, than the *real* empirical world perceived by the senses. Its witnesses were afterward

perfectly conscious that they had been "elsewhere"; they are not schizorphenics. It is a matter of a world that is hidden in the act itself of sensory perception, and one that we must find under the apparent objective certainty of that kind of perception. That is why we positively cannot qualify it as *imaginary*, in the current sense in which the word is taken to mean unreal, nonexistent. Just as the Latin word *origo* has given us the derivative "original," I believe that the word *imago* can give us, along with *imaginary*, and by regular derivation, the term *imaginal*. We will thus have the *imaginal* world be intermediate between the *sensory* world and the *intelligible* world. When we encounter the Arabic term *jism mithali* to designate the "subtle body" that penetrates into the "eighth climate," or the "resurrection body," we will be able to translate it literally as *imaginal body*, but certainly not as *imaginary body*. Perhaps, then, we will have less difficulty in placing the figures who belong neither to "myth" nor to "history," and perhaps we will have a sort of password to the path to the "lost continent."

In order to embolden us on this path, we have to ask ourselves what constitutes our *real*, the *real* for us, so that if we leave it, would we have more than the imaginary, utopia? And what is the *real* for our traditional Eastern thinkers, so that they may have access to the "eighth climate," to *Na-koja-*

Abad, by leaving the sensory place without leaving the real, or, rather, by having access precisely to the real? This presupposes a scale of being with many more degrees than ours. For let us make no mistake. It is not enough to concede that our predecessors, in the West, had a conception of the Imagination that was too rationalistic and too intellectualized. If we do not have available a cosmology whose schema can include, as does the one that belongs to our traditional philosophers, the plurality of universes in ascensional order, our Imagination will remain *unbalanced*, its recurrent conjunctions with the will to power will be an endless source of horrors. We will be continually searching for a new discipline of the Imagination, and we will have great difficulty in finding it as long as we persist in seeing in it only a certain way of keeping our *distance* with regard to what we call the *real*, and in order to exert an influence on that real. Now, that real appears to us as arbitrarily limited, as soon as we compare it to the real that our traditional theosophers have glimpsed, and that limitation degrades the reality itself. In addition, it is always the word *fantasy* that appears as an excuse: literary fantasy, for example, or preferably, in the taste and style of the day, social fantasy.

But it is impossible to avoid wondering whether the *mundus imaginalis*, in the proper meaning of the term, would of necessity be lost and leave room only for the imaginary if something like a

secularization of the *imaginal* into the *imaginary* were not required for the fantastic, the horrible, the monstrous, the macabre, the miserable, and the absurd to triumph. On the other hand, the art and imagination of Islamic culture in its traditional form are characterized by the hieratic and the serious, by gravity, stylization, and meaning. Neither our utopias, nor our science fiction, nor the sinister "*omega point*"-nothing of that kind succeeds in leaving this world or attaining *Na-koja-Abad*. Those who have known the "eighth climate" have not invented utopias, nor is the ultimate thought of Shi'ism a social or political fantasy, but it is an eschatology, because it is an *expectation* which is, as such, a *real Presence* here and now in another world, and a testimony to that other world.

111. TOPOGRAPHIES OF THE "EIGHTH CLIMATE"

We ought here to examine the extensive theory of the witnesses to that other world. We ought to question all those mystics who, in Islam, repeated the visionary experience of the heavenly assumption of the Prophet Muhammad (the *mi'raj*), which offers more than

one feature in common with the account, preserved in an old gnostic book, of the celestial visions of the prophet Isaiah. There, the activity of imaginative perception truly assumes the aspect of a *hierognosis*, a higher sacral knowledge. But in order to complete our discussion, I will limit myself to describing several features typical of accounts taken from Shi'ite literature, because the world into which it will allow us to penetrate seems, at first sight, still to be our world, while in fact the events take place in the eighth climate-not in the imaginary, but in the imaginal world, that is, the world whose coordinates cannot be plotted on our maps, and where the Twelfth Imam, the "Hidden Imam," lives a mysterious life surrounded by his companions, who are veiled under the same incognito as the Imam. One of the most typical of these accounts is the tale of a voyage to "the Green Island situated in the White Sea."

It is impossible to describe here, even in broad terms, what constitutes the essence of Shi'ite Islam in relation to what is appropriately called Sunni

orthodoxy. It is necessary, however, that we should have, at least allusively present in mind, the theme that dominates the horizon of the mystical theosophy of Shi'ism, namely, the "eternal prophetic Reality" (*Haqiqat mohammadiya*) that is designated as "Muhammadan Logos" or "Muhammadan Light" and is composed of fourteen entities of light: the Prophet, his daughter Fatima, and the twelve Imams. This is the pleroma of the "Fourteen Pure Ones," by means of whose countenance the mystery of an eternal theophany is accomplished from world to world. Shi'ism has thus given Islamic prophetology its metaphysical foundation at the same time that it has given it Imamology as the absolutely necessary complement. This means that the sense of the Divine Revelations is not limited to the letter, to the exoteric that is the cortex and containant, and that was enunciated by the Prophet; the true sense is the hidden internal, the esoteric, what is symbolized by the cortex, and which it is incumbent upon the Imams to reveal to their followers. That is why Shi'ite theosophy eminently possesses the sense of symbols.

Moreover, the closed group or dynasty of the twelve Imams is not a political dynasty in earthly competition with other political dynasties; it projects over them, in a way, as the dynasty of the guardians of the Grail, in our Western traditions, projects over the official hierarchy of the Church. The

ephemeral earthly appearance of the twelve Imams concluded with the twelfth, who, as a young child (in A.H. 260/A.D. 873) went into occultation from this world, but whose parousia the Prophet himself announced, the Manifestation at the end of our Aion, when he would reveal the hidden meaning of all Divine Revelations and fill the earth with justice and peace, as it will have been filled until then with violence and tyranny. Present simultaneously in the past and the future, the Twelfth Imam, the Hidden Imam, has been for ten centuries the *history* itself of Shi'ite consciousness, a history over which, of course, historical criticism loses its rights, for its events, although real, nevertheless do not have the reality of events in our climates, but they have the reality of those in the "eighth climate," events of the soul which are visions. His occultation occurred at two different times: the minor occultation (260/873) and the major occultation (330/942).¹⁷ Since then, the Hidden Imam is in the position of those who were removed from the visible world without crossing the threshold of death: Enoch, Elijah, and Christ himself, according to the teaching of the Qur'an. He is the Imam "hidden from the senses, but present in the heart of his followers," in the words of the consecrated formula, for he remains the mystical pole [*qotb*] of this world, the *pole of poles*, without whose existence the human world could not continue to exist. There is an entire Shi'ite literature about those to whom the Imam has manifested himself, or

who have approached him but without seeing him, during the period of the Great Occultation.

Of course, an understanding of these accounts postulates certain premises that our preceding analyses permit us to accept. The first point is that the Imam lives in a mysterious place that is by no means among those that empirical geography can verify; it cannot be situated on our maps. This place "outside of place" nonetheless has its own topography. The second point is that life is not limited to the conditions of our visible material world with its biological laws that we know. There are events in the life of the Hidden Imam-even descriptions of his five sons, who are the governors of mysterious cities. The third point is that in his last letter to his last visible representative, the Imam warned against the imposture of people who would pretend to quote him, to have seen him, in order to lay claim to a public or political role in his name. But the Imam never excluded the fact that he would manifest himself to aid someone in material or moral distress-a lost traveler, for example, or a believer who is in despair.

These manifestations, however, never occur except at the initiative of the Imam; and if he appears most often in the guise of a young man of supernatural beauty, almost always, subject to exception, the person granted the privilege of this vision is

only conscious afterward, later, of whom he has seen. A strict incognito covers these manifestations; that is why the religious event here can never be socialized. The same incognito covers the Imam's companions, that elite of elites composed of young people in his service. They form an esoteric hierarchy of a strictly limited number, which remains permanent by means of substitution from generation to generation. This mystical order of knights, which surrounds the Hidden Imam, is subject to an incognito as strict as that of the knights of the Grail, inasmuch as they do not lead anyone to themselves. But someone who has been led there will have penetrated for a moment into the eighth climate; for a moment he will have been "in the totality of the Heaven of his soul."

That was indeed the experience of a young Iranian shaykh, 'Ali ibn Fazel Mazandarani, toward the end of our thirteenth century, an experience recorded in the *Account of strange and marvelous things that he contemplated and saw with his own eyes on the Green Island situated in the White Sea*. I can only give a broad outline of this account here, without going into the details that guarantee the means and authenticity of its transmission. [18](#) The narrator himself gives a long recital of the years and circumstances of his life preceding the event; we are dealing with a scholarly and spiritual personality who has both feet on the ground. He tells us how he emigrated,

how in Damascus he followed the teaching of an Andalusian shaykh, and how he became attached to this shaykh; and when the latter left for Egypt, he together with a few other disciples accompanied him. From Cairo he followed him to Andalusia, where the shaykh had suddenly been called by a letter from his dying father. Our narrator had scarcely arrived in Andalusia when he contracted a fever that lasted for three days. Once recovered, he went into the village and saw a strange group of men who had come from a region near the land of the Berbers, not far from the "peninsula of the Shi'ites." He is told that the journey takes twenty-five days, with a large desert to cross. He decides to join the group. Up to this point, we are still more or less on the geographical map.

But it is no longer at all certain that we are still on it when our traveler reaches the peninsula of the Shi'ites, a peninsula surrounded by four walls with high massive towers; the outside wall borders the coast of the sea. He asks to be taken to the principal mosque. There, for the first time, he hears, during the muezzin's call to prayer, resounding from the minaret of the mosque, the Shi'ite invocation asking that "Joy should hasten," that is, the joy of the future Appearance of the Imam, who is now hidden. In order to understand his emotion and his tears, it is necessary to think of the heinous persecutions, over the course of many centuries and over vast portions of the

territory of Islam, that reduced the Shi'ites, the followers of the holy Imams, to a state of secrecy. Recognition among Shi'ites is effected here again in the observation, in a typical manner, of the customs of the "discipline of the arcanum."

Our pilgrim takes up residence among his own, but he notices in the course of his walks that there is no sown field in the area. Where do the inhabitants obtain their food? He learns that food comes to them from "the Green Island situated in the White Sea," which is one of the islands belonging to the sons of the Hidden Imam. Twice a year, a flotilla of seven ships brings it to them. That year the first voyage had already taken place; it would be necessary to wait four months until the next voyage. The account describes the pilgrim passing his days, overwhelmed by the kindness of the inhabitants, but in an anguish of expectation, walking tirelessly along the beach, always watching the high sea, toward the west, for the arrival of the ships. We might be tempted to believe that we are on the African coast of the Atlantic and that the Green Island belongs, perhaps, to the Canaries or the "Fortunate Isles." The details that follow will suffice to undeceive us. Other traditions place the Green Island elsewhere-in the Caspian Sea, for example-as though to indicate to us that it has no coordinates in the geography of this world.

Finally, as if according to the law of the "eighth climate" ardent desire has shortened space, the seven ships arrive somewhat in advance and make their entry into the port. From the largest of the ships descends a shaykh of noble and commanding appearance, with a handsome face and magnificent clothes. A conversation begins, and our pilgrim realizes with astonishment that the shaykh already knows everything about him, his name and his origin. The shaykh is his Companion, and he tells him that he has come to find him: together they will leave for the Green Island. This episode bears a characteristic feature of the gnostic's feeling everywhere and always: he is an exile, separated from his own people, whom he barely remembers, and he has still less an idea of the way that will take him back to them. One day, though, a message arrives from them, as in the "Song of the Pearl" in the *Acts of Thomas*, as in the "Tale of Western Exile" by Sohravardi. Here, there is something better than a message: it is one of the companions of the Imam in person. Our narrator exclaims movingly: "Upon hearing these words, I was overwhelmed with happiness. *Someone remembered me, my name was known to them!*" Was his exile at an end? From now on, he is entirely certain that the itinerary cannot be transferred onto our maps.

The crossing lasts sixteen days, after which the ship enters an area where the waters of the sea are completely

white; the Green Island is outlined on the horizon. Our pilgrim learns from his Companion that the White Sea forms an uncrossable zone of protection around the island; no ship manned by the enemies of the Imam and his people can venture there without the waves engulfing it. Our travelers land on the Green Island. There is a city at the edge of the sea; seven walls with high towers protect the precincts (this is the preeminent symbolic plan). There are luxuriant vegetation and abundant streams. The buildings are constructed from diaphanous marble. All the inhabitants have beautiful and young faces, and they wear magnificent clothes. Our Iranian shaykh feels his heart fill with joy, and from this point on, throughout the entire second part, his account will take on the rhythm and the meaning of an *initiation account*, in which we can distinguish three phases. There is an initial series of conversations with a noble personage who is none other than a grandson of the Twelfth Imam (the son of one of his five sons), and who governs the Green Island: Sayyed Shamsoddin These conversations compose a first initiation into the secret of the Hidden Imam; they take place sometimes in the shadow of: mosque and sometimes in the serenity of gardens filled with perfumed trees of all kinds. There follows a visit to a mysterious sanctuary in the heart of the mountain that is the highest peak on the island. Finally, there is a concluding series of conversations of decisive importance with regard to the possibility or in possibility of having

a vision of the Imam.

I am giving the briefest possible summary here, and I must pass over in silence the details of scenery depiction and of an intensely animated dramaturgy, in order to note only the central episode. At the summit or at the heart of the mountain, which is in the center of the Green Island, there is a small temple, with a cupola, where one can communicate with the Imam, because it happens that he leaves a personal message there, but no one is permitted to ascend to this temple except Sayyed Shamsoddin and those who are like him. This small temple stands in the shadow of the *Tuba* tree; now, we know that this is the name of the tree that shades Paradise; it is the *Tree of Being*. The temple is at the edge of a spring, which, since it gushes at the base of the Tree of Paradise, can only be the *Spring of Life*. In order to confirm this for us, our pilgrim meets there the incumbent of this temple, in whom we recognize the mysterious prophet Khezr (Khadir). It is there, at the heart of being, in the shade of the Tree and at the edge of the Spring, that the sanctuary is found where the Hidden Imam may be most closely approached. Here we have an entire constellation of easily recognizable archetypal symbols.

We have learned, among other things, that access to the little mystical temple was only permitted to a person who, by attaining the spiritual degree at

which the Imam has become his personal internal Guide, has attained a state "similar" to that of the actual descendant of the Imam. This is why the idea of internal conformation is truly at the center of the initiation account, and it is this that permits the pilgrim to learn other secrets of the Green Island: for example, the symbolism of a particularly eloquent ritual. [19](#) In the Shi'ite liturgical calendar, Friday is the weekday especially dedicated to the Twelfth Imam. Moreover, in the lunar calendar, the middle of the month marks the midpoint of the lunar cycle, and the middle of the month of Sha'ban is the anniversary date of the birth of the Twelfth Imam into this world. On a Friday, then, while our Iranian pilgrim is praying in the mosque, he hears a great commotion outside. His initiator, Sayyed, informs him that each time the day of the *middle of the month* falls on a Friday, the chiefs of the mysterious militia that surrounds the Imam assemble in "expectation of joy," a consecrated term, as we know, which means: in the expectation of the Manifestation of the Imam in this world. Leaving the mosque, he sees a gathering of horsemen from whom a triumphal clamor rises. These are the 313 chiefs of the supernatural order of knights always present incognito in this world, in the service of the Imam. This episode leads us gradually to the final scenes that precede the farewell. Like a leitmotiv, the expression of the desire to see the Imam returns ceaselessly. Our pilgrim will learn that twice in his

life he was in the Imams presence: he was lost in the desert and the Imam came to his aid. But as is an almost constant rule, he knew nothing of it then; he learns of it now that he has come to the Green Island. Alas, he must leave this island; the order cannot be rescinded; the ships are waiting, the same one on which he arrived. But even more than for the voyage outward, it is impossible for us to mark out the itinerary that leads from the "eighth climate" to this world. Our traveler obliterates his tracks, but he will keep some material evidence of his sojourn: the pages of notes taken in the course of his conversations with the Imam's grandson, and the parting gift from the latter at the moment of farewell.

The account of the Green Island allows us an abundant harvest of symbols: (1) It is one of the islands belonging to the son of the Twelfth Imam. (2) It is that island, where the Spring of Life gushes, in the shade of the Tree of Paradise, that ensure the sustenance of the Imams followers who live far away, and that sustenance can only be a "suprasubstantial" food. (3) It situated in the west, as the city of Jabarsa is situated in the we of the *mundus imaginalis*, and thus it offers a strange analogy with the paradise of the East, the paradise of Amitabha in Pure Land Buddhism; similarly, the figure of the Twelfth Imam suggestive of comparison with Maitreya, the future Buddha; there is also an analogy with Tir-na'n-Og, one

of the worlds the Afterlife among the Celts, the land of the West and the forever ever young. (4) Like the domain of the Grail, it is an interworld that is self-sufficient. (5) It is protected against and immune to any attempt from outside. (6) only one who is summoned there can find the way. (7) A mountain rises in the center; we have noted the symbols that it conceals. (8) Like Mont-Salvat, the inviolable Green Island is the place where his followers approach the mystical *pole* of the world, the Hidden Imam, reigning invisibly over this age- the jewel of the Shi'ite faith.

This tale is completed by others, for, as we have mentioned, nothing has been said until now about the islands under the reign of the truly extraordinary figures who are the five sons of the Hidden Imam (homologues of those whom Shi'ism designates as the "Five Personages of the Mantle"[20](#) and perhaps also of those whom Manichaeism designates as the "Five Sons of the Living Spirit"). An earlier tale[21](#) (it is from the middle of the twelfth century and the narrator is a Christian) provides us with complementary topographical information. Here again it involves travelers who suddenly realize that their ship has entered a completely unknown area. They land at a first island, *al Mobaraka*, the Blessed City. Certain difficulties, brought about by the presence among them of Sunni Muslims, oblige them to travel farther.

But their captain refuses; he is afraid of the unknown region. They have to hire a new crew. In succession, we learn the names of the five islands and the names of those who govern them: *al-Zahera*, the City Blooming with Flowers; *al Ra'yeqa*, the Limpid City; *al-Safiya*, the Serene City, etc. Whoever manages to gain admittance to them enters into joy forever. Five islands, five cities, five sons of the Imam, twelve months to travel through the islands (two months for each of the first four, four months for the fifth), all of these numbers having a symbolic significance. Here, too, the tale turns into an initiation account; all the travelers finally embrace the Shi'ite faith.

As there is no rule without an exception, I will conclude by citing in condensed form a tale illustrating a case of manifestation of the Imam in person.²² The tale is from the tenth century. An Iranian from Hamadan made the pilgrimage to Mecca. On the way back, a day's journey from Mecca (more than two thousand kilometers from Hamadan), having imprudently gone astray during the night, he loses his companions. In the morning he is wandering alone in the desert and placing his trust in God, Suddenly, he sees a garden that neither he nor anyone else has ever heard of. He enters it. At the door of a pavilion, two young pages dressed in white await him and lead him to a young mar of supernatural beauty. To his fearful and

awestruck astonishment, he learns that he is in the presence of the Twelfth Imam. The latter speaks to him about his future Appearance and finally addressing him by name, asks him whether he wants to return to his home and family. Certainly, he wants to do so. The Imam signals to one of his pages, who gives the traveler a purse, take him by the hand, and guides him through the gardens. They walk together until the traveler sees a group of houses, a mosque, and shade trees that seem familiar to him. Smiling, the page asks him: "Do you know this land?" "Near where I live in Hamadan" he replies, "there is a land called Asadabad, which exactly resembles this place." The page says to him, "But *you are in Asadabad*." Amazed, the traveler realizes that he is actually near his home. He turns around; the page is no longer there; he is all alone, but he still has in his hand the viaticum that has been given to him. Did we not say a little while ago that the *where*, the *ubi* of the "eighth climate" is an *ubique*?

I know how many commentaries can be applied to these tales depending upon whether we are metaphysicians, traditionalist or not, or whether we are psychologists. But by way of provisional conclusion, I prefer to limit myself to asking three small questions:

1. We are no longer participants in a traditional culture; we live in a scientific civilization that is extending its control, it is said, even to images. It is commonplace today to speak of a

"civilization of the image" (thinking of our magazines, cinema, and television). But one wonders whether, like all commonplace this does not conceal a radical misunderstanding, a complete error. For instead of the image being elevated to the level of a world that would be proper to it, instead of it appearing invested with a *symbolic function*, leading to an internal sense, there is above all a reduction of the image to the level of sensory perception pure and simple, and thus a definitive degradation of the image. Should it not be said, therefore, that the more successful this reduction is, the more the sense of the *imaginal* is lost, and the more we are condemned to producing only the *imaginary*?

2. In the second place, all imagery, the scenic perspective of a tale like the voyage to the Green Island, or the sudden encounter with the Imam in an unknown oasis-would all this be possible without the absolutely primary and irreducible, objective, initial fact (*Urphanomen*) of a world of image-archetypes or image-sources whose origin is nonrational and whose incursion into our world is unforeseeable, but whose postulate compels recognition?

3. In the third place, is it not precisely this postulate of the objectivity of the *imaginal world* that is suggested to us, or imposed on us, by certain forms or certain symbolic emblems (hermetic, kabbalistic; or *mandalas*) that have the

quality of effecting a magic display of mental images, such that they assume an objective reality?

To indicate in what sense it is possible to have an idea of how to respond to the question concerning the *objective* reality of supernatural figures and encounters with them, I will simply refer to an extraordinary text, where Villiers de L'Isle-Adam speaks about the face of the inscrutable Messenger with eyes of clay; it "could not be perceived except by the spirit. Creatures experience only influences that are inherent in the archangelic entity. "Angels," he writes, "*are not*, in substance, except in the free sublimity of the absolute Heavens, where reality is unified with the ideal.... They only externalize themselves in the ecstasy they cause and which forms a part of themselves."[23](#)

Those last words, *an ecstasy ... which forms part of themselves*, seem to me to possess a prophetic clarity, for they have the quality of piercing even the granite of doubt, of paralyzing the "agnostic reflex," in the sense that they break the reciprocal isolation of the consciousness and its object, of thought and being; phenomenology is now an ontology. Undoubtedly, this is the postulate implied in the teaching of our authors concerning the *imaginal*. For there is no external criterion for the manifestation of the Angel, other than the manifestation itself. The Angel is itself the *ekstasis*, the "displacement"

or the departure from ourselves that is a "change of state" from our state. That is why these words also suggest to us the secret of the supernatural being of the "Hidden Imam" and of his Appearances for the Shi'ite consciousness: the Imam is the *ekstasis* itself of that consciousness. One who is not in the same spiritual state cannot see him.

This is what Sohravardi alluded to in his tale of "The Crimson Archangel" by the words that we cited at the beginning: "If you are Khezr, you also may pass without difficulty through the mountain of Qaf."

March 1964

Moorish Pilgrimage To Ireland

I'd asked my friends Gordon Campbell and John Stephenson To find a Beltaine (May Eve) celebration to attend. But the old Celtic holidays are not widely celebrated (although I later found out from Barbara O'Flynn of the Folklore Dept. at University College in Dublin that Nay Fires and May Bushes are still to be seen in Sligo). John discovered that some enthusiasts for Celtic Christianity living on the Arran islands led by one Fr. Dara Molloy, would be having a bonfire, so we set out from Dublin on Apr. 30 for the West. With Gordon's madcap driving we were in Co. Galway by evening in time for the oysters & Guinness at Moran's-on-the-Weir, a famous old pub. Next day we were in Inish Mor (*Mor*, pronounced "moor", means "great" in Irish!), the main Arran island and visited the amazing megalithic "fort" Dun Aengus (the Celtic god of Love). (At each megalith site we visited we had a few pipes, and thus were able to interpret everything in true M.O.C. style.) That evening we trudged up to the "cult" headquarters, an old farmhouse, and took part in the ritual. Fr. Dara turned out to be a very interesting sort of heretic, who told us "Rome is the enemy!" and spoke of his friendship with Ivan Illich. The weather

was amazing (during the whole trip in fact) and the bonfire was pleasant. Dara gave us copies of their excellent Zine, *Aisling* (available from Aisling magazine, Inis Mor, Arainn, Co. Na Gaillimhe, Eire; phone/fax 099-61245).

Next morning we took the ferry to Connemara, the Gaelic-speakin region of Galway, and the vilage of Carraroe, to meet Bob Quinn, author and filmmaker of *Atlantaeon: Ireland North African and Maritime Heritage. (The book can be obtained from Quartet books, 27/29 Goodge St. London wlp lfd. As for the film, Bob gave me a VHS copy which i will try to make available to the faithful.) Bob and his companion Miriam gave us a warm welcom, although they were recovering from a big conference on Gaelic-language TV accompanied by lots of drink and traditional music dance. Bob told me about his latest research (on "druid" oak-lore) and gave me other interesting material on Irish/Oriental links. In a burst of enthusiasm we decided to found an international scholarly *gesellschaft* devoted to Irish/Oriental research (esp. Morocco), to be called the Atlantaen Society. We hope to hold a conference in Carraroe around May ! next year, if possible. I'm working on a preliminary newsletter and will make it available to all *MSM* readers A.S.A.P. This amy well turn out to be the most valuable thing I accomplished in Ireland, and I'm

extremely excited about it.

That afternoon we passed south through the fascinating little city of Galway, which has many Spanish & Moorish connections (such as the famous Claddagh ring, originally a Moorish design brought back by a goldsmith named Joyce who'd been captured by Barbary Pirates.) Then on to Co. Clare (John Stephens' ancestral land) and the Burren, a barren region rich in Neolithic sites. On Bob Quinn's advice we stopped to see the Poulnabrone Dolmen, one of the most impressive.

That evening we arrived in Co. Cork (my own ancestral county) and the village of Doneraile, where Gordon's friends Jim & Fran are renting a Gregorian mansion with an Anglo-Norman square tower named Castle Saffron. Unbelievably exquisite! The grounds include an Iron Age fort, overgrown with bluebells, which we investigated. (The rent on all this is less than a small apartment in New York) Jim is a mycologist, and told us about an indigenous "magic mushroom" called liberty caps.

Next day - joined by Gordon's wife Julie - zoom zoom - we were in Kerry - saw the Paps of Anu (the Mother Goddess), two breast-shaped mountains with megalithic "teats" on the summits - and then visited Staigue - a megalithic or Iron Age royal residence of great beauty; and then

pushed on to Gordon's village, Ballinskellig, on Kerry's stunning coast, where he is hoping to build a stone pyramid (if the planning commission allows such heresy!) We checked into a weird hotel run by mad ex-monks, and spent the evening drinking with an old Shanachie, Mick Murphy, who told us that liberty caps are not recent imports but were known to the druids (this would explain a lot). When I told Murphy about the difficulty I'd experienced trying to trace the origin of my great grandfather Patrick Rion, he came up with a memorable line: "Many a man's had to change his name when he changed his country!"

The Skellig islands, or rather Skellig Michael (- that's St. Michael Archangel, who likes big pointy hills and islands) were once the home of a monastic community of the Celtic Church; their beehive huts, chapels and tombs still survive. Despite the presence of tourists (we considered ourselves pilgrims) the visit was profoundly moving - and exhausting enough to amount to a penance! So we rewarded ourselves with an amazing meal (fresh seafood & Kerry mountain spring lamb) and a visit to Ballinskellig's other old shanachie, the bard Micheal Kirby.... All to short a visit, as we were in the middle of 18 different fascinating folk-loric subjects we had to leave. Kirby told us, for instance, that the Tuatha De Danaan literally disappeared underground when the Celts arrived, not only into the

megalithic mounds but also extensive tunnels (Viet Cong style). Later, at Knowth in the Boyne valley, we saw such tunnels, although they're dated to the 9th cen. AD and were supposedly used by Christians hiding from Vikings.

Our visit to the Brugh Na Boinne - Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange - was the culmination of our megalithic peregrinations. By great good luck John Stephenson was able to find an artist/archeologist, John Aboud (yes, an Oriental) who had worked at Knowth for 10 years, to give us a tour of the site, which was closed to the public. Astounding! Words fail me! Best of all, an hour in the central eastern chamber, contemplating the megalithic art and the bones of the Tuatha De Danaan! Aboud believes that Knowth was a center for communal festivities, while Newgrange was the secret "Druid" university. (Of course we're talking 5000 BC here, long before the Celts & the Druids *per se*.) But Newgrange has unfortunately been "restored" & opened to the public. Much of it's aura has been dissipated by tourism, not to mention the restoration work, which is very unconvincing.

The rest of the trip was spent in Dublin, visiting lovely old Gregarian mansions (inc. John Aboud's), browsing the book shops & spending all my money, and hanging out at Bewley's Oriental Coffee Shop in

Grafton St., the boho center of Dublin. In further issues I hope to describe John Sephenson's plans for an immense celebration of the millennium in Ireland in 2000 AD (very similar to our Jubilee project, but in this case backed by the Irish Ministry of Arts, which seems to have fallen into anarchist hands!). Also, as soon as the Atlantaen Soc. is launched formally I'll send the prospectus to the *MSM*, and hope for many members. The Church is off to a grand start in Ireland, and the next ten years (at least) promise to be magical indeed.

Moorish Tag Day Update

by Hakim Bey

The Manifesto of the Black Thorn League is essentially a meditation on Noble Drew Ali's mysterious teachings about Ireland as "once a part of the Moorish Empire"; St. Patrick's banishing of the snakes as a mask for the expulsion of the Irish Moors; and the Celts as an "Asiatic race". Since writing that text we have discovered a vast amount of material relating to this legend, although we still do not know how it reached Noble Drew --- revelation? Perhaps -- but we now believe even more strongly that the legend itself is far older than Drew Ali's recension, and we suspect he heard it from authentic "folk" sources. Mixed African/Irish communities are far more common in the "New" World than we knew or expected -- to give 2 examples : the Black Irish of Jamaica (descended from Cromwell's Irish serfs who intermarried with slave and maroon groups in Barbados and Jamaica); and Seneca Village, a settlement of squatters -- Irish, Black and Native American -- who in 1853 were forcibly driven out of the area of Manhattan now occupied by Central Park. The story of the 1741 St. Patrick's Day Riot in New York may have survived in some community as a legend of African-Irish connections. But

the story goes back, back, back, --
unbelievably far back.

Our first breakthrough -- the first indication of a whole school of history devoted to the Irish/Moorish question -- came with the purchase of a book in Dublin, by an Irish journalist named Bob Quinn (Atlantaeon: Ireland's North African & Maritime Heritage, Quartet books, London/NY, 1986). We hope to meet Quinn this year during our next visit to Ireland. His book is not scholarly, but it is wonderfully enthusiastic. Nearly every chapter throws light on what I've now come to think of as the Quest. Impossible to give a full precis.

Leaving aside all the material Quinn has collected on, say, Egyptian influence on the early Celtic Church -- or Hispano-Moorish-Irish maritime connections -- or the Barbary Pirates (Quinn missed the fact that Irish pirates converted to Islam and took part in the Sallee Republic, a Moroccan corsair utopia)-- in other words, leaving aside the historical era, we get to the gist of Quinn's hypothesis: the "Irish" and the "moors" are the same people (he never says it outright but it's clearly what he's thinking). But who are they?

Quinn's first clue is music -- the eerie similarity between Moroccan Berber music and Irish *seannos or chant-style singing. We explore this on our radio show, the Moorish Orthodox Radio Crusade, using folk music collected by Sean O'Riada (the late great Irish

composer) and comparing it with Gnaoua, Jajuka, High Atlas Berber and other Moroccan forms. The similarities are indeed stunning. But even more astonishing (how did Quinn miss this?): Ireland and Morocco have the only pentatonic scales west of China and Java!!

Quinn's second clue is language. A number of linguists and philologists, ranging from Morris Jones at the turn of the century to Heinrich Wagner (in The Celtic Consciousness, NY 1981) have attempted to isolate the pre-celtic substructure in Irish. Too complicated to explain here. The result? Connections between Irish, Berber, and ancient Egyptian! (pardon the exclamation points -- just can't help it!) This school of thought is poo-pooed by the Academic Boss Class -- but it refuses to go away. It's not mere crankism, either (not that we have anything against cranks) -- but as far as I can judge, it is daring, but thoroughly "scientific".

The third clue is -- Megaliths. Now so far in life I've resisted "Megalthomania" (as John Michell calls it) but here I'm afraid I've succumbed. I've read about 20 books on the subject so far, and am developing my own...crackpot theory. Quinn suggests (as does the turn of the century scholar, T. W. Rolleston, in Celtic Myths and Legends, 1917) that the pre-Celtic population of Ireland and the rest of the Insular or thalassic-Atlantic world, the people who built the

megaliths, were not wiped-out but absorbed by the late-coming Celts, who preserve significant "megalithic" strains of folklore as well as music and language; that these people are even more clearly represented in the modern world by Berbers (who have not been absorbed by the Arabs). Quinn and Rolleston go so far as to imagine that megalithism arose first in Morocco and that the proto-Berbers (as in Iberian and Hibernian, the Classical names for pre-Aryan aborigines of Spain and Ireland) were in fact the "Megalithic Missionaries" envisioned by certain archaeologists.

Quinn complains with complete justice that academic Megalithologists never discuss North Africa, even though it's apparently crawling with menhirs -- and I immediately noticed the Eurocentric bias to most of their work. The politics of all this are complex. People used to believe that the megaliths were Celtic ("druidic") in origin, and that they were pale, the distant echoes of Crete, Greece, Egypt, the great Near Eastern Neolithic civilizations. Gordon Childe, for instance, believed that the "Megalithic Missionaries" were Greeks or Egyptians. Very recently, however, carbon dating has exploded the "Near Eastern diffusion" theory. The earliest megaliths are older than the pyramids -- as old as Jerico and Catal Huyuk.

Carbon dating suggests, in fact, that Meagalithism arose in Spain or Brittany around 5000 BCE, and spread from there to Britain, Ireland, Scandinavia

and the Baltics, and to Sardinia, N. Africa, S. Italy, Malta and Egypt! (Almost no carbon dating has been done in North Africa so Quinn's suspicions about Moroccan origins may still prove correct.) But in light of carbon dating the academics have renounced ALL forms of Diffusionism. To listen to them now you'd think prehistoric humans were too dumb to travel at all. Everything is now explained according to the theory of Parallel Development -- i.e., everyone invented megaliths separately and on their own, because they'd reached the "right stage of development".

Lord, what horseshit! OBVIOUSLY people traveled -- by sea, as Quinn points out -- as far back into the Paleolithic. The Neolithic Atlantaeans or Atlantic peoples were OBVIOUSLY very cosmopolitan (linked by ceremonial "gift" routes along which they traded exquisite ceremonial stone axes -- and Megalithic "doctrines" too, no doubt).

Without going into arguments, I will assert here that Megalithism was a religion based on the calendar (the *first ideology) and on agriculture. It bears great similarities to the super-ancient agricultural religion of the Near East (explored by T. Gaster in his magnificent Thespis), but with several major differences. For one thing, the megaliths themselves were not temples (Near Eastern style) but observatories, calendars, ritual dance/theater sites, fairs for gift

exchange, and colleges for higher learning, all in one. (Classical authors called the megalith builders Hyperboreans, and their shamans, the Boreates -- note the B'R root. Again!) For another thing, the megalithic people were less hierchically structured than the Near Easterners. They retained a tribal or "segmentery" social structure based on the categories of sept, chief and shaman, rather than city, king and priest. This can be shown both archeologically and by examination of 20th century megalithic cultures in, say, Sumatra or Madagascar....

I could go on (and I will) -- but here I'll skip to the subject of folklore. The so-called "Celtic" calendar of Ireland is very likely megalithic in origin (see K. Danaher in The Celtic Consciousnes) The megaliths are obviously pre-Celtic in origin, so that all "Celtic" folklore about them must be sifted out; what's left might contain hints about megalithic culture. I need access to certain key early texts (long out of print or horribly expensive), such as the Book of Invasions, to carry out this task. So far, I believe I've located a complex of pre-Celtic themes in the myth of the Fomorians, the one-legged, one-eyed giants who were already in Ireland when the Celts (the Tuatha de Danaan) first arrived -- although in some versions the Fomorians came from the sea. (Note: Amur, an ancient name for Morocco or Mauritania; Amorica, ancient name for brittany, and Fomorians.) Even the late "druidic"

legends of the megaliths are worth studying; yet more promising, however, are the non-learned, non-aristocratic traditions embedded in, say, the Fenian Cycle and the legendary history of Munster (see Rees & Rees, Celtic Heritage, London, 1961); and Breton peasant lore and fairy tales (see J. P. Mohen, The World of Megaliths, NY 1989).

Recently I borrowed and read the entire 1,238 pages of Westermarck's great Ritual and Belief in Morocco (Quinn also missed this). To my amazement I discovered that in the 1920's the Berbers were still building stone circles and erecting menhirs! Westermarck devotes hundreds of pages to Moroccan stone cults, holy wells and mountains, snake cults, and other pre-Islamic survivals. The Berbers perform (on Midsummers Eve!) a burlesque version of the ancient Neolithic Calendrical drama, described by Gaster, and also found in Britain as the "Mummer plays and Morris (i.e. Moorish) Dances".

In short, I believe that a fairly complete reconstruction of megalithic culture is possible, based on a revised Diffusionism and comparative folklore, which will amply support Quinn's hypothesis of a pre-historic link between Morocco and Ireland. Once this link has been thoroughly researched, I believe that one of Noble Drew Ali's craziest ideas will turn out to be sheer fact, expressed in religious metaphors. We still need to do a tremendous amount of work -- on

snakes (and Dragons) for example -- on Irish and Moroccan prehistorical archaeology -- on music (I'm no ethnomusicologist) -- even on the Barbary Pirates. I'm writing this to solicit help. The story of Moorish Tag Day is expanding into an epic. I'm foundering in a dozen swamps of bibliography. A project like this should be multidisciplinary. The Black Thorn League needs active researchers!

In closing: -- Our Moorish Deacon of Paris, Wm. Strangmeyer, brought to my attention the fact that a "Count of the Black Thorn" plays a minor role in one of the Arthurian romances, Hartmann Von Aue's Iwein (NY/London, 1984), a book I haven't seen yet. On this basis, however, we should claim an ancient and honorable lineage for the Black Thorn League. History, after all, is a game. The point is to be nights -- not pawns.

" I lay you under prohibitions, and restrictions, and death, and destruction, to go and bring me the King of Morocco's bay filly that outruns the wind and leaps over the wall of castle-bawns."

-- From "The Greek Princes and the Young Gardener", in Patrick Kennedy, Irish Fireside Folktales, collected

in the 1860's in Co. Wexford

Moorish Weather Report

By Hakim Bey

"Then said the weather god to the queen goddess: 'we must act at once! 'we shall perish of hunger!'"

"The Hittite Myth of Telpinu" ("The Disappearing God Type'q, in TH. Gaster, Thespis (1950), p. 303

"...Apollonius replies like a pure sophister: 'And must I think then' -- saith he -- 'that the world is a living thing?' Saith Jarcas: 'Yea, verily, if you reason rightly; for it giveth life to all things.'" -- Thomas Vaughan, The Fraternity of the Rosy Cross (1652)

If the Earth is a living being, what constitutes her skin? The hermetic "Natural philosophers" elaborated the Hesiodic cosmogony whereby Chaos, Eros, Earth, and Old Night, make up the original pantheon of becoming. The hermeticists understood that we live and walk on the pelt of an animate body - just as Chinese mythographers called humans the fleas or lice on the body of the cosmogonic chaos-figure, Pan Ku. We are Earth's symbiotes - or parasites - or (Allah forbid) her germs.

The old Hermeticists also seemed to believe that atmosphere pervaded the

entire universe if they envisioned flights to the moon or stars, for example, they never imagined the need for "spacesuits" to protect them against a Vacuum. Air was everywhere. Cyrano de Bergerac dreamed of a way to reach the moon by attaching to his body many sealed crystal vials of dew, which was believed to fall from and return to the moon. Unable to escape from the vessels, the dew would lift Cyrano on rays of lunar attraction. Thus weather itself was - at the very least - sublunar in scope.

Meteorological phenomena or sky-events, from rain to clouds to comets, were not seen as parts of Earth's body, but rather as evidence that the universe itself is also alive. Thus every culture perceives a mating of Earth and Sky - an erotic reciprocity with the universe - which fecundates the planet. Weather spirits or deities belong to that sphere which is precisely not the Earth Sky or "heaven", which includes what we call "space" - the aether which fills the universe and is also alive - expresses its sexual relation with Earth in the form of weather. For the early agriculturalists weather is the sperm of the spirits. One of the signs of this meteorological Eros is the mushroom which (as John Allegro pointed out) has no seed but is planted direct from heaven by lightning bolts -an almost universal belief.

Charles Fourier described the Aurora Borealis as the flickering remnant of a once-great "aromal ray" whereby Earth in former times held sexual congress with other planets and stars. Unfortunately due to the malign influence of Civilization, which has degraded even meteorological phenomena, the "Northern Crown" no longer serves its proper function. If we could overcome Civilization and establish social harmony, we'd see the Boreal Crown shoot forth a coherent laser-like 1000-hued ray of pure aroma, or stellar jizm, and simultaneously we would receive similar rays projected at us from other planets, like sunbeams but even more concentrated and fruitful.

Thus from the Stone age up to our great "demi-messiah" Fourier, the adepts have seen weather as outside the earth. No matter what "science" tells us, this viewpoint will remain valid to the extent that weather, as a sensuous event, really does come to us from "outside". Looked at this way, the skin of Earth is her dirt-surface, her water-surface, and her stable biota such as plants (her "hair", etc.). The motile biota constitute an in-between zone or ambiguous third term between Earth and Sky- Humans, the upright pivots of this intermediate realm, are precisely the mediators between Earth and the weather, controlling rain by sacrifice or dance, and interpreting the falling stars. The Etruscans catalogued eleven varieties of lightning as

auguries; - weather has meaning, but the meaning is vaporous and evanescent as weather itself. The Taoists saw pictographic characters written in the clouds - but for the most part only spirits could read them Even in modern meteorology the weather retains an uncanny ability to express itself in mysterious glyphs which seem to hover on the edge of meaning, like the Lorentz "Butterfly Attractor" which describes the ultimate unpredictability of weather in the form of a mathematic "writing" in the shape of a butterfly. In some way, weather always appears to us as an "Other".

However, science no longer believes that dew rises to the Moon and falls again with moonbeams. Earth is surrounded by "hard vacuum" (a nice paradox) which may be virtually universal. We've seen photographs of the Earth which seem to recreate the visions of shamans in flight, and we have noticed that weather is a very local phenomenon. At first it might seem that the weather (clouds, blue sky, etc.) makes up Earth's cloak, a kind of close- fitting hallucinatory opalescent kinetic garment of atmosphere and moisture. But on further contemplation a more accurate metaphor occurs: - weather is not the cape but the skin-- the peau sensible - of the living Earth.

None of us can escape this new world view. Even though as individuals we continue to experience weather

coming to us from Outside, we must now superimpose on this symbolism another and perhaps complementary symbolic structure.

In this second view, we humans are no longer precisely the ambiguous pivots between Earth and Sky. Our relation with Earth has become much more intimate. We are inside her skin. We are part of the Weather itself, her kinetic flesh, her kaleidoscopic nudity. Now we ourselves seem somehow much more permeable, such that clouds and blue sky, rain and lightning, might well move in us and through us, as much parts of our skin and organs and in turn are parts of the skin organs bones of Earth. We are ourselves meteorological events, not unlike rain or falling stars.

Looking at weather from this point of view as well as from the traditional point of view should help us to overcome the rather exclusive duality of "earth and heaven" which became so exaggerated in the agriculturalist religions (see note 1). The calendar is the first ideology, an attempt to reconcile the messy organic year of the seasons with the crystalline precise year of the stellar sky; and thus it is the first attempt to regulate "the world" (human society) on the basis of an abstract idea. Those who claim to "control" (i.e. know) the calendar, and can predict sky-events, can also control the fecundating activity of the sky, its spermatic fertility. Eventually

the masters of the calendar can become more stellar (less organic and messy) even in their own relation to the Earth. They can begin to control (i.e. predict) the weather and thus to control the Earth's fecundity. They can invent agriculture (see note 2).

The violence to the earth which this invention demands creates the sensation of an immense imbalance, a final break with the original "order of intimacy" (as Bataille calls it) of the old Gathering way of life, the way of humanity before tool-making and hence prior to symbolic and abstract systematization. Religion per se now comes into being to restore this imbalance through yet more cruelty (human sacrifice, cannibalism, etc.). The old duality between Earth and Sky gradually deepens into dualism, the Gnostic hatred for the organic, the nostalgia for pure stellar perfection (and eventually supra- -stellar disembodiment), pure spirit - which from Earth's perspective is nothing but death (see note 3).

Now our new understanding of weather as Earth's skin might in a sense help to repair the lost order of intimacy which eroded so drastically with the invention of the calendar. In our new view of things, Earth and Sky (the weather-sky, not the stellar sky) are really parts of one and the same living being, rather than opposing principles. We understand weather as a form of chaos (if such an expression

makes any sense) which relates itself intimately with the ordered chaos or "Miraculous" negentropy of life itself. Weather and biosphere are now seen as two different densities of the same substance - the Hesiodic kaos. The distinction between a human being (or a mushroom) and a lightning bolt no longer seems so clear - or so important.

For us then the problem which presents itself is not the deconstruction and disappearance of the calendrical ideology, but rather the reconstruction and re-appearance of a more primordial pre--calendrical epistemology. Day and night, summer and winter, earth and the stars are no longer to be seen as making up any categorical dualism's, but rather as constituting a spectrum of dyadic energies (not too different from Taoist yin-yang five-elements theory). This would not involve a total return to some hypothetical Pleistocene pre-calendrical non-system based on pure spontaneity, but rather the synthesis of our new "chaos" understanding with ALL the old lunar, solar, and magical calendars.

Obviously we can't lose or dump the agricultural/stellar calendar even if we wanted to. It has become part of our means of experiencing time and space; and on some level we are all still agriculturalists -rebellious peasants! ("Tierra y Libertad! "). What we want is to supplement this

Farmer's Almanac with our Gatherer's anti-calendar, to superimpose the two, and to arrive at new (yet somehow primordial) ways of moving through space and time.

Our anti-calendar, which spontaneously experiences each moment as new and agrees with the Sufis that "there is no repetition in theophany", can be compared to the dreamtime of primordial Chaos; while the agricultural calendar can be compared with the mythic figures who exemplify Order and who are, in fact, the calendrical deities. For a long time now the chaos-calendar has been suppressed, and the 11 agricultural epistemology of Order has been elevated to the status of an ontology or a metaphysics. The year of Order - in which theophany does repeat itself 365 times a year - has tyrannized our perception of time for a Long time, about 6000 years in fact a "long duration" indeed - though only a flyspeck on the whole time of human awareness. Finally (with the "Death of God") Earth herself can at last be declared inert, non-organic - in fact, "dead" - and this pronouncement has provided agricultural/industrial Civilization with its terminal excuse to "rape our mother the Earth" and pollute her atmospheric skin with our antibiotic exhalations.

Ironically the agricultural calendar itself is now forgotten, buried under the debris of thousands of later

ideologies, despised as peasant superstition, lost in a meaningless past (except for a few spasms of commodity fetishism like Christmas or Halloween) - every day the same, Work or Leisure, with never a moment of true festival. And now we see that even the agricultural calendar, for all its cruelty, had great merit, compared with the soulless and mechanical year of Late Capitalism. The Old Farmers and old Moors preserved and transmitted a powerful poetics in their almanacs. Why, the almanac is a veritable occult treatise, a coding of all the wisdom of Ur and Memphis, a Hamlet's Mill or dream-machine for the production of mythopoesis. Above all the almanac represents a religion of festivals, a pattern of points of superabundance in which the rich moments of the year are made sacred by acts of generosity and excess. No, we can't give up the calendar; in fact we want to save it. But to do so we must surrender the calendar as categorical imperative; - we must admit that the "calendar of chaos" is yet older and more direct, and at the same time far newer and more precise. In short, we want a synthesis or synergetic cross fertilization of the calendars of chaos and order.

The agricultural calendar maintains a system of gender duality and inequality, as well as class duality and inequality. It presents us with a dialectic of surplus and scarcity, both of sexuality and of goods (see note 4).

By contrast the calendar of chaos, which characterizes a pre-agricultural and even a pre-hunting economy, offers far less scope for such categorization and stratification. It appears to be based on spontaneity and excess. It lies far closer to the "order of intimacy" which in fact is not an order at all but a chaos, a cornucopious outpouring of continual creation - "new every day on the potter's Wheel of heaven" (Chuang Tzu).

The original perception of Earth as a living being includes a recognition of her generosity an outpouring which links space (which is full of good things) and time (which does not withhold those good things) to human consciousness in the "order of intimacy". The invention of the calendar signals a growing mistrust of space/time, which must now be influenced and directed by a human consciousness that is separate and even alienated from Nature's intimacy and spontaneity. However, the calendar has not yet "killed" Earth nor has it made a metaphysical principle out of "Capital". It still reveres Earth and sacrilizes space/time. One may speak here of a "peasants" utopia - exemplified in so many Chinese myths and social movements - in which agriculture has not yet disrupted the natural harmonies nor given rise to inequality and injustice. Whatever the historical authenticity of this "stage of development", it remains with us as an

ideal and even as an ideology (as in Mexican anarchism, for example, or "Jeffersonian" agrarian democracy). Once again, for us it is not a matter of any "return TO the Stone Age" (whether Paleo- or Neolithic) but rather a return OF the stone age". All the magical calendars are coming back - the whole palimpsest has been illuminated and become legible to us. Why? Because under Capitalism the calendar itself has been replaced - by schedules of production and consumption - and Earth buried in concrete like a corpse. Medieval peasants angered over calendrical "reform" rioted and demanded "Give us back the lost eleven days!" We however must demand Give us back the entire lost year. In this reading of the almanac, in which both the year of order and the year of chaos will receive their due honor, we shall have to give up certain lingering manichaeian attitudes about the weather. Television weather shows - those poverty-stricken parodies of the almanac - assure us that the weather is "good" or "bad". "Weathermen", washed-out ghosts of once-great priests of Stonehenge and Tenochtitlan, smirk or grimace to give us our cue. "Accu-weather" is treated like a commodity; "climate control" and weather-management are posited as high values. Nature in wilder moods now appears only as "emergency", and is measured in millions of dollars of damage ... ; no longer seen as portent of the deaths of kings. But our

calendar will be glad to hear the winds
howl And the wolves come back, just
as glad as it is to see the sky blue and
wildflowers bloom in the ditch. Our
almanac will be based on that old zen
saw, "Every day is a fine day."

At midnight a low mist hangs in the
trees on the hillside above the lake, lit
from above by the Moon, making our
suburban maples into a Grimm Bros.
forest - in the Samhain season - in the
air of the Real World our almanac
advises us to live like the weather.
Rain or shine - embrace the skin of
Earth.

-- Hakim Bey, Long Pond Ashram, Oct.
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CHAOS: THE BROADSHEETS OF ONTOLOGICAL ANARCHISM

(Dedicated to Ustad Mahmud Ali Abd al-
Khabir)

Chaos

CHAOS NEVER DIED. Primordial
uncarved block, sole worshipful
monster, inert & spontaneous, more
ultraviolet than any mythology (like the
shadows before Babylon), the original
undifferentiated oneness-of-being still
radiates serene as the black pennants
of Assassins, random & perpetually
intoxicated.

Chaos comes before all principles of
order & entropy, it's neither a god nor a
maggot, its idiotic desires encompass &
define every possible choreography, all
meaningless aethers & phlogistons: its
masks are crystallizations of its own
facelessness, like clouds.

Everything in nature is perfectly real including consciousness, there's absolutely nothing to worry about. Not only have the chains of the Law been broken, they never existed; demons never guarded the stars, the Empire never got started, Eros never grew a beard.

No, listen, what happened was this: they lied to you, sold you ideas of good & evil, gave you distrust of your body & shame for your prophethood of chaos, invented words of disgust for your molecular love, mesmerized you with inattention, bored you with civilization & all its usurious emotions.

There is no becoming, no revolution, no struggle, no path; already you're the monarch of your own skin--your inviolable freedom waits to be completed only by the love of other monarchs: a politics of dream, urgent as the blueness of sky.

To shed all the illusory rights & hesitations of history demands the economy of some legendary Stone Age--shamans not priests, bards not lords, hunters not police, gatherers of paleolithic laziness, gentle as blood, going naked for a sign or painted as birds, poised on the wave of explicit presence, the clockless nowever.

Agents of chaos cast burning glances at anything or anyone capable of bearing witness to their condition, their fever of *lux et voluptas*. I am awake only in

what I love & desire to the point of
terror--everything else is just shrouded
furniture, quotidian anaesthesia, shit-
for-brains, sub-reptilian ennui of
totalitarian regimes, banal censorship &
useless pain.

Avatars of chaos act as spies,
saboteurs, criminals of amour fou,
neither selfless nor selfish, accessible
as children, mannered as barbarians,
chafed with obsessions, unemployed,
sensually deranged, wolfangels, mirrors
for contemplation, eyes like flowers,
pirates of all signs & meanings.

Here we are crawling the cracks
between walls of church state school &
factory, all the paranoid monoliths. Cut
off from the tribe by feral nostalgia we
tunnel after lost words, imaginary
bombs.

The last possible *deed* is that which
defines perception itself, an invisible
golden cord that connects us: illegal
dancing in the courthouse corridors. If I
were to kiss you here they'd call it an
act of terrorism--so let's take our
pistols to bed & wake up the city at
midnight like drunken bandits
celebrating with a fusillade, the
message of the taste of chaos.

Poetic Terrorism

WEIRD DANCING IN ALL-NIGHT
computer-banking lobbies.
Unauthorized pyrotechnic displays.
Land-art, earth-works as bizarre alien

artifacts strewn in State Parks.
Burglarize houses but instead of stealing, leave Poetic-Terrorist objects. Kidnap someone & make them happy. Pick someone at random & convince them they're the heir to an enormous, useless & amazing fortune--say 5000 square miles of Antarctica, or an aging circus elephant, or an orphanage in Bombay, or a collection of alchemical mss. Later they will come to realize that for a few moments they believed in something extraordinary, & will perhaps be driven as a result to seek out some more intense mode of existence.

Bolt up brass commemorative plaques in places (public or private) where you have experienced a revelation or had a particularly fulfilling sexual experience, etc.

Go naked for a sign.

Organize a strike in your school or workplace on the grounds that it does not satisfy your need for indolence & spiritual beauty.

Graffiti-art loaned some grace to ugly subways & rigid public monuments--PT-art can also be created for public places: poems scrawled in courthouse lavatories, small fetishes abandoned in parks & restaurants, xerox-art under windshield-wipers of parked cars, Big Character Slogans pasted on playground walls, anonymous letters mailed to random or chosen recipients (mail fraud), pirate radio transmissions,

wet cement...

The audience reaction or aesthetic-shock produced by PT ought to be at least as strong as the emotion of terror - powerful disgust, sexual arousal, superstitious awe, sudden intuitive breakthrough, dada-esque angst--no matter whether the PT is aimed at one person or many, no matter whether it is "signed" or anonymous, if it does not change someone's life (aside from the artist) it fails.

PT is an act in a Theater of Cruelty which has no stage, no rows of seats, no tickets & no walls. In order to work at all, PT must categorically be divorced from all conventional structures for art consumption (galleries, publications, media). Even the guerilla Situationist tactics of street theater are perhaps too well known & expected now.

An exquisite seduction carried out not only in the cause of mutual satisfaction but also as a conscious act in a deliberately beautiful life--may be the ultimate PT. The PTerrorist behaves like a confidence-trickster whose aim is not money but CHANGE.

Don't do PT for other artists, do it for people who will not realize (at least for a few moments) that what you have done is art. Avoid recognizable art-categories, avoid politics, don't stick around to argue, don't be sentimental; be ruthless, take risks, vandalize only what *must* be defaced, do something

children will remember all their lives--
but don't be spontaneous unless the PT
Muse has possessed you.

Dress up. Leave a false name. Be
legendary. The best PT is against the
law, but don't get caught. Art as crime;
crime as art.

Amour Fou

AMOUR FOU IS NOT a Social
Democracy, it is not a Parliament of
Two. The minutes of its secret meetings
deal with meanings too enormous but
too precise for prose. Not this, not that--
its Book of Emblems trembles in your
hand.

Naturally it shits on schoolmasters &
police, but it sneers at liberationists &
ideologues as well--it is not a clean well-
lit room. A topological charlatan laid out
its corridors & abandoned parks, its
ambush-decor of luminous black &
membranous maniacal red.

Each of us owns half the map--like two
renaissance potentates we define a new
culture with our anathematized
mingling of bodies, merging of liquids--
the Imaginal seams of our City-state
blur in our sweat.

Ontological anarchism never came back
from its last fishing trip. So long as no
one squeals to the FBI, CHAOS cares
nothing for the future of civilization.
Amour fou breeds only by accident--its
primary goal is ingestion of the Galaxy.

A conspiracy of transmutation.

Its only concern for the Family lies in the possibility of incest ("Grow your own!" "Every human a Pharoah!")--O most sincere of readers, my semblance, my brother/sister!--& in the masturbation of a child it finds concealed (like a japanese-paper-flower-pill) the image of the crumbling of the State.

Words belong to those who use them only till someone else steals them back. The Surrealists disgraced themselves by selling amour fou to the ghost-machine of Abstraction--they sought in their unconsciousness only power over others, & in this they followed de Sade (who wanted "freedom" only for grown-up whitemen to eviscerate women & children).

Amour fou is saturated with its own aesthetic, it fills itself to the borders of itself with the trajectories of its own gestures, it runs on angels' clocks, it is not a fit fate for commissars & shopkeepers. Its ego evaporates in the mutability of desire, its communal spirit withers in the selfishness of obsession.

Amour fou involves non-ordinary sexuality the way sorcery demands non-ordinary consciousness. The anglo-saxon post- Protestant world channels all its suppressed sensuality into advertising & splits itself into clashing mobs: hysterical prudes vs promiscuous clones & former-ex-

singles. AF doesn't want to join anyone's army, it takes no part in the Gender Wars, it is bored by equal opportunity employment (in fact it refuses to work for a living), it doesn't complain, doesn't explain, never votes & never pays taxes.

AF would like to see every bastard ("lovechild") come to term & birthed-- AF thrives on anti-entropic devices--AF loves to be molested by children--AF is better than prayer, better than sinsemilla--AF takes its own palmtrees & moon wherever it goes. AF admires tropicalismo, sabotage, break- dancing, Layla & Majnun, the smells of gunpowder & sperm.

AF is always illegal, whether it's disguised as a marriage or a boyscout troop--always drunk, whether on the wine of its own secretions or the smoke of its own polymorphous virtues. It is not the derangement of the senses but rather their apotheosis--not the result of freedom but rather its precondition. *Lux et voluptas.*

Wild Children

THE FULL MOON'S UNFATHOMABLE light-path--mid-May midnight in some State that starts with "I," so two-dimensional it can scarcely be said to possess any geography at all--the beams so urgent & tangible you must draw the shades in order to think in words.

No question of *writing to* Wild Children. They think in images--prose is for them a code not yet fully digested & ossified, just as for us never fully trusted.

You may write *about* them, so that others who have lost the silver chain may follow. Or write *for* them, making of STORY & EMBLEM a process of seduction into your own paleolithic memories, a barbaric enticement to liberty (chaos as CHAOS understands it).

For this otherworld species or "third sex," *les enfants sauvages*, fancy & Imagination are still undifferentiated. Unbridled PLAY: at one & the same time the source of our Art & of all the race's rarest eros.

To embrace disorder both as wellspring of style & voluptuous storehouse, a fundamental of our alien & occult civilization, our conspiratorial esthetic, our lunatic espionage--this is the action (let's face it) either of an artist of some sort, or of a ten- or thirteen-year-old.

Children whose clarified senses betray them into a brilliant sorcery of beautiful pleasure reflect something feral & smutty in the nature of reality itself: natural ontological anarchists, angels of chaos--their gestures & body odors broadcast around them a jungle of presence, a forest of prescience complete with snakes, ninja weapons, turtles, futuristic shamanism, incredible mess, piss, ghosts, sunlight, jerking off,

birds' nests & eggs--gleeful aggression against the groan-ups of those Lower Planes so powerless to englobe either destructive epiphanies or creation in the form of antics fragile but sharp enough to slice moonlight.

And yet the denizens of these inferior jerkwater dimensions truly believe they control the destinies of Wild Children--& *down here*, such vicious beliefs actually sculpt most of the substance of happenstance.

The only ones who actually wish to *share* the mischievous destiny of those savage runaways or minor guerillas rather than dictate it, the only ones who can understand that cherishing & unleashing are the *same act*--these are mostly artists, anarchists, perverts, heretics, a band apart (as much from each other as from the world) or able to meet only as wild children might, locking gazes across a dinnertable while adults gibber from behind their masks.

Too young for Harley choppers--flunk-outs, break-dancers, scarcely pubescent poets of flat lost railroad towns--a million sparks falling from the skyrocketers of Rimbaud & Mowgli--slender terrorists whose gaudy bombs are compacted of polymorphous love & the precious shards of popular culture--punk gunslingers dreaming of piercing their ears, animist bicyclists gliding in the pewter dusk through Welfare streets of accidental flowers--out-of-season gypsy skinny-dippers, smiling sideways-glancing thieves of power-

totems, small change & panther-bladed knives--we sense them everywhere--we publish this offer to trade the corruption of our own *lux et gaudium* for their perfect gentle filth.

So get this: our realization, our liberation depends on *theirs*--not because we ape the Family, those "misers of love" who hold hostages for a banal future, nor the State which schools us all to sink beneath the event-horizon of a tedious "usefulness"--no--but because *we & they*, the wild ones, are images of each other, linked & bordered by that silver chain which defines the pale of sensuality, transgression & vision.

We share the same enemies & our means of triumphant escape are also the same: a delirious & obsessive *play*, powered by the spectral brilliance of the wolves & their children.

Paganism

CONSTELLATIONS BY WHICH TO steer the barque of the soul. "If the moslem understood Islam he would become an idol-worshipper."--Mahmud Shabestari
Eleggua, ugly opener of doors with a hook in his head & cowrie shells for eyes, black santeria cigar & glass of rum--same as Ganesh, elephant-head fat boy of Beginnings who rides a mouse. The organ which senses the numinous atrophies with the senses. Those who cannot feel baraka cannot know the caress of the world.

Hermes Poimandres taught the animation of idolons, the magic indwelling of icons by spirits--but those who cannot perform this rite on themselves & on the whole palpable fabric of material being will inherit only blues, rubbish, decay.

The pagan body becomes a Court of Angels who all perceive this place--this very grove--as paradise ("If there is a paradise, surely it is *here!*"--inscription on a Mughal garden gate)..

But ontological anarchism is too paleolithic for eschatology--things are real, sorcery works, bush-spirits one with the Imagination, death an unpleasant vagueness--the plot of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*--an epic of mutability. The personal mythscape.

Paganism has not yet invented laws--only virtues. No priestcraft, no theology or metaphysics or morality--but a universal shamanism in which no one attains real humanity without a vision.

Food money sex sleep sun sand & sinsemilla--love truth peace freedom & justice. Beauty. Dionysus the drunk boy on a panther--rank adolescent sweat--Pan goatman slogs through the solid earth up to his waist as if it were the sea, his skin crusted with moss & lichen--Eros multiplies himself into a dozen pastoral naked Iowa farm boys with muddy feet & pond-scum on their thighs.

Raven, the potlatch trickster,
sometimes a boy, old woman, bird who
stole the Moon, pine needles floating on
a pond, Heckle/Jeckle totempole-head,
chorus-line of crows with silver eyes
dancing on the woodpile--same as
Semar the hunchback albino
hermaphrodite shadow-puppet patron
of the Javanese revolution.

Yemaya, bluestar sea-goddess &
patroness of queers--same as Tara,
bluegrey aspect of Kali, necklace of
skulls, dancing on Shiva's stiff lingam,
licking monsoon clouds with her yard-
long tongue--same as Loro Kidul,
jasper-green Javanese sea-goddess
who bestows the power of
invulnerability on sultans by tantrik
intercourse in magic towers & caves.

>From one point of view ontological
anarchism is extremely bare, stripped
of all qualities & possessions, poor as
CHAOS itself--but from another point of
view it pullulates with baroqueness like
the Fucking-Temples of Kathmandu or
an alchemical emblem book--it sprawls
on its divan eating loukoum &
entertaining heretical notions, one hand
inside its baggy trousers.

The hulls of its pirate ships are
lacquered black, the lateen sails are
red, black banners with the device of a
winged hourglass.

A South China Sea of the mind, off a
jungle-flat coast of palms, rotten gold
temples to unknown bestiary gods,

island after island, the breeze like wet yellow silk on naked skin, navigating by pantheistic stars, hierophany on hierophany, light upon light against the luminous & chaotic dark.

Art Sabotage

ART SABOTAGE STRIVES TO be perfectly exemplary but at the same time retain an element of opacity--not propaganda but aesthetic shock--apallingly direct yet also subtly angled--action-as-metaphor.

Art Sabotage is the dark side of Poetic Terrorism--creation- through- destruction--but it cannot serve any Party, nor any nihilism, nor even art itself. Just as the banishment of illusion enhances awareness, so the demolition of aesthetic blight sweetens the air of the world of discourse, of the Other. Art Sabotage serves only consciousness, attentiveness, awakens.

A-S goes beyond paranoia, beyond deconstruction--the ultimate criticism-- physical attack on offensive art-- aesthetic jihad. The slightest taint of petty ego-icity or even of personal taste spoils its purity & vitiates its force. A-S can never seek power--only *release* it.

Individual artworks (even the worst) are largely irrelevant- -A-S seeks to damage institutions which use art to diminish consciousness & profit by delusion. This or that poet or painter cannot be condemned for lack of vision--

but malign Ideas can be assaulted through the artifacts they generate. MUZAK is designed to hypnotize & control--its machinery can be smashed.

Public book burnings--why should rednecks & Customs officials monopolize this weapon? Novels about children possessed by demons; the *New York Times* bestseller list; feminist tracts against pornography; schoolbooks (especially Social Studies, Civics, Health); piles of *New York Post*, *Village Voice* & other supermarket papers; choice gleanings of Xtian publishers; a few Harlequin Romances--a festive atmosphere, wine-bottles & joints passed around on a clear autumn afternoon.

To throw money away at the Stock Exchange was pretty decent Poetic Terrorism--but to *destroy* the money would have been good Art Sabotage. To seize TV transmission & broadcast a few pirated minutes of incendiary Chaote art would constitute a feat of PT--but simply to blow up the transmission tower would be perfectly adequate Art Sabotage. If certain galleries & museums deserve an occasional brick through their windows--not destruction, but a jolt to complacency--then what about BANKS? Galleries turn beauty into a commodity but banks transmute Imagination into feces and debt. Wouldn't the world gain a degree of beauty with each bank that could be made to tremble...or fall? But how? Art Sabotage should probably stay away from politics (it's so boring)--but not

from banks.

Don't picket--vandalize. Don't protest--deface. When ugliness, poor design & stupid waste are forced upon you, turn Luddite, throw your shoe in the works, retaliate. Smash the symbols of the Empire in the name of nothing but the heart's longing for grace.

The Assassins

ACROSS THE LUSTER OF the desert & into the polychrome hills, hairless & ochre violet dun & umber, at the top of a dessicate blue valley travelers find an artificial oasis, a fortified castle in saracenic style enclosing a hidden garden.

As guests of the Old Man of the Mountain Hassan-i Sabbah they climb rock-cut steps to the castle. Here the Day of Resurrection has already come & gone--those within live outside profane Time, which they hold at bay with daggers & poisons.

Behind crenellations & slit-windowed towers scholars & fedayeen wake in narrow monolithic cells. Star-maps, astrolabes, alembics & retorts, piles of open books in a shaft of morning sunlight--an unsheathed scimitar.

Each of those who enter the realm of the *Imam-of-one's-own-being* becomes a sultan of inverted revelation, a monarch of abrogation & apostasy. In a central chamber

scalloped with light and hung with tapestried arabesques they lean on bolsters & smoke long chibouks of haschisch scented with opium & amber.

For them the hierarchy of being has compacted to a dimensionless punctum of the real--for them the chains of Law have been broken--they end their fasting with wine. For them the outside of everything is its inside, its true face shines through direct. But the garden gates are camouflaged with terrorism, mirrors, rumors of assassination, trompe l'oeil, legends.

Pomegranate, mulberry, persimmon, the erotic melancholy of cypresses, membrane-pink shirazi roses, braziers of meccan aloes & benzoin, stiff shafts of ottoman tulips, carpets spread like make-believe gardens on actual lawns-- a pavilion set with a mosaic of calligrammes--a willow, a stream with watercress--a fountain crystallized underneath with geometry-- the metaphysical scandal of bathing odalisques, of wet brown cupbearers hide-&-seeking in the foliage-- "water, greenery, beautiful faces."

By night Hassan-i Sabbah like a civilized wolf in a turban stretches out on a parapet above the garden & glares at the sky, conning the asterisms of heresy in the mindless cool desert air. True, in this myth some aspirant disciples may be ordered to fling themselves off the ramparts into the black--but also true that some of them will learn to fly like sorcerers.

The emblem of Alamut holds in the mind, a *mandals* or magic circle lost to history but embedded or imprinted in consciousness. The Old Man flits like a ghost into tents of kings & bedrooms of theologians, past all locks & guards with forgotten moslem/ninja techniques, leaves behind bad dreams, stilettos on pillows, puissant bribes.

The attar of his propaganda seeps into the criminal dreams of ontological anarchism, the heraldry of our obsessions displays the luminous black outlaw banners of the Assassins...all of them pretenders to the throne of an Imaginal Egypt, an occult space/light continuum consumed by still-unimagined liberties.

Pyrotechnics

INVENTED BY THE CHINESE but never developed for war--a fine example of Poetic Terrorism--a weapon used to trigger aesthetic shock rather than kill--the Chinese hated war & used to go into mourning when armies were raised--gunpowder more useful to frighten malign demons, delight children, fill the air with brave & risky-smelling haze.

Class C Thunder Bombs from Kwantung, bottlerockets, butterflies, M-80's, sunflowers, "A Forest In Springtime"-- revolution weather--light your cigarette from the sizzling fuse of a Haymarket-black bomb--imagine the air full of lamiae & succubi, oppressive

spirits, police-ghosts. Call some kid with a smouldering punk or kitchen match-- shaman-apostle of summer gunpowder plots--shatter the heavy night with pinched stars & pumped stars, arsenic & antimony, sodium & calomel, a blitz of magnesium & shrill picrate of potash.

Spur-fire (lampblack & saltpetre) portfire & iron filings-- attack your local bank or ugly church with roman candles & purple-gold skyrockets, impromptu & anonymous (perhaps launch from back of pick-up truck..)

Build frame-lattice lancework set-pieces on the roofs of insurance buildings or schools--a kundalini-snake or Chaos-dragon coiled barium-green against a background of sodium- oxalate yellow-- Don't Tread On Me--or copulating monsters shooting wads of jizm-fire at a Baptists old folks home.

Cloud-sculpture, smoke sculpture & flags = Air Art. Earthworks. Fountains = Water Art. And Fireworks. Don't perform with Rockefeller grants & police permits for audiences of culture-lovers. Evanescent incendiary mind-bombs, scary mandalas flaring up on smug suburban nights, alien green thunderheads of emotional plague blasted by orgone-blue vajra-rays of lasered *feux d'artifice*.

Comets that explode with the odor of hashish & radioactive charcoal-- swampghouls & will-o'-the-wisps

haunting public parks--fake St. Elmo's
fire flickering over the architecture of
the bourgeoisie--strings of lady-fingers
falling on the Legislature floor--
salamander-elementals attack well-
known moral reformers.

Blazing shellac, sugar of milk,
strontium, pitch, gum water, gerbs of
chinese fire--for a few moments the air
is ozone- sharp--drifting opal cloud of
pungent dragon/phoenix smoke. For an
instant the Empire falls, its princes &
governors flee to their stygian muck,
plumes of sulphur from elf-
flamethrowers burning their pinched
asses as they retreat. The Assassin-
child, psyche of fire, holds sway for one
brief dogstar-hot night.

Chaos Myths

Unseen Chaos (po-te-kitea)
Unpossessed, Unpassing
Chaos of utter darkness
Untouched & untouchable
--Maori Chant

Chaos perches on a sky-mountain: a
huge bird like a yellow bag or red
fireball, with six feet & four wings--has
no face but dances & sings.

Or Chaos is a black longhaired dog,
blind & deaf, lacking the five viscera.

Chaos the Abyss comes first, then
Earth/Gaia, then Desire/Eros. From
these three proceed two pairs--Erebus
& old Night, Aether & Daylight. Neither

Being nor Non-being
neither air nor earth nor space:
what was enclosed? where? under
whose protection?
What was water, deep, unfathomable?
Neither death nor immortality, day nor
night--
but ONE breathed by itself with no
wind.
Nothing else. Darkness swathed in
darkness,
unmanifest water.
The ONE, hidden by void,
felt the generation of heat, came into
being
as Desire, first seed of Mind...
Was there an up or down?
There were casters of seed, there were
powers:
energy underneath, impulse above.
But who knows for sure?
--Rg Veda

Tiamat the Chaos-Ocean slowly drops
from her womb Silt & Slime, the
Horizons, Sky and watery Wisdom.
These offspring grow noisy & bumptious--
-she considers their destruction.

But Marduk the wargod of Babylon rises
in rebellion against the Old Hag & her
Chaos-monsters, chthonic totems--
Worm, Female Ogre, Great Lion, Mad
Dog, Scorpion Man, Howling Storm--
dragons wearing their glory like gods--
& Tiamat herself a great sea-serpent.

Marduk accuses her of causing sons to
rebel against fathers- -she loves Mist &
Cloud, principles of disorder. Marduk
will be the first to rule, to invent

government. In battle he slays Tiamat & from her body orders the material universe. He inaugurates the Babylonian Empire--then from gibbets & bloody entrails of Tiamat's incestuous son he creates the human race to serve forever the comfort of gods--& their high priests & anointed kings.

Father Zeus & the Olympians wage war against Mother Gaia & the Titans, those partisans of Chaos, the old ways of hunting & gathering, of aimless wandering, androgyny & the license of beasts.

Amon-Ra (Being) sits alone in the primordial Chaos-Ocean of NUN creating all the other gods by jerking off--but Chaos also manifests as the dragon Apophis whom Ra must destroy (along with his state of glory, his shadow & his magic) in order that the Pharaoh may safely rule--a victory ritually re-created daily in Imperial temples to confound the enemies of the State, of cosmic Order.

Chaos is Hun Tun, Emperor of the Center. One day the South Sea, Emperor Shu, & the North Sea, Emperor Hu (*shu hu* = lightning) paid a visit to Hun Tun, who always treated them well. Wishing to repay his kindness they said, "All beings have seven orifices for seeing, hearing, eating, shitting, etc.--but poor old Hun Tun has none! Let's drill some into him!" So they did--one orifice a day--till on the seventh day, Chaos died.

But...Chaos is also an enormous chicken's egg. Inside it P'an-Ku is born & grows for 18,000 years--at last the egg opens up, splits into sky & earth, yang & yin. Now P'an-Ku grows into a column that holds up the universe--or else he *becomes* the universe (breath-->wind, eyes-->sun & moon, blood & humors-->rivers & seas, hair & lashes-->stars & planets, sperm-->pearls, marrow-->jade, his fleas-->human beings, etc.)

Or else he becomes the man/monster Yellow Emperor. Or else he becomes Lao Tzu, prophet of Tao. In fact, poor old Hun Tun is the Tao itself.

"Nature's music has no existence outside things. The various apertures, pipes, flutes, all living beings together make up nature. The "I" cannot produce things & things cannot produce the "I," which is self-existent. Things are what they are spontaneously, not caused by something else. Everything is natural & does not know why it is so. The 10,000 things have 10,000 different states, all in motion as if there were a True Lord to move them--but if we search for evidence of this Lord we fail to find any."
(Kuo Hsiang)

Every realized consciousness is an

"emperor" whose sole form of rule is to do nothing to disturb the spontaneity of nature, the Tao. The "sage" is not Chaos itself, but rather a loyal child of Chaos--one of P'an-Ku's fleas, a fragment of flesh of Tiamat's monstrous son. "Heaven and Earth," says Chuang Tzu, "were born at the same time I was, & the 10,000 things are one with me."

Ontological Anarchism tends to disagree only with the Taoists' total quietism. In our world Chaos has been overthrown by younger gods, moralists, phalocrats, banker-priests, fit lords for serfs. If rebellion proves impossible then at least a kind of clandestine spiritual jihad might be launched. Let it follow the war-banners of the anarchist black dragon, Tiamat, Hun Tun.

Chaos never died.

Pornography

IN PERSIA I SAW that poetry is meant to be set to music & chanted or sung--for one reason alone--because it *works*.

A right combination of image & tune plunges the audience into a *hal* (something between emotional/aesthetic mood & trance of hyperawareness), outbursts of weeping, fits of dancing--measurable physical response to art. For us the link between poetry & body died with the bardic era--we read under the influence of a cartesian anaesthetic gas.

In N. India even non-musical recitation provokes noise & motion, each good couplet applauded, "Wa! Wa!" with elegant hand-jive, tossing of rupees-- whereas we listen to poetry like some SciFi brain in a jar--at best a wry chuckle or grimace, vestige of simian rictus--the rest of the body off on some other planet.

In the East poets are sometimes thrown in prison--a sort of compliment, since it suggests the author has done something at least as real as theft or rape or revolution. Here poets are allowed to publish anything at all--a sort of punishment in effect, prison without walls, without echoes, without palpable existence--shadow-realm of print, or of abstract thought--world without risk or *eros*.

So poetry is dead again--& even if the mumia from its corpse retains some healing properties, auto-resurrection isn't one of them.

If rulers refuse to consider poems as crimes, then someone must commit crimes that serve the function of poetry, or texts that possess the resonance of terrorism. At any cost re-connect poetry to the body. Not crimes against bodies, but against Ideas (& Ideas-in-things) which are deadly & suffocating. Not stupid libertinage but exemplary crimes, aesthetic crimes, crimes for love. In England some pornographic books are still banned. Pornography has a measurable physical

effect on its readers. Like propaganda it sometimes changes lives because it uncovers true desires.

Our culture produces most of its porn out of body-hatred-- but erotic art in itself makes a better vehicle for enhancement of being/consciousness/bliss--as in certain oriental works. A sort of Western tantrik porn might help galvanize the corpse, make it shine with some of the glamor of crime.

America has freedom of speech because all words are considered equally vapid. Only *images* count--the censors love snaps of death & mutilation but recoil in horror at the sight of a child masturbating-- apparently they experience this as an invasion of their existential validity, their identification with the Empire & its subtlest gestures.

No doubt even the most poetic porn would never revive the faceless corpse to dance & sing (like the Chinese Chaos-bird)--but...imagine a script for a three-minute film set on a mythical isle of runaway children who inhabit ruins of old castles or build totem-huts & junk-assemblage nests--mixture of animation, special-effects, compugraphix & color tape-- edited tight as a fastfood commercial...

...but weird & naked, feathers & bones, tents sewn with crystal, black dogs, pigeon-blood--flashes of amber limbs

tangled in sheets--faces in starry
masks kissing soft creases of skin--
androgynous pirates, castaway faces of
columbines sleeping on thigh-white
flowers--nasty hilarious piss jokes, pet
lizards lapping spilt milk--nude break-
dancing--victorian bathtub with rubber
ducks & pink boners-- Alice on ganja...

...atonal punk reggae scored for
gamelan, synthesizer, saxophones &
drums--electric boogie lyrics sung by
aetherial children's choir--ontological
anarchist lyrics, cross between Hafez &
Pancho Villa, Li Po & Bakunin, Kabir &
Tzara- -call it "CHAOS--the Rock
Video!"

No...probably just a dream. Too
expensive to produce, & besides, who
would see it? Not the kids it was meant
to seduce. Pirate TV is a futile fantasy,
rock merely another commodity--forget
the slick gesamtkunstwerk, then.
Leaflet a playground with inflammatory
smutty feuilletons-- pornopropaganda,
crackpot samizdat to unchain Desire
from its bondage.

Crime

JUSTICE CANNOT BE OBTAINED under
any Law--action in accord with
spontaneous nature, action which is
just, cannot be defined by dogma. The
crimes advocated in these broadsheets
cannot be committed against self or
other but only against the mordant
crystallization of Ideas into structures
of poisonous Thrones & Dominations.

That is, not crimes against nature or humanity but crimes by legal fiat. Sooner or later the uncovering & unveiling of self/nature transmogrifies a person into a brigand--like stepping into another world then returning to this one to discover you've been declared a traitor, heretic, exile. The Law waits for you to stumble on a mode of being, a soul different from the FDA-approved purple-stamped standard dead meat--& as soon as you begin to act in harmony with nature the Law garottes & strangles you--so don't play the blessed liberal middleclass martyr--accept the fact that you're a criminal & be prepared to act like one.

Paradox: to embrace Chaos is not to slide toward entropy but to emerge into an energy like stars, a pattern of instantaneous grace--a spontaneous organic order completely different from the carrion pyramids of sultans, muftis, cadis & grinning executioners.

After Chaos comes Eros--the principle of order implicit in the nothingness of the unqualified One. Love is structure, system, the only code untainted by slavery & drugged sleep. We must become crooks & con-men to protect its spiritual beauty in a bezel of clandestinity, a hidden garden of espionage.

Don't just survive while waiting for someone's revolution to clear your head, don't sign up for the armies of anorexia or bulimia--act as if you were

already free, calculate the odds, step out, remember the Code Duello-- Smoke Pot/Eat Chicken/Drink Tea. Every man his own vine & figtree (*Circle Seven Koran*, Noble Drew Ali)-- carry your Moorish passport with pride, don't get caught in the crossfire, keep your back covered--but take the risk, dance before you calcify.

The natural social model for ontological anarchism is the child-gang or the bank-robbers-band. Money is a lie--this adventure must be feasible without it--booty & pillage should be spent before it turns back into dust. Today is Resurrection Day--money wasted on beauty will be alchemically transmuted into elixir. As my uncle Melvin used to say, stolen watermelon tastes sweeter. The world is already re-made according to the heart's desire- -but civilization owns all the leases & most of the guns. Our feral angels demand we trespass, for they manifest themselves only on forbidden grounds. High Way Man. The yoga of stealth, the lightning raid, the enjoyment of treasure.

Sorcery

THE UNIVERSE WANTS TO PLAY. Those who refuse out of dry spiritual greed & choose pure contemplation forfeit their humanity--those who refuse out of dull anguish, those who hesitate, lose their chance at divinity--those who mold themselves blind masks of Ideas & thrash around seeking some proof of their own solidity end by seeing out of

dead men's eyes.

Sorcery: the systematic cultivation of enhanced consciousness or non-ordinary awareness & its deployment in the world of deeds & objects to bring about desired results.

The incremental openings of perception gradually banish the false selves, our cacophonous ghosts--the "black magic" of envy & vendetta backfires because Desire cannot be forced. Where our knowledge of beauty harmonizes with the *ludus naturae*, sorcery begins.

No, not spoon-bending or horoscopy, not the Golden Dawn or make-believe shamanism, astral projection or the Satanic Mass--if it's mumbo jumbo you want go for the real stuff, banking, politics, social science--not that weak blavatskian crap.

Sorcery works at creating around itself a psychic/physical space or openings into a space of untrammelled expression--the metamorphosis of quotidian place into angelic sphere. This involves the manipulation of symbols (which are also things) & of people (who are also symbolic)--the archetypes supply a vocabulary for this process & therefore are treated as if they were both real & unreal, like words. Imaginal Yoga.

The sorcerer is a Simple Realist: the world is real--but then so must consciousness be real since its effects are so tangible. The dullard finds even

wine tasteless but the sorcerer can be intoxicated by the mere sight of water. Quality of perception defines the world of intoxication--but to sustain it & expand it to include *others* demands activity of a certain kind--sorcery. Sorcery breaks no law of nature because there is no Natural Law, only the spontaneity of *natura naturans*, the tao. Sorcery violates laws which seek to chain this flow-- priests, kings, hierophants, mystics, scientists & shopkeepers all brand the sorcerer *enemy* for threatening the power of their charade, the tensile strength of their illusory web.

A poem can act as a spell & vice versa-- but sorcery refuses to be a metaphor for mere literature--it insists that symbols must cause events as well as private epiphanies. It is not a critique but a re-making. It rejects all eschatology & metaphysics of removal, all bleary nostalgia & strident futurismo, in favor of a paroxysm or seizure of *presence*.

Incense & crystal, dagger & sword, wand, robes, rum, cigars, candles, herbs like dried dreams--the virgin boy staring into a bowl of ink--wine & ganja, meat, yantras & gestures-- rituals of pleasure, the garden of houris & sakis--the sorcerer climbs these snakes & ladders to a moment which is fully saturated with its own color, where mountains are mountains & trees are trees, where the body becomes all time, the beloved all space.

The tactics of ontological anarchism are rooted in this secret Art--the goals of ontological anarchism appear in its flowering. Chaos hexes its enemies & rewards its devotees...this strange yellowing pamphlet, pseudonymous & dust-stained, reveals all...send away for one split second of eternity.

Advertisement

WHAT THIS TELLS YOU is not prose. It may be pinned to the board but it's still alive & wriggling. It does not want to seduce you unless you're extremely young & good-looking (enclose recent photo).

Hakim Bey lives in a seedy Chinese hotel where the proprietor nods out over newspaper & scratchy broadcasts of Peking Opera. The ceiling fan turns like a sluggish dervish--sweat falls on the page--the poet's kaftan is rusty, his ovals spill ash on the rug--his monologues seem disjointed & slightly sinister--outside shuttered windows the barrio fades into palmtrees, the naive blue ocean, the philosophy of tropicalismo.

Along a highway somewhere east of Baltimore you pass an Airstream trailer with a big sign on the lawn SPIRITUAL READINGS & the image of a crude black hand on a red background. Inside you notice a display of dream-books, numbers-books, pamphlets on Hoodoo and Santeria, dusty old nudist magazines, a pile of *Boy's Life*,

treatises on fighting-cocks... & this book, *Chaos*. Like words spoken in a dream, portentous, evanescent, changing into perfumes, birds, colors, forgotten music.

This book distances itself by a certain impassibility of surface, almost a glassiness. It doesn't wag its tail & it doesn't snarl but it bites & humps the furniture. It doesn't have an ISBN number & it doesn't want you for a disciple but it might kidnap your children.

This book is nervous like coffee or malaria--it sets up a network of cut-outs & safe drops between itself & its readers--but it's so baldfaced & literal-minded it practically encodes itself--it smokes itself into a stupor.

A mask, an automythology, a map without placenames--stiff as an egyptian wallpainting nevertheless it reaches to caress someone's face--& suddenly finds itself out in the street, in a body, embodied in light, walking, awake, almost satisfied.

--NYC, May 1-July 4, 1984

[CONTINUE](#)

COMMUNIQUES OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR ONTOLOGICAL ANARCHY

COMMUNIQUE #1 (SPRING 1986)

I. Slogans & Mottos for Subway Graffiti & Other Purposes

ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITANISM

POETIC TERRORISM

(for scrawling or rubberstamping on
advertisements:)

THIS IS YOUR TRUE DESIRE

MARXISM-STIRNERISM

STRIKE FOR INDOLENCE & SPIRITUAL
BEAUTY

YOUNG CHILDREN HAVE BEAUTIFUL
FEET

THE CHAINS OF LAW HAVE BEEN
BROKEN

TANTRIK PORNOGRAPHY

RADICAL ARISTOCRATISM

KIDS' LIB URBAN GUERILLAS

IMAGINARY SHIITE FANATICS

BOLO'BOLO

GAY ZIONISM

(SODOM FOR THE SODOMITES)

PIRATE UTOPIAS

CHAOS NEVER DIED

Some of these are "sincere" slogans of
the A.O.A.--others are meant to rouse
public apprehension & misgivings--but
we're not sure which is which. Thanx to
Stalin, Anon., Bob Black, Pir Hassan
(upon his mention be peace), F.
Nietzsche, Hank Purcell Jr., "P.M.," &

Bro. Abu Jihad al-Salah of the Moorish Temple of Dagon.

II. Some Poetic-Terrorist Ideas Still Sadly Languishing in the Realm of "Conceptual Art"

1. Walk into Citibank or Chembank computer customer service area during busy period, take a shit on the floor, & leave.
2. Chicago May Day '86: organize "religious" procession for Haymarket "Martyrs"--huge banners with sentimental portraits, wreathed in flowers & streaming with tinsel & ribbon, borne by penitenti in black KKKatholic-style hooded gowns--outrageous campy TV acolytes with incense & holy water sprinkle the crowd--anarchists w/ash-smearred faces beat themselves with little flails & whips--a "Pope" in black robes blesses tiny symbolic coffins reverently carried to Cemetery by weeping punks. Such a spectacle ought to offend *nearly everyone*.
3. Paste up in public places a xerox flyer, photo of a beautiful twelve-year-old boy, naked and masturbating, clearly titled: THE FACE OF GOD.
4. Mail elaborate & exquisite magickal "blessings" *anonymously* to people or groups you admire, e.g. for their politics or spirituality or physical beauty or success in crime, etc. Follow the same general procedure as outlined in

Section 5 below, but utilize an aesthetic of good fortune, bliss or love, as appropriate.

5. Invoke a terrible curse on a malign *institution*, such as the *New York Post* or the MUZAK company. A technique adapted from Malaysian sorcerers: send the Company a package containing a bottle, corked and sealed with black wax. Inside: dead insects, scorpions, lizards or the like; a bag containing graveyard dirt ("gris-gris" in American HooDoo terminology) along with other noxious substances; an egg, pierced with iron nails and pins; and a scroll on which an emblem is drawn (see p. 57).

(This *yantra* or *veve* invokes the Black Djinn, the Self's dark shadow. Full details obtainable from the A.O.A.) An accompanying note explains that the hex is sent against the *institution* & not against individuals--but unless the institution itself *ceases to be malign*, the curse (like a mirror) will begin to infect the premises with noxious fortune, a miasma of negativity. Prepare a "news release" explaining the curse & taking credit for it in the name of the American Poetry Society. Mail copies of this text to all employees of the institution & to selected media. The night before these letters arrive, wheatpaste the institutional premises with xerox copies of the Black Djinn's emblem, where they will be seen by all employees arriving for work next morning.

(Thanx to Abu Jehad again, & to Sri Anamananda--the Moorish Castellan of Belvedere Weather Tower--& other comrades of the Central Park Autonomous Zone, & Brooklyn Temple Number 1)

COMMUNIQUE #2

The Kallikak Memorial Bolo & Chaos Ashram: A Proposal

NURSING AN OBSESSION FOR Airstream trailers--those classic miniature dirigibles on wheels--& also the New Jersey Pine Barrens, huge lost backlands of sandy creeks & tar pines, cranberry bogs & ghost towns, population around 14 per sq. mile, dirt roads overgrown with fern, brokenspine cabins & isolated rusty mobile homes with burnt-out cars in the front yards

land of the mythical Kallikaks--Piney families studied by eugenicists in the 1920's to justify sterilization of rural poor. Some Kallikaks married well, prospered, & waxed bourgeois thanx to good genes--others however never worked real jobs but lived off the woods--incest, sodomy, mental deficiencies galore--photos touched up to make them look vacant & morose--descended from rogue Indians, Hessian mercenaries, rum smugglers, deserters--Lovecraftian degenerates

come to think of it the Kallikaks might well have produced secret Chaotes,

precursor sex radicals, Zerowork prophets. Like other monotone landscapes (desert, sea, swamp), the Barrens seem infused with erotic power--not vril or orgone so much as a languid disorder, almost a sluttishness of Nature, as if the very ground & water were formed of sexual flesh, membranes, spongy erectile tissue. We want to squat there, maybe an abandoned hunting/fishing lodge with old woodstove & privy--or decaying Vacation Cabins on some disused County Highway--or just a woodlot where we park 2 or 3 Airstreams hidden back in the pines near creek or swimming hole. Were the Kallikaks onto something good? We'll find out

somewhere boys dream that extraterrestrials will come to rescue them from their families, perhaps vaporizing the parents with some alien ray in the process. Oh well. Space Pirate Kidnap Plot Uncovered--"Alien" Unmasked As Shiite Fanatic Queer Poet--UFOs Seen Over Pine Barrens--"Lost Boys Will Leave Earth," Claims So-Called Prophet Of Chaos Hakim Bey

runaway boys, mess & disorder, ecstasy & sloth, skinny- dipping, childhood as permanent insurrection--collections of frogs, snails, leaves--pissing in the moonlight--11, 12, 13--old enough to seize back control of one's own history from parents, school, Welfare, TV--Come live with us in the Barrens--we'll cultivate a local brand of seedless rope to finance our luxuries & contemplation of summer's alchemy--&

otherwise produce nothing but artifacts
of Poetic Terrorism & mementos of our
pleasures

going for aimless rides in the old
pickup, fishing & gathering, lying
around in the shade reading comics &
eating grapes--this is our economy.
The suchness of things when unchained
from the Law, each molecule an orchid,
each atom a pearl to the attentive
consciousness--this is our cult. The
Airstream is draped with Persian rugs,
the lawn is profuse with satisfied weeds

the treehouse becomes a wooden
spaceship in the nakedness of July &
midnight, half-open to the stars, warm
with epicurean sweat, rushed & then
hushed by the breathing of the Pines.
(Dear *Bolo Log*: You asked for a
practical & feasible utopia--here it is,
no mere post-holocaust fantasy, no
castles on the moon of Jupiter--a
scheme we could start up tomorrow--
except that every single aspect of it
breaks some law, reveals some
absolute taboo in U.S. society,
threatens the very fabric of etc., etc.
Too bad. This is our true desire, & to
attain it we must contemplate not only
a life of pure art but also pure crime,
pure insurrection. Amen.)

(Thanx to the Grim Reaper & other
members of the Si Fan Temple of
Providence for YALU, GANO, SILA, &
ideas)

COMMUNIQUE #3

Haymarket Issue

"I NEED ONLY MENTION in passing that there is a curious reappearance of the Catfish tradition in the popular Godzilla cycle of films which arose after the nuclear chaos unleashed upon Japan. In fact, the symbolic details in the evolution of Godzilla filmic poplore parallel in a quite surprising way the traditional Japanese and Chinese mythological and folkloric themes of combat with an ambivalent chaos creature (some of the films, like *Mothra*, directly recalling the ancient motifs of the cosmic egg/gourd/cocoon) that is usually tamed, after the failure of the civilizational order, through the special and indirect agency of children."--Girardot, *Myth & Meaning in Early Taoism: The Theme of Chaos (hun-t'un)*

In some old Moorish Science Temple (in Chicago or Baltimore) a friend claimed to have seen a secret altar on which rested a matched pair of six shooters (in velvet-lined case) & a *black* fez. Supposedly initiation to the inner circle required the neophyte Moor to assassinate at least one cop. /// What

about Louis Lingg? Was he a precursor of Ontological Anarchism? "I despise you"--one can't help but admiring such sentiments. But the man dynamited himself aged 22 to cheat the gallows...this is not exactly our chosen path. /// The IDEA of the POLICE like hydra grows 100 new heads for each one cut off--and all these heads are *live cops*. Slicing off heads gains us nothing, but only enhances the beast's power till it swallows us. /// First murder the IDEA--blow up the monument *inside us*--& then perhaps...the balance of power will shift. When the last cop in our brain is gunned down by the last unfulfilled desire-- perhaps even the landscape around us will begin to change.../// Poetic Terrorism proposes this *sabotage of archetypes* as the only practical insurrectionary tactic for the present. But as Shiite Extremists eager for the overthrow (by any means) of all police, ayatollahs, bankers, executioners, priests, etc., we reserve the option of venerating even the "failures" of radical excess. /// A few days unchained from the Empire of Lies might well be worth considerable sacrifice; a moment of exalted realization may outweigh a lifetime of microcephalic boredom & work. /// But this moment must *become ours*--and our ownership of it is seriously compromised if we must commit suicide to preserve its integrity. So we mix our veneration with irony-- it's not martyrdom itself we propose, but the courage of the dynamiter, the self-possession of a Chaos-monster, the attainment of criminal & illegal

pleasures.

COMMUNIQUE #4 The End of the World

THE A.O.A. DECLARES ITSELF officially *bored* with the End of the World. The canonical version has been used since 1945 to keep us cowering in fear of Mutual Assured Destruction & in snivelling servitude to our super-hero politicians (the only ones capable of handling deadly Green Kryptonite)...

What does it mean that we have invented a way to destroy all life on Earth? Nothing much. We have *dreamed* this as an escape from the contemplation of our own individual deaths. We have made an emblem to serve as the mirror-image of a discarded immortality. Like demented dictators we swoon at the thought of taking it *all* down with us into the Abyss.

The unofficial version of the Apocalypse involves a lascivious yearning for the End, & for a post-Holocaust Eden where the Survivalists (or the 144,000 Elect of *Revelations*) can indulge themselves in orgies of Dualist hysteria, endless final confrontations with a seductive evil...

We have seen the ghost of Rene Guenon, cadaverous & topped with a fez (like Boris Karloff as Ardis Bey in *The Mummy*) leading a funereal No

Wave Industrial-Noise rock band in loud buzzing blackfly-chants for the death of Culture & Cosmos: the elitist fetishism of pathetic nihilists, the Gnostic self-disgust of "post-sexual" intellectoids.

Are these dreary ballads not simply mirror-images of all those lies & platitudes about Progress & the Future, beamed from every loudspeaker, zapped like paranoid brain-waves from every schoolbook & TV in the world of the Consensus? The thanatosis of the Hip Millenarians extrudes itself like pus from the false *health* of the Consumers' & Workers' Paradises.

Anyone who can read history with both hemispheres of the brain knows that a world comes to an end every instant--the waves of time leave washed up behind themselves only dry memories of a closed & petrified past--imperfect memory, itself already dying & autumnal. And every instant also gives birth to a world--despite the cavillings of philosophers & scientists whose bodies have grown numb--a present in which all impossibilities are renewed, where regret & premonition fade to nothing in one presential hologrammatical psychomantic gesture.

The "normative" past or the future heat-death of the universe mean as little to us as last year's GNP or the withering away of the State. All Ideal pasts, all futures which have not yet come to

pass, simply obstruct our consciousness of total vivid presence.

Certain sects believe that the world (or "a" world) has *already come to an end*. For Jehovah's Witnesses it happened in 1914 (yes folks, we are living in the Book of Revelations *now*). For certain oriental occultists, it occurred during the Major Conjunction of the Planets in 1962. Joachim of Fiore proclaimed the Third Age, that of the Holy Spirit, which replaced those of Father & Son. Hassan II of Alamut proclaimed the Great Resurrection, the immanentization of the eschaton, paradise on earth. Profane time came to an end somewhere in the late Middle Ages. Since then we've been living angelic time--only most of us don't know it.

Or to take an even more Radical Monist stance: Time never started at all. Chaos never died. The Empire was never founded. We are not now & never have been slaves to the past or hostages to the future.

We suggest that the End of the World be declared a *fait accompli*; the exact date is unimportant. The ranters in 1650 knew that the Millenium comes *now* into each soul that wakes to itself, to its own centrality & divinity. "Rejoice, fellow creature," was their greeting. "All is ours!"

I want no part of any other End of the World. A boy smiles at me in the street. A black crow sits in a pink magnolia

tree, cawing as orgone accumulates & discharges in a split second over the city...summer begins. I may be your lover...but I spit on your Millenium.

COMMUNIQUE #5

"Intellectual S/M Is the Fascism of the Eighties--The Avant-Garde Eats Shit and Likes It"

COMRADES!

Recently some confusion about "Chaos" has plagued the A.O.A. from certain revanchist quarters, forcing us (who despise polemics) at last to indulge in a Plenary Session devoted to denunciations *ex cathedra*, portentous as hell; our faces burn red with rhetoric, spit flies from our lips, neck veins bulge with pulpit fervor. We must at last descend to flying banners with angry slogans (in 1930's type faces) declaring what Ontological Anarchy *is not*.

Remember, only in Classical Physics does Chaos have anything to do with entropy, heat-death, or decay. In our physics (Chaos Theory), Chaos identifies with tao, beyond both yin- as-entropy & yang-as-energy, more a principle of continual creation than of any *nihil*, void in the sense of *potentia*, not exhaustion. (Chaos as the "sum of all orders.")

From this alchemy we quintessentialize

an aesthetic theory. Chaote art may act terrifying, it may even act *grand guignol*, but it can never allow itself to be drenched in putrid negativity, thanatosis, *schadenfreude* (delight in the misery of others), crooning over Nazi memorabilia & serial murders. Ontological Anarchy collects no snuff films & is bored to tears with dominatrices who spout french philosophy. ("Everything is hopeless & I knew it before you did, asshole. Nyahh!")

Wilhelm Reich was driven half mad & killed by agents of the Emotional Plague; maybe half his work derived from sheer paranoia (UFO conspiracies, homophobia, even his orgasm theory), BUT on one point we agree wholeheartedly--*sexpol*: sexual repression breeds death obsession, which leads to *bad politics*. A great deal of avant-garde Art is saturated with Deadly Orgone Rays (DOR). Ontological Anarchy aims to build aesthetic cloud-busters (OR-guns) to disperse the miasma of cerebral sado-masochism which now passes for slick, hip, new, fashionable. Self-mutilating "performance" artists strike us as banal & stupid--their art makes everyone *more unhappy*. What kind of two-bit conniving horseshit...what kind of cockroach-brained Art creeps cooked up this apocalypse stew?

Of course the avant-garde seems "smart"--so did Marinetti & the Futurists, so did Pound & Celine.

Compared to that kind of intelligence we'd choose real stupidity, bucolic New Age blissed-out inanity--we'd rather be pinheads than *queer for death*. But luckily we don't have to scoop out our brains to attain our own queer brand of satori. All the faculties, all the senses belong to us as our property--both heart & head, intellect & spirit, body & soul. Ours is no art of mutilation but of excess, superabundance, amazement.

The purveyors of pointless gloom are the Death Squads of contemporary aesthetics--& we are the "disappeared ones." Their make-believe ballroom of occult 3rd-Reich bric-a-brac & child murder attracts the manipulators of the Spectacle-- death looks better on TV than life--& we Chaotes, who preach an insurrectionary joy, are edged out towards silence.

Needless to say we reject all censorship by Church & State-- but "after the revolution" we would be willing to take individual & personal responsibility for burning all the Death Squad snuff-art crap & running them out of town on a rail. (Criticism becomes *direct action* in an anarchist context.) *My space* has room neither for Jesus & his lords of the flies nor for Chas. Manson & his literary admirers. I want no mundane police--I want no cosmic axe-murderers either; no TV chainsaw massacres, no sensitive poststructuralist novels about necrophilia.

As it happens, the A.O.A. can scarcely hope to sabotage the suffocating mechanisms of the State & its ghostly circuitry--but we just *might* happen to find ourselves in a position to do something about lesser manifestations of the DOR plague such as the Corpse-Eaters of the Lower East Side & other Art scum. We support artists who use *terrifying* material in some "higher cause"--who use loving/sexual material of any kind, however shocking or illegal--who *use* their anger & disgust & their true desires to lurch toward self-realization & beauty & adventure. "Social Nihilism," yes--but not the dead nihilism of gnostic self-disgust. Even if it's violent & abrasive, anyone with a vestigial 3rd eye can see the differences between revolutionary pro-life art & reactionary pro-death art. DOR stinks, & the chaote nose can sniff it out--just as it knows the perfume of spiritual/sexual joy, however buried or masked by other darker scents. Even the Radical Right, for all its horror of flesh & the senses, occasionally comes up with a moment of perception & consciousness-enhancement--but the Death Squads, for all their tired lip service to fashionable revolutionary abstractions, offer us about as much true libertarian energy as the FBI, FDA, or the double-dip Baptists.

We live in a society which advertises its costliest commodities with images of death & mutilation, beaming them direct to the reptilian back-brain of the millions thru alpha-wave-generating carcinogenic reality-warping devices--

while certain images of life (such as our favorite, a child masturbating) are banned & punished with incredible ferocity. It takes no guts at all to be an Art Sadist, for salacious death lies at the aesthetic center of our Consensus Paradigm. "Leftists" who like to dress up & play Police-&-Victim, people who jerk off to atrocity photos, people who like to *think* & intellectualize about splatter art & highfalutin hopelessness & groovy ghoulishness & *other people's misery*--such "artists" are nothing but police-without-power (a perfect definition for many "revolutionaries" too). We have a black bomb for these aesthetic fascists--it explodes with sperm & firecrackers, raucous weeds & piracy, weird Shiite heresies & bubbling paradise-fountains, complex rhythms, pulsations of life, all shapeless & exquisite.

Wake up! Breathe! Feel the world's breath against your skin! Seize the day! Breathe! Breathe!

(Thanx to J. Mander's *Four Arguments for the Abolition of Television*; Adam Exit; & the Moorish Cosmopolitan of Williamsburg)

COMMUNIQUE #6

I. Salon Apocalypse: "Secret Theater"

AS LONG AS NO Stalin breathes down our necks, why not make *some* art in

the service of...an insurrection?

Never mind if it's "impossible." What else can we hope to attain but the "impossible"? Should we wait for *someone else* to reveal our true desires?

If art has died, or the audience has withered away, then we find ourselves free of two dead weights. Potentially, everyone is now some kind of artist--& potentially every audience has regained its innocence, its ability to *become* the art that it experiences.

Provided we can escape from the museums we carry around inside us, provided we can stop selling ourselves tickets to the galleries in our own skulls, we can begin to contemplate an art which re-creates the goal of the sorcerer: changing the structure of reality by the manipulation of living symbols (in this case, the images we've been "given" by the organizers of this salon--murder, war, famine, & greed).

We might now contemplate aesthetic actions which possess some of the resonance of terrorism (or "cruelty," as Artaud put it) aimed at the destruction of abstractions rather than people, at liberation rather than power, pleasure rather than profit, joy rather than fear. "Poetic Terrorism." Our chosen images have the potency of darkness--but all images are masks, & behind these masks lie energies we can turn toward light & pleasure.

For example, the man who invented *aikido* was a samurai who became a pacifist & refused to fight for Japanese imperialism. He became a hermit, lived on a mountain sitting under a tree..

One day a former fellow-officer came to visit him & accused him of betrayal, cowardice, etc. The hermit said nothing, but kept on sitting--& the officer fell into a rage, drew his sword, & struck. Spontaneously the unarmed master disarmed the officer & returned his sword. Again & again the officer tried to kill, using every subtle *kata* in his repertoire--but out of his empty mind the hermit each time invented a new way to disarm him.

The officer of course became his first disciple. Later, they learned how to *dodge bullets*. We might contemplate some form of metadrama meant to capture a taste of this performance, which gave rise to a wholly new art, a totally non-violent way of fighting--war without murder, "the sword of life" rather than death.

A conspiracy of artists, anonymous as any mad bombers, but aimed toward an act of gratuitous generosity rather than violence--at the millennium rather than the apocalypse--or rather, aimed at a *present moment* of aesthetic shock in the service of realization & liberation.

Art tells gorgeous lies that come true.

Is it possible to create a SECRET

THEATER in which both artist & audience have completely disappeared--only to re-appear on another plane, where life & art have become the same thing, the pure giving of gifts?

(Note: The "Salon Apocalypse" was organized by Sharon Gannon in July, 1986.)

II. Murder--War--Famine--Greed

THE MANICHEES & CATHARS believed that the body can be spiritualized--or rather, that the body merely contaminates pure spirit & must be utterly rejected. The Gnostic *perfecti* (radical dualists) starved themselves to death to escape the body & return to the pleroma of pure light. So: to evade the evils of the flesh--murder, war, famine, greed--paradoxically only one path remains: murder of one's own body, war on the flesh, famine unto death, greed for salvation.

The radical monists however (Ismailis, Ranters, Antinomians) consider that body & spirit are one, that the same spirit which pervades a black stone also infuses the flesh with its light; that all lives & all is life.

"Things are what they are spontaneously...everything is natural...all in motion as if there were a True Lord to move them--but if we seek for evidence of this lord we fail to find any." (Kuo

Hsiang)

Paradoxically, the monist path also cannot be followed without some sort of "murder, war, famine, greed": the transformation of death into life (food, negentropy)--war against the Empire of Lies--"fasting of the soul," or renunciation of the Lie, of all that is not life--& greed for life itself, the absolute power of desire.

Even more: without knowledge of the darkness ("carnal knowledge") there can exist no knowledge of the light ("gnosis"). The two knowledges are not merely complementary: say rather *identical*, like the same note played in different octaves. Heraclitus claims that reality persists in a state of "war." Only clashing notes can make harmony. ("Chaos is the sum of all orders.") Give each of these four terms a different mask of language (to call the Furies "The Kindly Ones" is not mere euphemism but a way of uncovering *yet more meaning*). Masked, ritualized, realized as art, the terms take on their dark beauty, their "Black Light."

Instead of murder say *the hunt*, the pure paleolithic economy of all archaic and non-authoritarian tribal society--"venery," both the killing & eating of flesh & the way of Venus, of desire. Instead of war say *insurrection*, not the revolution of classes & powers but of the eternal rebel, the dark one who uncovers light. Instead of greed say *yearning*, unconquerable desire, mad

love. And then instead of famine, which is a kind of mutilation, speak of wholeness, plenty, superabundance, generosity of the self which spirals outward toward the Other.

Without this dance of masks, nothing will be created. The oldest mythology makes Eros the firstborn of Chaos. Eros, the wild one who tames, is the door through which the artist returns to Chaos, the One, and then re-returns, comes back again, bearing one of the patterns of beauty. The artist, the hunter, the warrior: one who is both passionate and balanced, both greedy & altruistic to the utmost extreme. We must be saved from all salvations which save us from ourselves, from our *animal* which is also our *anima*, our very life force, as well as our *animus*, our animating self-empowerment, which may even manifest as anger & greed. BABYLON has told us that our flesh is filth--with this device & the promise of salvation it enslaved us. But--if the flesh is already "saved," already *light*--if even consciousness itself is a kind of flesh, a palpable & simultaneous living aether--then we need no power to intercede for us. The wilderness, as Omar says, is paradise *even now*.

The true proprietorship of *murder* lies with the Empire, for only freedom is complete life. *War* is Babylonian as well--no free person will die for another's aggrandizement. *Famine* comes into existence *only* with the civilization of the saviors, the priest-kings--wasn't it Joseph who taught Pharaoh to

speculate in grain futures? *Greed*--for land, for symbolic wealth, for power to deform others' souls & bodies for their own *salvation*--greed too arises not from "Nature nature-ing," but from the damming up & canalization of all energies for the Empire's Glory. Against all this, the artist possesses the dance of masks, the total radicalization of language, the invention of a "Poetic Terrorism" which will strike not at living beings but at malign *ideas*, dead-weights on the coffin-lid of our desires. The architecture of suffocation and paralysis will be *blown up*. only by our total celebration of everything-- even darkness.

--Summer Solstice, 1986

COMMUNIQUE #7

Psychic Paleolithism & High Technology: A Position Paper

JUST BECAUSE THE A.O.A. talks about "Paleolithism" all the time, don't get the idea we intend to bomb ourselves back to the Stone Age.

We have no interest in going "back to the land" if the deal includes the boring life of a shit-kicking peasant--nor do we want "tribalism" if it comes with taboos, fetishes & malnutrition. We have no quarrel with the concept of *culture*--including *technology*; for us the problem begins with *civilization*.

What we like about Paleolithic life has been summed up by the Peoples-Without-Authority School of anthropology: the elegant laziness of hunter/gatherer society, the 2-hour workday, the obsession with art, dance, poetry & amorousness, the "democratization of shamanism," the cultivation of perception--in short, culture.

What we dislike about civilization can be deduced from the following progression: the "Agricultural Revolution"; the emergence of caste; the City & its cult of hieratic control ("Babylon"); slavery; dogma; imperialism ("Rome"). The suppression of sexuality in "work" under the aegis of "authority." "The Empire never ended."

A *psychic paleolithism* based on High-Tech--post-agricultural, post-industrial, "Zerowork," nomadic (or "Rootless Cosmopolitan")--a Quantum Paradigm Society--this constitutes the ideal vision of the future according to Chaos Theory as well as "Futurology" (in the Robert Anton Wilson-T. Leary sense of the term).

As for the present: we reject all collaboration with the Civilization of Anorexia & Bulimia, with people so ashamed of never suffering that they invent hair shirts for themselves & others--or those who gorge without compassion & then spew the vomit of their suppressed guilt in great

masochistic bouts of jogging & dieting. All *our* pleasures & self-disciplines belong to us by Nature--we never deny ourselves, we never give up anything; but some things have given up on us & left us, because we are too large for them. I am both caveman & starfaring mutant, con-man & free prince. Once an Indian Chief was invited to the White House for a banquet. As the food passed round, the Chief heaped his plate to the max, not once but three times. At last the honky sitting next to him says, "Chief, heh-heh, don't you think that's a little too much?" "Ugh," the Chief replies, "little too much *just right* for Chief!"

Nevertheless, certain doctrines of "Futurology" remain problematic. For example, even if we accept the liberatory potential of such new technologies as TV, computers, robotics, Space exploration, etc., we still see a gap between potentiality & actualization. The banalization of TV, the yuppification of computers & the militarization of Space suggest that these technologies in themselves provide no "determined" guarantee of their liberatory use.

Even if we reject the Nuclear Holocaust as just another Spectacular Diversion orchestrated to distract our attention from *real* problems, we must still admit that "Mutual Assured Destruction" & "Pure War" tend to dampen our enthusiasm for certain aspects of the High-Tech Adventure. Ontological Anarchy retains its affection for

Luddism as a tactic: if a given technology, no matter how admirable *in potentia* (in the future), is used to oppress me here & now, then I must either wield the weapon of sabotage or else seize the means of production (or perhaps more importantly the means of *communication*). There is no humanity without *techne*--but there is no *techne* worth more than my humanity.

We spurn knee-jerk anti-Tech anarchism--for ourselves, at least (there exist some who enjoy farming, or so one hears)--and we reject the concept of the Technological Fix as well. For us all forms of determinism appear equally vapid--we're slaves of neither our genes nor our machines. What is "natural" is what we *imagine & create*. "Nature has no Laws--only habits."

Life for us belongs neither to the Past--that land of famous ghosts hoarding their tarnished grave- goods--nor to the Future, whose bulbbrained mutant citizens guard so jealously the secrets of immortality, faster-than- light flight, designer genes & the withering of the State. *Aut nunc aut nihil*. Each moment contains an eternity to be penetrated--yet we lose ourselves in visions seen through corpses' eyes, or in nostalgia for unborn perfections.

The attainments of my ancestors & descendants are nothing more to me than an instructive or amusing tale--I will never call them my betters, even to

excuse my own smallness. I print for myself a license to steal from them whatever I need--psychic paleolithism or high-tech--or for that matter the gorgeous detritus of civilization itself, secrets of the Hidden Masters, pleasures of frivolous nobility & *la vie boheme*.

La decadence, Nietzsche to the contrary notwithstanding, plays as deep a role in Ontological Anarchy as health--we take what we want of each. Decadent aesthetes do not wage stupid wars nor submerge their consciousness in microcephalic greed & resentment. They seek adventure in artistic innovation & non-ordinary sexuality rather than in the misery of others. The A.O.A. admires & emulates their sloth, their disdain for the stupidity of normalcy, their expropriation of aristocratic sensibilities. For us these qualities harmonize paradoxically with those of the Old Stone Age & its overflowing health, ignorance of hierarchy, cultivation of *virtu* rather than *Law*. We demand decadence without sickness, & health without boredom!

Thus the A.O.A. gives unqualified support to all indigenous & tribal peoples in their struggle for complete autonomy--& at the same time, to the wildest, most Spaced-out speculations & demands of the Futurologists. The paleolithism of the future (which for us, as mutants, already exists) will be achieved on a grand scale only through a massive technology of the

Imagination, and a scientific paradigm which reaches beyond Quantum Mechanics into the realm of Chaos Theory & the hallucinations of Speculative Fiction.

As Rootless Cosmopolitans we lay claim to all the beauties of the past, of the orient, of tribal societies--all this must & can be ours, even the treasuries of the Empire: ours to share. And at the same time we demand a technology which transcends agriculture, industry, even the simultaneity of electricity, a hardware that intersects with the wetware of consciousness, that embraces the power of quarks, of particles travelling backward in time, of quasars & parallel universes.

The squabbling ideologues of anarchism & libertarianism each prescribe some utopia congenial to their various brands of tunnel-vision, ranging from the peasant commune to the L-5 Space City. We say, let a thousand flowers bloom--with no gardener to lop off weeds & sports according to some moralizing or eugenical scheme. The only true conflict is that between the authority of the tyrant & the authority of the realized self--all else is illusion, psychological projection, wasted verbiage.

In one sense the sons & daughters of Gaia have never left the paleolithic; in another sense, all the perfections of the future are already ours. Only insurrection will "solve" this paradox--

only the uprising against false consciousness in both ourselves & others will sweep away the technology of oppression & the poverty of the Spectacle. In this battle a painted mask or shaman's rattle may prove as vital as the seizing of a communications satellite or secret computer network.

Our sole criterion for judging a weapon or a tool is its beauty. The means already *are* the end, in a certain sense; the insurrection already *is* our adventure; Becoming IS Being. Past & future exist within us & for us, alpha & omega. There are no other gods before or after us. We are free in TIME--and will be free in SPACE as well.

(Thanx to Hagbard Celine the Sage of Howth & Environs)

COMMUNIQUE #8 Chaos Theory & the Nuclear Family

SUNDAY IN RIVERSIDE PARK the Fathers fix their sons in place, nailing them magically to the grass with baleful ensorcelling stares of milky camaraderie, & force them to throw baseballs back & forth for hours. The boys almost appear to be small St Sebastians pierced by arrows of boredom.

The smug rituals of family fun turn each humid Summer meadow into a

Theme Park, each son an unwitting allegory of Father's wealth, a pale representation 2 or 3 times removed from reality: the Child as metaphor of Something-or-other.

And here I come as dusk gathers, stoned on mushroom dust, half convinced that these hundreds of fireflies arise from my own consciousness--Where have they been all these years? why so many so suddenly?--each rising in the moment of its incandescence, describing quick arcs like abstract graphs of the energy in sperm.

"Families! misers of love! How I hate them!" Baseballs fly aimlessly in vesper light, catches are missed, voices rise in peevish exhaustion. The children feel sunset encrusting the last few hours of doled-out freedom, but still the Fathers insist on stretching the tepid postlude of their patriarchal sacrifice till dinnertime, till shadows eat the grass.

Among these sons of the gentry one locks gazes with me for a moment--I transmit telepathically the image of sweet license, the smell of TIME unlocked from all grids of school, music lessons, summer camps, family evenings round the tube, Sundays in the Park with Dad--authentic time, chaotic time.

Now the family is leaving the Park, a little platoon of dissatisfaction. But *that one* turns & smiles back at me in

complicity-- "Message Received"--&
dances away after a firefly, buoyed up
by my desire. The Father barks a
mantra which dissipates my power.

The moment passes. The boy is
swallowed up in the pattern of the
week--vanishes like a bare-legged
pirate or Indian taken prisoner by
missionaries. The Park knows who I
am, it stirs under me like a giant jaguar
about to wake for nocturnal meditation.
Sadness still holds it back, but it
remains untamed in its deepest
essence: an exquisite disorder at the
heart of the city's night.

COMMUNIQUE #9 Double-Dip Denunciations

I. Xtianity

AGAIN & AGAIN WE hope that
attitudinizing corpse has finally
breathed its last rancorous sigh &
floated off to its final pumpkinification.
Again & again we imagine the defeat of
that obscene flayed death-trip bogey
nailed to the walls of all our waiting
rooms, never again to whine at us for
our sins...

but again & again it resurrects itself &
comes creeping back to haunt us like
the villain of some *n*th rate snuff-porn
splatter film--the thousandth re-make
of *Night of the Living Dead*--trailing its
snail-track of whimpering

humiliation...just when you thought it was safe in the unconscious...it's JAWS for JESUS. Look out! Hardcore Chainsaw Baptists!

and the Leftists, nostalgic for the Omega Point of their dialectical paradise, welcome each galvanized revival of the putrescent creed with coos of delight: Let's dance the tango with all those marxist bishops from Latin America--croon a ballad for the pious Polish dockworkers--hum spirituals for the latest afro-Methodist presidential hopeful from the Bible Belt...

The A.O.A. denounces Liberation Theology as a conspiracy of stalinist nuns--the Whore of Babylon's secret scarlet deal with red fascism in the tropics. *Solidarnosc*? The Pope's Own Labor Union--backed by the AFL/CIO, the Vatican Bank, the Freemason Lodge Propaganda Due, and the Mafia. And if we ever voted we'd never waste that empty gesture on some Xtian dog, no matter what its breed or color.

As for the *real* Xtians, those bored-again self-lobotomized bigots, those Mormon babykillers, those Star Warriors of the Slave Morality, televangelist blackshirts, zombie squads of the Blessed Virgin Mary (who hovers in a pink cloud over the Bronx spewing hatred, anathema, roses of vomit on the sexuality of children, pregnant teenagers & queers)...

As for the genuine death-cultists, ritual cannibals, Armageddon-freaks--the Xtian Right--we can only pray that the RAPTURE WILL COME & snatch them all up from behind the steering wheels of their cars, from their lukewarm game shows & chaste beds, take them all up into heaven & let *us* get on with *human life*.

II. Abortionists & Anti-abortionists

REDNECKS WHO BOMB ABORTION clinics belong in the same grotesque category of vicious stupidity as bishops who prattle Peace & yet condemn all human sexuality. Nature has no laws ("only habits"), & all law is unnatural. *Everything* belongs to the sphere of personal/imaginal morality--even murder.

However, according to Chaos Theory, it does not follow that we are obliged to like & approve of murder--or abortion. Chaos would enjoy seeing every bastard love-child carried to term & birthed; sperm & egg alone are mere lovely secretions, but combined as DNA they become potential consciousness, negentropy, joy.

If "meat is murder!" as the Vegans like to claim, what pray tell is abortion? Those totemists who danced to the animals they hunted, who meditated to become one with their living food & share its tragedy, demonstrated values far more humane than the average

claque of "pro-Choice" feminoid liberals.

In every single "issue" cooked up for "debate" in the patternbook of the Spectacle, *both sides* are invariably full of shit. The "abortion issue" is no exception..

COMMUNIQUE #10 Plenary Session Issues New Denunciations--Purges Expected

TO OFFSET ANY STICKY karma we might have acquired thru our pulpit-thumping sermonette against Xtians & other end-of-the-world creeps (see last ish) & just to set the record straight: the A.O.A. also denounces all born-again knee-jerk *atheists* & their frowsy late-Victorian luggage of scientific vulgar materialism. ///// We applaud all anti- Xtian sentiment, of course--& all attacks on *all* organized religions. But...to hear some anarchists talk you'd think the sixties never happened and no one ever dropped LSD. ///// As for the scientists themselves, the Alice-like madnesses of Quantum & Chaos Theory have driven the best of them towards taoism & vedanta (not to mention dada)--& yet if you read *The Match* or *Freedom* you might imagine science was embalmed with Prince Kropotkin--& "religion" with Bishop Ussher. ///// Of course one despises the Aquarian brownshirts, the kind of gurus lauded recently in the

New York Times for their contributions to Big Business, the franchise-granting yuppie zombie cults, the anorexic metaphysics of New Age banality...but OUR esotericism remains undefiled by these mediocre money- changers & their braindead minions. ///// The heretics & antinomian mystics of Orient & Occident have developed systems based on *inner liberation*. Some of these systems are tainted with religious mysticism & even social reaction-- others seem more purely radical or "psychological"--& some even crystallize into revolutionary movements (millenarian Levellers, Assassins, Yellow Turban Taoists, etc.) Whatever their flaws they possess certain magical weapons which anarchism sorely lacks: (1) A sense of the *meta-rational* ("metanoia"), ways to go beyond laminated thinking into smooth (or nomadic or "chaotic") thinking & perception; (2) an actual definition of self-realized or liberated consciousness, a positive description of its structure, & techniques for approaching it; (3) a coherent archetypal view of epistemology--that is, a way of knowing (about history, for example) that utilizes hermeneutic phenomenology to uncover patterns of *meaning* (something like the Surrealists' "Paranoia Criticism"); (4) a teaching on sexuality (in the "tantrik" aspects of various Paths) that assigns value to pleasure rather than self-denial, not only for its own sake but as a vehicle of enhanced awareness or "liberation"; (5) an attitude of celebration, what might be called a

"Jubilee concept," a cancelling of psychic debt thru some inherent generosity in reality itself; (6) a *language* (including gesture, ritual, intentionality) with which to animate & communicate these five aspects of cognition; and (7) a silence. ///// It's no surprise to discover how many anarchists are ex-Catholics, defrocked priests or nuns, former altar boys, lapsed born-again baptists or even ex-Shiite fanatics. Anarchism offers up a black (& red) Mass to de-ritualize all spook-haunted brains--a secular exorcism--but then betrays itself by cobbling together a High Church of its own, all cobwebby with Ethical Humanism, Free Thought, Muscular Atheism, & crude Fundamentalist Cartesian Logic. ///// Two decades ago we began the project of becoming Rootless Cosmopolitans, determined to sift the detritus of all tribes, cultures & civilizations (including our own) for viable fragments--& to synthesize from this mess of potsherds a living system of our own--lest (as Blake warned) we become slaves to someone else's. ///// If some Javanese sorcerer or Native American shaman possesses some precious fragment I need for my own "medicine pouch," should I sneer & quote Bakunin's line about stringing up priests with bankers' guts? or should I remember that anarchy knows no dogma, that Chaos cannot be mapped--& help myself to anything not nailed down? ///// The earliest definitions of anarchy are found in the *Chuang Tzu* & other taoist texts; "mystical anarchism" boasts a hoarier pedigree than the

Greco-Rationalist variety. When Nietzsche spoke of the "Hyperboreans" I think he foretold *us*, who have gone beyond the death of God--& the rebirth of the Goddess--to a realm where spirit & matter are one. Every manifestation of that hierogamy, every material thing & every life, becomes not only "sacred" in itself but also symbolic of its own "divine essence." ///// Atheism is nothing but the opiate of The Masses (or rather, their self-chosen champions)--& not a very colorful or sexy drug. If we are to follow Baudelaire's advice & "be always intoxicated," the A.O.A. would prefer something more like mushrooms, thank you. Chaos is the oldest of the gods--& Chaos never died.

COMMUNIQUE #11

Special Holiday Season Food Issue Rant: Turn Off the Lite!

THE ASSOCIATION FOR ONTOLOGICAL ANARCHY calls for a boycott of all products marketed under the Shibboleth of LITE--beer, meat, lo-cal candy, cosmetics, music, pre-packaged "lifestyles," whatever.

The concept of LITE (in Situ-jargon) unfolds a complex of symbolism by which the Spectacle hopes to recuperate all revulsion against its commodification of desire. "Natural," "organic," "healthy" produce is designed for a market sector of mildly dissatisfied consumers with mild cases

of future- shock & mild yearnings for a tepid authenticity. A niche has been prepared for *you*, softly illumined with the illusions of simplicity, cleanliness, thinness, a dash of asceticism & self-denial. Of course, it costs a little more...after all, LITEness was not designed for poor hungry primitivos who still think of food as nourishment rather than decor. It *has* to cost more-- otherwise *you* wouldn't buy it.

The American Middle Class (don't quibble; you know what I mean) falls naturally into opposite but complementary factions: the Armies of Anorexia & Bulimia. Clinical cases of these diseases represent only the psychosomatic froth on a wave of cultural pathology, deep, diffused & largely unconscious. The Bulimics are those yuppied-out gentry who gorge on margharitas & VCRs, then purge on LITE food, jogging, or (an)aerobic jiggling. The Anorexics are the "lifestyle" rebels, ultra-food-faddists, eaters of algae, joyless, dispirited & wan--but smug in their puritanical zeal & their designer hair-shirts. Grotesque junk food simply represents the flip-side of ghoulish "health food": --nothing tastes like anything but woodchips or additives--it's all either boring or carcinogenic--or both--& it's all incredibly *stupid*.

Food, cooked or raw, cannot escape from symbolism. It *is*, & also simultaneously *represents* that which it is. All food is soul food; to treat it otherwise is to court indigestion, both

chronic & metaphysical.

But in the airless vault of our civilization, where nearly every experience is mediated, where reality is strained through the deadening mesh of consensus-perception, we lose touch with food as *nourishment*; we begin to construct for ourselves personae based on what we consume, treating *products* as projections of our yearning for the authentic.

The A.O.A. sometimes envisions CHAOS as a cornucopia of continual creation, as a sort of geyser of cosmic generosity; therefore we refrain from advocating any specific diet, lest we offend against the Sacred Multiplicity & the Divine Subjectivity. We're not about to hawk you yet another New Age prescription for perfect health (only the dead are perfectly healthy); we interest ourselves in *life*, not "lifestyles."

True lightness we adore, & rich heaviness delights us in its season. Excess suits us to perfection, moderation pleases us, & we have learned that hunger can be the finest of all spices. Everything *is* light, & the lushest flowers grow round the privy. We dream of phalanstery tables & bolo'bolo cafes where every festive collective of diners will share the individual genius of a Brillat-Savarin (that saint of taste).

Shaykh Abu Sa'id never saved money or even kept it overnight--therefore,

whenever some patron donated a heavy purse to his hospice, the dervishes celebrated with a gourmet feast; & on other days, all went hungry. The point was to enjoy both states, full & empty...

LITE parodies spiritual emptiness & illumination, just as McDonald's travesties the imagery of fullness & celebration. The human spirit (not to mention *hunger*) can overcome & transcend all this fetishism--joy can erupt even at Burger King, & even LITE beer may hide a dose of Dionysus. But why should we have to struggle against this garbagy tide of cheap rip-off ticky-tack, when we could be drinking the wine of paradise even now under our own vine & fig tree?

Food belongs to the realm of everyday life, the primary arena for all insurrectionary self-empowerment, all spiritual self-enhancement, all seizing-back of pleasure, all revolt against the Planetary Work Machine & its imitation desires. Far be it from us to dogmatize; the Native American hunter might fuel his happiness with fried squirrel, the anarcho-taoist with a handful of dried apricots. Milarepa the Tibetan, after ten years of nettle- soup, ate a butter cake & achieved enlightenment. The dullard sees no *eros* in fine champagne; the sorcerer can fall intoxicated on a glass of water.

Our culture, choking on its own pollutants, cries out (like the dying

Goethe) for "More LITE!"--as if these polyunsaturated effluents could somehow assuage our misery, as if their bland weightless tasteless characterlessness could protect us from the gathering dark.

No! This last illusion finally strikes us as too cruel. We are forced against our own slothful inclinations to take a stand & protest. Boycott! Boycott! TURN OFF THE LITE!

Appendix: Menu For An Anarchist Black Banquet (veg & non- veg)

Caviar & blinis; Hundred year old eggs; Squid & rice cooked in ink; Eggplants cooked in their skins with black pickled garlic; Wild rice with black walnuts & black mushrooms; Truffles in black butter; Venison marinated in port, charcoal grilled, served on pumpernickel slices & garnished with roast chestnuts. Black Russians; Guinness-&-champagne; Chinese black tea. Dark chocolate mousse, Turkish coffee, black grapes, plums, cherries, etc.

[CONTINUE](#)

SPECIAL HALLOWEEN COMMUNIQUE Black Magic as Revolutionary Action

PREPARE AN INK OF pure & genuine saffron mixed with rose- water, adding if possible some blood from a black rooster. In a quiet room furnish an altar with a bowl of the ink, a pen with an iron nib, 7 black candles, an incense burner, & some benzoin. The charm may be written on virgin paper or parchment. Draw the diagram at 4 p.m. on a Wednesday, facing North. Copy the 7-headed diagram (see illustration) without lifting the pen from the paper, in one smooth operation, holding your breath & pressing your tongue to the roof of your mouth. This is the *Barisan Laksamana*, or King of the Djinn. Then draw the Solomon's Seal (a star representing a 5- headed djinn) & other parts of the diagram. Above Solomon's Seal write the name of the individual or institution to be cursed. Now hold the paper in the benzoin fumes, & invoke the white & black djinn *within yourself*:

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim
as-salaam alikum
O White Djinn, Radiance of Mohammad
king of all spirits within me
O Black Djinn, shadow of myself
AWAY, destroy my enemy
--and if you do not
then be considered a traitor to Allah
--by virtue of the charm
La illaha ill'Allah

Mohammad ar-Rasul Allah

If the curse is to be aimed at an individual oppressor, a wax doll may be prepared & the charm inserted (see illustration).

Seven needles are then driven downward into the top of the head, thru the left & right armpits, left & right hips, & thru the lips or nostrils. Wrap the doll in a white shroud & bury it in the ground where the enemy is sure to walk over it, meanwhile enlisting the aid of local earth spirits:

Bismillah ar-Rahman ar-Rahim
O Earth Djinn, Dirt-spirit
O Black Djinn living underground
listen, vampire of the soil
I order you to mark & destroy
the body & soul of _____
Heed my orders
for I am the true & original sorcerer
by virtue of the charm
la illaha ill'Allah

Mohammad ar-Rasul Allah

If however the curse is intended for an institution or company, assemble the following items: a hard-boiled egg, an iron nail, & 3 iron pins (stick nail & needles into egg); dried scorpion, lizard &/or beetles; a small chamois bag containing graveyard dirt, magnetized iron fillings, asafoetida & sulphur, & tied with a red ribbon. Sew the charm into yellow silk & seal it with red wax. Place all these things in a wide-necked

bottle, cork it, & seal it with wax.

The bottle may now be carefully packaged & sent by mail to the target institution--for example a Xtian televangelist show, the *New York Post*, the MUZAK company, a school or college--along with a copy of the following statement (extra copies may be mailed to individual employees, &/or posted surreptitiously around the premises):

Malay Black Djinn Curse

These premises have been cursed by black sorcery. The curse has been activated according to correct rituals. This institution is cursed because it has oppressed the Imagination & defiled the Intellect, degraded the arts toward stupefaction, spiritual slavery, propaganda for State & Capital, puritanical reaction, unjust profits, lies & aesthetic blight. The employees of this institution are now in danger. No individual has been cursed, but the place itself has been infected with ill fortune & malignancy. Those who do not wake up & quit, or begin sabotaging the workplace, will gradually fall under the effect of this sorcery. Removing or destroying the implement of sorcery will do no good. It has been seen in this place, & this place is cursed. Reclaim your humanity & revolt in the name of the Imagination-- or else be judged (in the mirror of this charm) an enemy of the human race.

We suggest "taking credit" for this action in the name of some other offensive cultural institution, such as the American Poetry Society or the Women's Anti-Porn Crusade (give full address).

We also suggest, in order to counter-balance the effect on yourself of calling up the personal black djinn, that you send a *magical blessing* to someone or some group you love &/or admire. Do this anonymously, & make the gift beautiful. No precise ritual need be followed, but the imagery should be allowed to spring from the well of consciousness in an intuitive/spontaneous meditational state. Use sweet incense, red & white candles, hard candy, wine, flowers, etc. If possible include real silver, gold, or jewels in the gift.

This how-to-do-it manual on the Malay Black Djinn Curse has been prepared according to authentic & complete ritual by the Cultural Terrorism Committee of the inner Adept Chamber of the HMOCA ("Third Paradise"). We are Nizari-Ismaili Esotericists; that is, Shiite heretics & fanatics who trace our spiritual line to Hassan-i Sabbah through Aladdin Mohammad III "the Madman," seventh & last Pir of Alamut (& not through the line of the Aga Khans). We espouse radical monism & pure antinomianism, & oppose *all* forms of law & authority, in the name of Chaos.

At present, for tactical reasons, we do not advocate violence or sorcery against individuals. We call for actions against *institutions & ideas--art-sabotage & clandestine propaganda (including ceremonial magic & "tantrik pornography")--and especially against the poisonous media of the Empire of Lies. The Black Djinn Curse represents only a first step in the campaign of Poetic Terrorism which--we trust--will lead to other less subtle forms of insurrection.*

SPECIAL COMMUNIQUE A.O.A. Announces Purges in Chaos Movement

CHAOS THEORY MUST OF course flow *impurely*. "Lazy yokel plows a crooked furrow." Any attempt to precipitate a crystal of ideology would result in flawed rigidities, fossilizations, armorings & drynesses which we would like to renounce, along with all "purity." Yes, Chaos revels in a certain abandoned formlessness not unlike the erotic messiness of those we love for their shattering of habit & their unveiling of mutability. Nevertheless this looseness does not imply that Chaos Theory must accept every leech that attempts to attach itself to our sacred membranes. Certain definitions or deformations of Chaos deserve denunciation, & our dedication to divine disorder need not deter us from trashing the traitors & rip-off artists &

psychic vampires now buzzing around Chaos under the impression that it's trendy. We propose not an Inquisition in the name of *our* definitions, but rather a duel, a brawl, an act of violence or emotional repugnance, an exorcism. First we'd like to define & even name our enemies. (1) All those death-heads & mutilation artists who associate Chaos exclusively with misery, negativity & a joyless pseudo-libertinism--those who think "beyond good & evil" means doing evil--the S/M intellectuals, crooners of the apocalypse--the new Gnostic Dualists, world-haters & ugly nihilists. (2) All those scientists selling Chaos either as a force for destruction (e.g. particle-beam weapons) or as a mechanism for enforcing order, as in the use of Chaos math in statistical sociology and mob control. An attempt will be made to discover names and addresses in this category. (3) All those who appropriate Chaos in the cause of some New Age scam. Of course we have no objection to your giving us all your money, but we'll tell you up front: we'll use it to buy dope or fly to Morocco. You can't sell water by the river; Chaos is that *materia* of which the alchemists spoke, which fools value more highly than gold even tho it may be found on any dungheap. The chief enemy in this category is Werner Erhardt, founder of *est*, who is now bottling "Chaos" & trying to franchise it to the Yuppoids. Second, we will list some of our friends, in order to give an idea of the disparate trends in Chaos Theory we enjoy: Chaotica, the imaginal autonomous

zone discovered by Feral Faun (a.k.a. Feral Ranter); the Academy of Chaotic Arts of Tundra Wind; Joel Birnoco's magazine *KAOS*; *Chaos Inc.*, a newsletter connected to the work of Ralph Abraham, a leading Chaos scientist; the Church of Eris; Discordian Zen; the Moorish Orthodox Church; certain clenches of the Church of the SubGenius; the Sacred Jihad of Our Lady of Perpetual Chaos; the writers associated with "type-3 anarchism" & journals like *Popular Reality*; etc. The battle lines are drawn. Chaos is not entropy, Chaos is not death, Chaos is not a commodity. Chaos is continual creation. Chaos never died.

POST-ANARCHISM ANARCHY

THE ASSOCIATION FOR ONTOLOGICAL ANARCHY gathers in conclave, black turbans & shimmering robes, sprawled on shirazi carpets sipping bitter coffee, smoking long chibouk & sibi.

QUESTION: What's our position on all these recent defections & desertions from anarchism (esp. in California-Land): condemn or condone? Purge them or hail them as advance-guard? Gnostic elite...or traitors?

Actually, we have a lot of sympathy for the deserters & their various critiques of anarchISM. Like Sinbad & the Horrible Old Man, anarchism staggers around with the corpse of a Martyr magically stuck to its shoulders-- haunted by the legacy of failure &

revolutionary masochism--stagnant
backwater of lost history.

Between tragic Past & impossible
Future, anarchism seems to lack a
Present--as if afraid to ask itself, here
& now, WHAT ARE MY TRUE DESIRES?--
& what can I DO before it's *too*
late?...Yes, imagine yourself confronted
by a sorcerer who stares you down
balefully & demands, "What is your
True Desire?" Do you hem & haw,
stammer, take refuge in ideological
platitudes? Do you possess both
Imagination & Will, can you both dream
& dare--or are you the dupe of an
impotent fantasy?

Look in the mirror & try it...(for one of
your masks is the face of a sorcerer)...

The anarchist "movement" today
contains virtually no Blacks, Hispanics,
Native Americans or children...even tho
in theory such genuinely oppressed
groups stand to gain the most from any
anti-authoritarian revolt. Might it be
that anarchISM offers no concrete
program whereby the truly deprived
might fulfill (or at least struggle
realistically to fulfill) real needs &
desires?

If so, then this failure would explain not
only anarchism's lack of appeal to the
poor & marginal, but also the
disaffection & desertions from within its
own ranks. Demos, picket-lines &
reprints of 19th century classics don't
add up to a vital, daring conspiracy of

self-liberation. If the movement is to grow rather than shrink, a lot of deadwood will have to be jettisoned & some risky ideas embraced.

The potential exists. Any day now, vast numbers of americans are going to realize they're being force-fed a load of reactionary boring hysterical artificially-flavored *crap*. Vast chorus of groans, puking & retching...angry mobs roam the malls, smashing & looting...etc., etc. The Black Banner could provide a focus for the outrage & channel it into an insurrection of the Imagination. We could pick up the struggle where it was dropped by Situationism in '68 & Autonomia in the seventies, & carry it to the next stage. We could have revolt in our times--& in the process, we could realize many of our True Desires, even if only for a season, a brief Pirate Utopia, a warped free-zone in the old Space/Time continuum.

If the A.O.A. retains its affiliation with the "movement," we do so not merely out of a romantic predilection for lost causes--or not entirely. Of all "political systems," anarchism (despite its flaws, & precisely because it is neither political nor a system) comes closest to our understanding of reality, ontology, the nature of being. As for the deserters...we agree with their critiques, but note that they seem to offer no new powerful alternatives. So for the time being we prefer to concentrate on changing anarchism from within. Here's our program, comrades:

1. Work on the realization that *psychic racism* has replaced overt discrimination as one of the most disgusting aspects of our society. Imaginative participation in other cultures, esp. those we live with.
2. Abandon all ideological purity. Embrace "Type-3" anarchism (to use Bob Black's pro-tem slogan): neither collectivist nor individualist. Cleanse the temple of vain idols, get rid of the Horrible Old Men, the relics & martyrologies.
3. Anti-work or "Zerowork" movement extremely important, including a radical & perhaps violent attack on Education & the serfdom of children.
4. Develop american samizdat network, replace outdated publishing/propaganda tactics. Pornography & popular entertainment as vehicles for radical re-education.
5. In music the hegemony of the 2/4 & 4/4 beat must be overthrown. We need a new music, totally insane but life- affirming, rhythmically subtle yet powerful, & we need it NOW.
6. Anarchism must wean itself away from evangelical materialism & banal 2-dimensional 19th century

scientism. "Higher states of consciousness" are not mere SPOOKS invented by evil priests. The orient, the occult, the tribal cultures possess *techniques* which can be "appropriated" in true anarchist fashion. Without "higher states of consciousness," anarchism ends & dries itself up into a form of misery, a whining complaint. We need a practical kind of "mystical anarchism," devoid of all New Age shit-&-shinola, & inexorably heretical & anti-clerical; avid for all new technologies of consciousness & metanoia--a democratization of shamanism, intoxicated & serene.

7. Sexuality is under assault, obviously from the Right, more subtly from the avant-pseud "post-sexuality" movement, & even more subtly by Spectacular Recuperation in media & advertising. Time for a major step forward in SexPol awareness, an explosive reaffirmation of the polymorphic eros-- (even & especially in the face of plague & gloom)--a literal glorification of the senses, a doctrine of delight. Abandon all world-hatred & shame.
8. Experiment with new tactics to replace the outdated baggage of Leftism. Emphasize practical, material & personal benefits of radical networking. The times do not appear propitious for violence

or militancy, but surely a bit of sabotage & imaginative disruption is never out of place. Plot & conspire, don't bitch & moan. The Art World in particular deserves a dose of "Poetic Terrorism."

9. The despatialization of post-Industrial society provides some benefits (e.g. computer networking) but can also manifest as a form of oppression (homelessness, gentrification, architectural depersonalization, the erasure of Nature, etc.) The communes of the sixties tried to circumvent these forces but failed. The question of *land* refuses to go away. How can we separate the concept of *space* from the mechanisms of *control*? The territorial gangsters, the Nation/States, have hogged the entire map. Who can invent for us a cartography of autonomy, who can draw a map that includes our desires?

AnarchISM ultimately implies anarchy-- & anarchy is chaos. Chaos is the principle of continual creation... & *Chaos never died*.

--A.O.A. Plenary Session

March '87, NYC

BLACK CROWN & BLACK ROSE

Anarcho-Monarchism & Anarcho-Mysticism

IN SLEEP WE DREAM of only two forms of government--anarchy & monarchy. Primordial root consciousness understands no politics & never plays fair. A democratic dream? a socialist dream? Impossible.

Whether my REMs bring veridical near-prophetic visions or mere Viennese wish-fulfillment, only kings & wild people populate my night. Monads & nomads.

Pallid day (when nothing shines by its own light) slinks & insinuates & suggests that we compromise with a sad & lackluster reality. But in dream we are never ruled except by love or sorcery, which are the skills of chaotes & sultans.

Among a people who cannot create or play, but can only *work*, artists also know no choice but anarchy & monarchy. Like the dreamer, they must possess & *do* possess their own perceptions, & for this they must sacrifice the merely social to a "tyrannical Muse." Art dies when treated "fairly." It must enjoy a caveman's wildness or else have its mouth filled with gold by some prince. Bureaucrats & sales personnel poison it, professors chew it up, & philosophers spit it out. Art is a kind of byzantine barbarity fit only for nobles & heathens. If you had known the

sweetness of life as a poet in the reign of some venal, corrupt, decadent, ineffective & ridiculous Pasha or Emir, some Qajar shah, some King Farouk, some Queen of Persia, you would know that this is what every anarchist must want. How they loved poems & paintings, those dead luxurious fools, how they absorbed all roses & cool breezes, tulips & lutes! Hate their cruelty & caprice, yes--but at least they were human. The bureaucrats, however, who smear the walls of the mind with odorless filth--so kind, so *gemutlich*--who pollute the inner air with numbness--they're not even worthy of hate. They scarcely exist outside the bloodless Ideas they serve.

And besides: the dreamer, the artist, the anarchist--do they not share some tinge of cruel caprice with the most outrageous of moghuls? Can genuine life occur without some folly, some excess, some bouts of Heraclitan "strife"? We do not rule--but we cannot & will not *be ruled*.

In Russia the Narodnik-Anarchists would sometimes forge a *ukase* or manifesto in the name of the Czar; in it the Autocrat would complain that greedy lords & unfeeling officials had sealed him in his palace & cut him off from his beloved people. He would proclaim the end of serfdom & call on peasants & workers to rise in His Name against the government.

Several times this ploy actually

succeeded in sparking revolts. Why? Because the single absolute ruler acts metaphorically as a mirror for the unique and utter absoluteness of the self. Each peasant looked into this glassy legend & beheld his or her own freedom--an illusion, but one that borrowed its magic from the logic of the dream.

A similar myth must have inspired the 17th century Ranters & Antinomians & Fifth Monarchy Men who flocked to the Jacobite standard with its erudite cabals & bloodproud conspiracies. The radical mystics were betrayed first by Cromwell & then by the Restoration-- why not, finally, join with flippant cavaliers & foppish counts, with Rosicrucians & Scottish Rite Masons, to place an occult messiah on Albion's throne?

Among a people who cannot conceive human society without a monarch, the desires of radicals may be expressed in monarchical terms. Among a people who cannot conceive human existence without a religion, radical desires may speak the language of heresy.

Taoism rejected the whole of Confucian bureaucracy but retained the image of the Emperor-Sage, who would sit silent on his throne facing a propitious direction, doing absolutely nothing. In Islam the Ismailis took the idea of the Imam of the Prophet's Household & metamorphosed it into the Imam-of-one's-own-being, the perfected self

who is beyond all Law & rule, who is atoned with the One. And this doctrine led them into revolt against Islam, to terror & assassination in the name of pure esoteric self-liberation & total realization.

Classical 19th century anarchism defined itself in the struggle against crown & church, & therefore on the waking level it considered itself egalitarian & atheist. This rhetoric however obscures what really happens: the "king" becomes the "anarchist," the "priest" a "heretic." In this strange duet of mutability the politician, the democrat, the socialist, the rational ideologue can find no place; they are deaf to the music & lack all sense of rhythm. Terrorist & monarch are *archetypes*; these others are mere functionaries.

Once anarch & king clutched each other's throats & waltzed a totentanz-- a splendid battle. Now, however, both are relegated to history's trashbin-- has-beens, curiosities of a leisurely & more cultivated past. They whirl around so fast that they seem to meld together...can they somehow have become one thing, a Siamese twin, a Janus, a freakish unity? "The sleep of Reason..." ah! most desirable & desirous monsters!

Ontological Anarchy proclaims flatly, bluntly, & almost brainlessly: yes, the two are now one. As a single entity the anarch/king now is reborn; each of us

the ruler of our own flesh, our own creations--and as much of everything else as we can grab & hold.

Our actions are justified by fiat & our relations are shaped by treaties with other autarchs. We make the law for our own domains--& the chains of the law have been broken. At present perhaps we survive as mere Pretenders--but even so we may seize a few instants, a few square feet of reality over which to impose our absolute will, our *royaume. L'etat, c'est moi.*

If we are bound by any ethic or morality it must be one which we ourselves have imagined, fabulously more exalted & more liberating than the "moralic acid" of puritans & humanists. "Ye are as gods"--"Thou art That."

The words *monarchism & mysticism* are used here in part simply *pour epater* those egalito-atheist anarchists who react with pious horror to any mention of pomp or superstition-mongering. No champagne revolutions for *them!*

Our brand of anti-authoritarianism, however, thrives on baroque paradox; it favors states of consciousness, emotion & aesthetics over all petrified ideologies & dogma; it embraces multitudes & relishes contradictions. Ontological Anarchy is a hobgoblin for BIG minds. The translation of the title (& key term) of Max Stirner's magnum opus as *The Ego & Its Own* has led to a

subtle misinterpretation of "individualism." The English-Latin word *ego* comes freighted & weighed with freudian & protestant baggage. A careful reading of Stirner suggests that *The Unique & His Own-ness* would better reflect his intentions, given that he never defines the *ego in opposition to libido or id, or in opposition to "soul" or "spirit."* The Unique (*der Einzige*) might best be construed simply as the individual self.

Stirner commits no metaphysics, yet bestows on the Unique a certain absoluteness. In what way then does this *Einzige* differ from the Self of Advaita Vedanta? *Tat tvam asi: Thou (individual Self) art That (absolute Self).*

Many believe that mysticism "dissolves the ego." Rubbish. Only death does that (or such at least is our Sadducean assumption). Nor does mysticism destroy the "carnal" or "animal" self-- which would also amount to suicide. What mysticism really tries to surmount is false consciousness, illusion, Consensus Reality, & all the failures of self that accompany these ills. True mysticism creates a "self at peace," a self with power. The highest task of metaphysics (accomplished for example by Ibn Arabi, Boehme, Ramana Maharshi) is in a sense to self-destruct, to identify metaphysical & physical, transcendent & immanent, as ONE. Certain *radical monists* have pushed this doctrine far beyond mere pantheism or religious mysticism. An

apprehension of the immanent oneness of being inspires certain antinomian heresies (the Ranters, the Assassins) whom we consider our ancestors.

Stirner himself seems deaf to the possible spiritual resonances of Individualism--& in this he belongs to the 19th century: born long after the deliquescence of Christendom, but long before the discovery of the Orient & of the hidden illuminist tradition in Western alchemy, revolutionary heresy & occult activism. Stirner quite correctly despised what he knew as "mysticism," a mere pietistic sentimentality based on self-abnegation & world hatred. Nietzsche nailed down the lid on "God" a few years later. Since then, who has dared to suggest that Individualism & mysticism might be reconciled & synthesized?

The missing ingredient in Stirner (Nietzsche comes closer) is a working concept of *nonordinary consciousness*. The realization of the unique self (or *ubermensch*) must reverberate & expand like waves or spirals or music to embrace direct experience or intuitive perception of the uniqueness of reality itself. This realization engulfs & erases all duality, dichotomy, & dialectic. It carries with itself, like an electric charge, an intense & wordless sense of *value*: it "divinizes" the self.

Being/consciousness/bliss (*satchitananda*) cannot be dismissed as merely another Stirnerian "spook" or

"wheel in the head." It invokes no exclusively transcendent principle for which the *Einzig*e must sacrifice his/her own-ness. It simply states that intense awareness of existence itself results in "bliss"--or in less loaded language, "valuative consciousness." The goal of the Unique after all is to *possess everything*; the radical monist attains this by identifying self with perception, like the Chinese inkbrush painter who "becomes the bamboo," so that "it paints itself."

Despite mysterious hints Stirner drops about a "union of Unique-ones" & despite Nietzsche's eternal "Yea" & exaltation of life, their Individualism seems somehow shaped by a certain *coldness toward the other*. In part they cultivated a bracing, cleansing chilliness against the warm suffocation of 19th century sentimentality & altruism; in part they simply despised what someone (Mencken?) called "Homo Boobensis."

And yet, reading behind & beneath the layer of ice, we uncover traces of a fiery doctrine--what Gaston Bachelard might have called "a Poetics of the Other." The *Einzig*e's relation with the Other cannot be defined or limited by any institution or idea. And yet clearly, however paradoxically, the Unique depends for completeness on the Other, & cannot & will not be realized in any bitter isolation.

The examples of "wolf children" or

enfants sauvages suggest that a human infant deprived of human company for too long will never attain conscious humanity--will never acquire language. The Wild Child perhaps provides a poetic metaphor for the Unique-one--and yet simultaneously marks the precise point where Unique & Other must meet, coalesce, unify--or else fail to attain & possess all of which they are capable.

The Other mirrors the Self--the Other is our *witness*. The Other completes the Self--the Other gives us the key to the perception of oneness-of-being. When we speak of being & consciousness, we point to the Self; when we speak of bliss we implicate the Other.

The acquisition of language falls under the sign of Eros-- all communication is essentially erotic, all relations are erotic. Avicenna & Dante claimed that love moves the very stars & planets in their courses--the *Rg Veda* & Hesiod's *Theogony* both proclaim Love the first god born after Chaos. Affections, affinities, aesthetic perceptions, beautiful creations, conviviality--all the most precious possessions of the Unique-one arise from the conjunction of Self & Other in the constellation of Desire.

Here again the project begun by Individualism can be evolved & revived by a graft with mysticism--specifically with tantra. As an esoteric *technique* divorced from orthodox

Hinduism, tantra provides a symbolic framework ("Net of Jewels") for the identification of sexual pleasure & non-ordinary consciousness. All antinomian sects have contained some "tantrik" aspect, from the families of Love & Free Brethren & Adamites of Europe to the pederast sufis of Persia to the Taoist alchemists of China. Even classical anarchism has enjoyed its tantrik moments: Fourier's Phalansteries; the "Mystical Anarchism" of G. Ivanov & other fin-de-siÉcle Russian symbolists; the incestuous erotism of Arzibashaev's *Sanine*; the weird combination of Nihilism & Kali-worship which inspired the Bengali Terrorist Party (to which my tantrik guru Sri Kamanaransan Biswas had the honor of belonging)...

We, however, propose a much deeper syncretism of anarchy & tantra than any of these. In fact, we simply suggest that Individual Anarchism & Radical Monism are to be considered henceforth one and the same movement.

This hybrid has been called "spiritual materialism," a term which burns up all metaphysics in the fire of oneness of spirit & matter. We also like "Ontological Anarchy" because it suggests that being itself remains in a state of "divine Chaos," of all-potentiality, of continual creation.

In this flux only the *jiva mukti*, or "liberated individual," is self-realized, and thus monarch or owner of his

perceptions and relations. In this ceaseless flow only desire offers any principle of order, and thus the only possible society (as Fourier understood) is that of lovers.

Anarchism is dead, long live anarchy!
We no longer need the baggage of revolutionary masochism or idealist self-sacrifice--or the frigidity of Individualism with its disdain for conviviality, of *living together*--or the vulgar superstitions of 19th century atheism, scientism, and progressism. All that dead weight! Frowsy proletarian suitcases, heavy bourgeois steamer-trunks, boring philosophical portmanteaux--over the side with them!

We want from these systems only their vitality, their life- forces, daring, intransigence, anger, heedlessness-- their power, their *shakti*. Before we jettison the rubbish and the carpetbags, we'll rifle the luggage for billfolds, revolvers, jewels, drugs and other useful items--keep what we like and trash the rest. Why not? Are we priests of a cult, to croon over relics and mumble our martyrologies?

Monarchism too has something we want--a grace, an ease, a pride, a superabundance. We'll take these, and dump the woes of authority & torture in history's garbage bin. Mysticism has something we need--"self-overcoming," exalted awareness, reservoirs of psychic potency. These we will

expropriate in the name of our
insurrection--and leave the woes of
morality & religion to rot & decompose.

As the Ranters used to say when
greeting any "fellow creature"--from
king to cut-purse--"Rejoice! All is ours!"

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE KALI YUGA

THE KALI YUGA STILL has 200,000 or
so years to play--good news for
advocates & avatars of CHAOS, bad
news for Brahmins, Yahwists,
bureaucrat-gods & their runningdogs.

I knew Darjeeling hid something for me
soon as I heard the name--*dorje ling*--
Thunderbolt City. In 1969 I arrived just
before the monsoons. Old British hill
station, summer hdqrs for Govt. of
Bengal--streets in the form of winding
wood staircases, the Mall with a View of
Sikkim & Mt Katchenhunga- -Tibetan
temples & refugees--beautiful yellow-
porcelain people called Lepchas (the
real abo's)--Hindus, Moslems, Nepalese
& Bhutanese Buddhists, & decaying
Brits who lost their way home in '47,
still running musty banks & tea-
shoppes.

Met Ganesh Baba, fat white-bearded
saddhu with overly- impeccable Oxford
accent--never saw anyone smoke so
much ganja, chillam after chillam full,
then we'd wander the streets while he

played ball with shrieking kids or picked fights in the bazaar, chasing after terrified clerks with his umbrella, then roaring with laughter.

He introduced me to Sri Kamanaransan Biswas, a tiny wispy middleage Bengali government clerk in a shabby suit, who offered to teach me Tantra. Mr Biswas lived in a tiny bungalow perched on a steep pine-tree misty hillside, where I visited him daily with pints of cheap brandy for puja & tipping--he encouraged me to smoke while we talked, since ganja too is sacred to Kali.

Mr Biswas in his wild youth was a member of the Bengali Terrorist Party, which included both Kali worshippers & heretic Moslem mystics as well as anarchists & extreme leftists. Ganesh Baba seemed to approve of this secret past, as if it were a sign of Mr Biswas's hidden tantrika strength, despite his outward seedy mild appearance.

We discussed my readings in Sir John Woodruffe ("Arthur Avalon") each afternoon, I walked there thru cold summer fogs, Tibetan spirit-traps flapping in the soaked breeze loomed out of the mist & cedars. We practiced the Tara- mantra and Tara-mudra (or Yoni-mudra), and studied the Tara-yantra diagram for magical purposes. Once we visited a temple to the Hindu Mars (like ours, both planet & war-god) where he bought a finger-ring made from an iron horseshoe nail & gave it to me. More brandy & ganja.

Tara: one of the forms of Kali, very similar in attributes: dwarfish, naked, four-armed with weapons, dancing on dead Shiva, necklace of skulls or severed heads, tongue dripping blood, skin a deep blue-grey the precise color of monsoon clouds. Every day more rain--mud-slides blocking roads. My Border Area Permit expires. Mr Biswas & I descend the slick wet Himalayas by jeep & train down to his ancestral city, Siliguri in the flat Bengali plains where the Ganges fingers into a sodden viridescent delta.

We visit his wife in the hospital. Last year a flood drowned Siliguri killing tens of thousands. Cholera broke out, the city's a wreck, algae-stained & ruined, the hospital's halls still caked with slime, blood, vomit, the liquids of death. She sits silent on her bed glaring unblinking at hideous fates. Dark side of the goddess. He gives me a colored lithograph of Tara which miraculously floated above the water & was saved.

That night we attend some ceremony at the local Kali-temple, a modest half-ruined little roadside shrine--torchlight the only illumination--chanting & drums with strange, almost African syncopation, totally unclassical, primordial & yet insanely complex. We drink, we smoke. Alone in the cemetery, next to a half-burnt corpse, I'm initiated into Tara Tantra. Next day, feverish & spaced-out, I say farewell & set out for Assam, to the great temple of Shakti's *yoni* in Gauhati, just in time

for the annual festival. Assam is forbidden territory & I have no permit. Midnight in Gauhati I sneak off the train, back down the tracks thru rain & mud up to my knees & total darkness, blunder at last into the city & find a bug-ridden hotel. Sick as a dog by this time. No sleep.

In the morning, bus up to the temple on a nearby mountain. Huge towers, pullulating deities, courtyards, outbuildings-- hundreds of thousands of pilgrims--weird saddhus down from their ice-caves squatting on tiger skins & chanting. Sheep & doves are being slaughtered by the thousands, a real hecatomb-- (not another white sahib in sight)--gutters running inch-deep in blood--curve-bladed Kali-swords chop chop chop, dead heads pocking onto the slippery cobblestones.

When Shiva chopped Shakti into 53 pieces & scattered them over the whole Ganges basin, her cunt fell here. Some friendly priests speak English & help me find the cave where Yoni's on display. By this time I know I'm seriously sick, but determined to finish the ritual. A herd of pilgrims (all at least one head shorter than me) literally engulfs me like an undertow-wave at the beach, & hurls me suspended down suffocating winding troglodyte stairs into claustrophobic womb-cave where I swirl nauseated & hallucinating toward a shapeless cone meteorite smeared in centuries of ghee & ochre. The herd parts for me, allows me to throw a garland of jasmine over the yoni.

A week later in Kathmandu I enter the German Missionary Hospital (for a month) with hepatitis. A small price to pay for all that knowledge--the liver of some retired colonel from a Kipling story!--but I know *her*, I know Kali. Yes absolutely the archetype of all that horror, yet for those who know, she becomes the generous mother. Later in a cave in the jungle above Rishikish I meditated on Tara for several days (with mantra, yantra, mudra, incense, & flowers) & returned to the serenity of Darjeeling, its beneficent visions.

Her age must contain horrors, for most of us cannot understand her or reach beyond the necklace of skulls to the garland of jasmine, knowing in what sense they are *the same*. To go thru CHAOS, to ride it like a tiger, to embrace it (even sexually) & absorb some of its shakti, its life-juice--this is the Path of Kali Yuga. Creative nihilism. For those who follow it she promises enlightenment & even wealth, a share of her temporal *power*.

The sexuality & violence serve as metaphors in a poem which acts directly on consciousness through the Image-ination--or else in the correct circumstances they can be openly deployed & enjoyed, imbued with a sense of the holiness of *every thing* from ecstasy & wine to garbage & corpses.

Those who ignore her or see her

outside themselves risk destruction. Those who worship her as *ishta-devata*, or divine self, taste her Age of Iron as if it were gold, knowing the alchemy of her presence.

AGAINST THE REPRODUCTION OF DEATH

ONE OF THE SIGNS of that End Time so many seem to anticipate would consist of a fascination with all the most negative & hateful detritus of that Time, a fascination felt by the very class of thinkers who consider themselves most perspicacious about the so-called apocalypse they warn us to beware. I'm speaking of people I know very well--those of the "spiritual right" (such as the neo-Guenonians with their obsession for signs of decadence)--& those of the post-philosophical left, the detached essayists of death, connoisseurs of the arts of mutilation.

For both these sets, all possible action in the world is smeared out onto one level plain--all become equally meaningless. For the Traditionalist, nothing matters but to prepare the soul for death (not only its own but the whole world's as well). For the "cultural critic" nothing matters but the game of identifying yet one more reason for despair, analyzing it, adding it to the catalogue.

Now the End of the World is an abstraction because it has never happened. It has no existence in the real world. It will cease to be an abstraction only when it happens--if it happens. (I do not claim to know "God's mind" on the subject- -nor to possess any scientific knowledge about a still non- existent future). I see only a mental image & its emotional ramifications; as such I identify it as a kind of ghostly virus, a spook-sickness in myself which ought to be expunged rather than hypochondriacally coddled & indulged. I have come to despise the "End of the World" as an ideological icon held over my head by religion, state, & cultural milieu alike, as a reason for *doing nothing*.

I understand why the religious & political "powers" would want to keep me quaking in my shoes. Since only *they* offer even a *chance* of evading ragnarok (thru prayer, thru democracy, thru communism, etc.), I will sheepishly follow their dictates & dare nothing on my own. The case of the enlightened intellectuals, however, seems more puzzling at first. What power do *they* derive from this telling-the- beads of fear & gloom, sadism & hatred?

Essentially they gain *smartness*. Any attack on them must appear stupid, since they alone are clear-eyed enough to recognize the truth, they alone daring enough to *show it forth* in defiance of rude shit-kicking censors & liberal wimps. If I attack them as part

of the very problem they claim to be discussing objectively, I will be seen as a bumpkin, a prude, a pollyanna. If I admit my hatred for the *artifacts* of their perception (books, artworks, performances) then I may be dismissed as merely squeamish (& so of course psychologically repressed), or else at the very least lacking in seriousness.

Many people assume that because I sometimes express myself as an anarchist boy-lover, I must also be "interested" in other ultra-postmodern ideas like serial child-murder, fascist ideology, or the photographs of Joel P. Witkin. They assume only two sides to any issue--the hip side & the unhip side. A marxist who objected to all this death-cultishness as anti-progressive would be thought as foolish as a Xtian fundamentalist who believed it immoral.

I maintain that (as usual) many sides exist to this issue rather than only two. Two-sided issues (creationism vs darwinism, "choice" vs "pro-life," etc.) are all without exception *delusions*, spectacular lies.

My position is this: I am all too well aware of the "intelligence" which prevents action. I myself possess it in abundance. Every once in a while however I have managed to behave as if I were stupid enough to try to change my life. Sometimes I've used dangerous stupifiants like religion, marijuana, chaos, the love of boys. On

a few occasions I have attained some degree of success--& I say this not to boast but rather to bear witness. By overthrowing the inner icons of the End of the World & the Futility of all mundane endeavor, I have (rarely) broken through into a state which (by comparison with all I'd known) appeared to be one of *health*. The images of death & mutilation which fascinate our artists & intellectuals appear to me--in the remembered light of these experiences--tragically inappropriate to the real potential of existence & of *discourse* about existence.

Existence itself may be considered an abyss possessed of no meaning. I do not read this as a *pessimistic* statement. If it be true, then I can see in it nothing else but a declaration of autonomy for my imagination & will--& for the most beautiful act they can conceive with which to *bestow* meaning upon existence.

Why should I emblemize this freedom with an act such as murder (as did the existentialists) or with any of the ghoulish tastes of the eighties? Death can only kill me once--till then I am free to express & experience (as much as I *can*) a life & an art of life based on self-valuating "peak experiences," as well as "conviviality" (which also possesses its own reward).

The obsessive replication of Death-imagery (& its reproduction or even

commodification) *gets in the way* of this project just as obstructively as censorship or media- brainwashing. It sets up negative feedback loops--it is bad juju. It helps no one conquer fear of death, but merely inculcates a *morbid* fear in place of the healthy fear all sentient creatures feel at the smell of their own mortality.

This is not to absolve the world of its ugliness, or to deny that truly fearful things exist in it. But some of these things can be overcome--on the condition that we build an *aesthetic* on the overcoming rather than the fear.

I recently attended a gay dance/poetry performance of uncompromising hipness: the one black dancer in the troupe had to pretend to fuck a dead sheep.

Part of my self-induced stupidity, I confess, is to believe (& even feel) that art can change me, & change others. That's why I write pornography & propaganda--to cause *change*. Art can never mean as much as a love affair, perhaps, or an insurrection. But...to a certain extent...it works.

Even if I'd given up all hope in art, however, all expectation of exaltation, I would still refuse to put up with art that merely exacerbates my misery, or indulges in *schadenfreude*, "delight in the misery of others." I turn away from certain art as a dog would turn away howling from the corpse of its

companion. I'd like to renounce the sophistication which would permit me to sniff it with detached curiosity as yet another example of post-industrial decomposition.

Only the dead are truly smart, truly cool. Nothing touches them. While I live, however, I side with bumbling suffering crooked life, with anger rather than boredom, with sweet lust, hunger & carelessness...against the icy avant-guard & its fashionable premonitions of the sepulcher.

RINGING DENUNCIATION OF SURREALISM

(For Harry Smith)

AT THE SURREALIST FILM show, someone asked Stan Brakhage about the media's use of surrealism (MTV, etc.); he answered that it was a "damn shame." Well, maybe it is & maybe it isn't (does popular kultur *ipso facto* lack all inspiration?)--but granting that on some level the media's appropriation of surrealism is a damn shame, are we to believe that there was nothing in surrealism that allowed this theft to occur?

The return of the repressed means the return of the paleolithic--not a return to the Old Stone Age, but a spiralling around on a new level of the gyre. (After all, 99.9999% of human

experience is of hunting/gathering, with agriculture & industry a mere oil slick on the deep well of non-history.) Paleolithic equals pre-Work ("original leisure society"). Post-Work (Zerowork) equals "Psychic Paleolithism."

All projects for the "liberation of desire" (Surrealism) which remain enmeshed in the matrix of Work can only lead to the commodification of desire. The Neolithic begins with desire for commodities (agricultural surplus), moves on to the production of desire (industry), & ends with the implosion of desire (advertising). The Surrealist liberation of desire, for all its aesthetic accomplishments, remains no more than a subset of production--hence the wholesaling of Surrealism to the Communist Party & its Work-ist ideology (not to mention attendant misogyny & homophobia). Modern leisure, in turn, is simply a subset of Work (hence its commodification)--so it is no accident that when Surrealism closed up shop, the only customers at the garage sale were ad execs.

Advertising, using Surrealism's colonization of the unconscious to *create* desire, leads to the final implosion of Surrealism. It's not just a "damn shame & a disgrace," not a simple appropriation. Surrealism was *made* for advertising, for commodification. Surrealism is in fact a betrayal of desire.

And yet, out of this abyss of meaning,

desire still rises, innocent as a new-hatched phoenix. Early Berlin dada (which rejected the return of the art-object) for all its faults provides a better model for dealing with the implosion of the social than Surrealism could ever do--an anarchist model, or perhaps (in anthro-jargon) a non-authoritarian model, a destruction of all ideology, of all chains of law. As the structure of Work/Leisure crumbles into emptiness, as all forms of control vanish in the dissolution of meaning, the Neolithic seems bound to vanish as well, with all its temples & granaries & police, to be replaced by some return of hunting/gathering on the psychic level--a re-nomadization. Everything's imploding & disappearing--the oedipal family, education, even the unconscious itself (as Andr- Codrescu says). Let's not mistake this for Armageddon (let's resist the seduction of apocalypse, the eschatological con)--it's not *the world* coming to an end--only the empty husks of the social, catching fire & disappearing.

Surrealism must be junked along with all the other beautiful bric-a-brac of agricultural priestcraft & vapid control-systems. No one knows what's coming, what misery, what spirit of wildness, what joy--but the last thing we need on our voyage is another set of commissars--popes of our dreams--daddies. Down with Surrealism...

--Naropa, July 9, 1988

FOR A CONGRESS OF WEIRD RELIGIONS

WE'VE LEARNED TO DISTRUST the verb *to be*, the word *is*--let's say rather: note the striking resemblance between the concept SATORI & the concept REVOLUTION OF EVERYDAY LIFE--in both cases: a perception of the "ordinary" with extraordinary consequences for consciousness & action. We can't use the phrase "is like" because both concepts (like all concepts, all words for that matter) come crusted with accretions--each burdened with all its psycho-cultural baggage, like guests who arrive suspiciously overly well-supplied for the weekend.

So allow me the old-fashioned Beat-Zennish use of *satori*, while simultaneously emphasizing--in the case of the Situationist slogan--that one of the roots of its dialectic can be traced to dada & Surrealism's notion of the "marvelous" erupting from (or into) a life which only *seems* suffocated by the banal, by the miseries of abstraction & alienation. I define my terms by making them more vague, precisely in order to avoid the orthodoxies of both Buddhism & Situationism, to evade their ideologico-semantic traps--those broken-down language machines! Rather, I propose we ravage them for parts, an act of cultural bricolage. "Revolution" means just another turn of the crank--while

religious orthodoxy of any sort leads logically to a veritable government of cranks. Let's not idolize satori by imagining it the monopoly of mystic monks, or as contingent on any moral code; & rather than fetishize the Leftism of '68 we prefer Stirner's term "insurrection" or "uprising," which escapes the built-in implications of a mere change of authority.

This constellation of concepts involves "breaking rules" of ordered perception to arrive at direct experiencing, somewhat analogous to the process whereby chaos spontaneously resolves into fractal nonlinear orders, or the way in which "wild" creative energy resolves as play & *poesis*. "Spontaneous order" out of "chaos" in turn evokes the anarchist Taoism of the *Chuang Tzu*. Zen may be accused of lacking awareness of the "revolutionary" implications of satori, while the Situationists can be criticized for ignoring a certain "spirituality" inherent in the self-realization & conviviality their cause demands. By identifying satori with the r. of e.d.l. we're performing a bit of a shotgun marriage fully as remarkable as the Surrealists' famous mating of an umbrella & sewing machine or whatever it was. Miscegenation. The race-mixing advocated by Nietzsche, who was attracted, no doubt, by the sexiness of the half-caste.

I'm tempted to try to describe the way satori "is" like the r. of e.d.l.--but I can't. Or to put it another way: nearly

all I write revolves around this theme; I would have to repeat nearly everything in order to elucidate this single point. Instead, as an appendix, I offer one more curious coincidence or interpenetration of 2 terms, one from Situationism again & the other this time from sufism. The *d-rive* or "drift" was conceived as an exercise in deliberate revolutionizing of everyday life--a sort of aimless wandering thru city streets, a visionary urban nomadism involving an openness to "culture as nature" (if I grasp the idea correctly)--which by its sheer duration would inculcate in the drifters a propensity to experience the marvelous; not always in its beneficent form perhaps, but hopefully always productive of insight--whether thru architecture, the erotic, adventure, drink & drugs, danger, inspiration, whatever--into the intensity of unmediated perception & experience.

The parallel term in sufism would be "journeying to the far horizons" or simply "journeying," a spiritual exercise which combines the urban & nomadic energies of Islam into a single trajectory, sometimes called "the Caravan of Summer." The dervish vows to travel at a certain velocity, perhaps spending no more than 7 nights or 40 nights in one city, accepting whatever comes, moving wherever signs & coincidences or simply whims may lead, heading from power-spot to power-spot, conscious of "sacred geography," of itinerary as meaning, of topology as symbology. Here's another

constellation: Ibn Khaldun, *On the Road* (both Jack Kerouac's & Jack London's), the form of the picaresque novel in general, Baron Munchausen, *wanderjahr*, Marco Polo, boys in a suburban summer forest, Arthurian knights out questing for trouble, queers out cruising for boys, pub-crawling with Melville, Poe, Baudelaire--or canoeing with Thoreau in Maine...travel as the antithesis of tourism, space *rather than* time. Art project: the construction of a "map" bearing a 1:1 ratio to the "territory" explored. Political project: the construction of shifting "autonomous zones" within an invisible nomadic network (like the Rainbow Gatherings). Spiritual project: the creation or discovery of pilgrimages in which the concept "shrine" has been replaced (or esotericized) by the concept "peak experience."

What I'm trying to do here (as usual) is to provide a sound irrational basis, a strange philosophy if you like, for what I call the Free Religions, including the Psychedelic & Discordian currents, non-hierarchical neo-paganism, antinomian heresies, chaos & Kaos Magik, revolutionary Hoodoo, "unchurched" & anarchist Christians, Magical Judaism, the Moorish Orthodox Church, Church of the SubGenius, the Faeries, radical Taoists, beer mystics, people of the Herb, etc., etc.

Contrary to the expectations of 19th century radicals, religion has not gone away--perhaps we'd be better off if it had--but has instead increased in

power, seemingly in proportion to the global increase in the realm of technology & rational control. Both fundamentalism & the New Age derive some force from deep & widespread dissatisfaction with the System that works against all perception of the marvelousness of everyday life--call it Babylon or the Spectacle, Capital or Empire, Society of Simulation or of soulless mechanism--what you wish. But these two religious forces divert the very desire for the authentic toward overpowering & oppressive new abstractions (morality in the case of fundamentalism, commodification in the case of the New Age), & for this reason can quite properly be called "reactionary."

Just as cultural radicals will seek to infiltrate & subvert the popular media, & just as political radicals will perform similar functions in the spheres of Work, Family, & other social organizations, so there exists a need for radicals to penetrate the institution of religion itself rather than merely continue to mouth 19th century platitudes about atheistic materialism. It's going to happen anyway--better to approach it with consciousness, with grace & style.

Having once lived near the Hdqrs of the World Council of Churches, I like the possibility of a Free Churches parody version--parody being one of our chief strategies (or call it *d-tournement* or deconstruction or creative destruction)-

-a sort of loose network (I dislike that word; let's call it a "webwork" instead) of weird cults & individuals providing conversation & services for each other, out of which might begin to emerge a trend or tendency or "current" (in magical terms) strong enough to wreak some psychic havoc on the Fundies & New Agers, even the ayatollahs & the Papacy, convivial enough for us to disagree with each other & yet still give great parties--or conclaves, or ecumenical councils, or World Congresses--which we anticipate with glee.

The Free Religions may offer some of the only possible spiritual alternatives to televangelist stormtroopers & pinhead crystal-channelers (not to mention the established religions), & will thus become more & more important, more & more vital in a future where the demand for the eruption of the marvelous into the ordinary will become the most ringing, poignant & tumultuous of all political demands--a future which will begin (wait a minute, lemme check my clock)...7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1...NOW.

HOLLOW EARTH

SUBTERRANEAN REGIONS OF THE continent excavated in cyclopaean caverns, cathedralspace fractal networks, labyrinthine gargantuan tunnels, slow black underground rivers,

unmoving stygian lakes, pure & slightly luminiferous, slim waterfalls plunging down watersmooth rock, cataracting round petrified forests of stalactites & stalagmites in spelunker-bewildering blind-fish complexity & unfathomable vastness...Who dug this hollow earth beneath the ice foreseen by Poe, by certain paranoid German occultists, Shaverian UFO freaks? Was Earth once colonized in the time of Gondwana or MU by some Elder Race? their reptilian skeletons still mouldering in the farthest secret mazes of the cavern system? Sluggish backwaters, dead-end canals, stagnant pools far from the centers of civilization like Little America, Transport City, or Nan Chi Han, down in the dark recesses and boondocks of the Antarctic caves, fungus & albino fern. We suspect them of mutations, amphibian webbed fingers and toes, degenerate habits-- Kallikaks of the Hollow Earth, Lovecraftian renegades, hermits, skulking incestuous smugglers, runaway criminals, anarchists forced into hiding after the Entropy Wars, fugitives from Genetic Puritanism, dissident Chinese Tongs & Yellow Turban fanatics, lascar cave-pirates, pale shiftless whitetrash from the prolewarrens of the industrial domes along Thwait's Tongue & the Walgreen Coast & Edsel-Ford-Land- -the Troggs have kept alive for over 200 years the folk- memory of the Autonomous Zone, the myth that someday it will appear again...Taoism, libertine philosophy, Indonesian sorcery, cult of the Cave Mother (or Mothers), identified by some

scholars with the Javanese sea/moon goddess Loro Kidul, by others with a minor deity of the South Pole Star Sect, the "Jade Goddess"...manuscripts (written in Bahasa Inggris the pidgin dialect of the deep caves) contain mangled quotations from Nietzsche & Chuang Tzu...Trade consists of occasional precious gems and cultivation of white poppy, fungus, over a dozen different species of "magic" mushrooms...Shallow Lake Erebus, 5 miles across, dotted with stalagmitic islets choked with fern & kudzu & black dwarf pine, held in a cave so vast it sometimes creates its own weather...The town belongs officially to Little America but most of the inhabitants are Troggs living off the Shiftless Dole--& the deep-cave tribal country lies just across the Lake. Riffraff, artists, drug addicts, sorcerers, smugglers, remittance-men & perverts live in crumbling basalt-&- synthplast hotels half-encrusted with pale green vines, along the lakefront, an avenue of squalid cafes, gem emporia guarded by armed ninjas, chinese krill-noodle shops, the crystal-tinselled hall for slow fusion-gamelan dancers, boys practicing their mudras on sleepy electronic dark blue afternoons to the rippling of synthgongs and metallophones...& below the pier perhaps a few desultory bathers along the black beach, genuine low-budget tourists gawking at the shrine behind the bazaar where pallid old Troggs pampered out on fungus drool & roll up their eyes, breathe in the fumes of heavy incense, everything seems

suddenly menacingly bright, flickering with significance...a few cases of webbed fingers but the rumors of ritual promiscuity are true enough. I was living in a Trog fishing village across the lake from Erebus in a rented room above the baitshop...rural sloth & degenerate superstitious rites of sensual abandon, the larval & unhealthy mysteries of the chthonic mutant downtrodden Trogs, lazy shiftless no-count hicks...Little America, so christian & free of mutation, eugenic & orderly, where ev- eryone lives jacked into the fleshless realm of ancient software & holography, so euclidean, newtonian, clean & patriotic-- L.A. will never understand this innocent filth- sorcery, this "spiritual materialism," this slavery to the volcanic desires of secret cave-boy gangs like laughing flowers jetting with dynamo erections pulsing up pure life curved taut as bows, & the smell of water, pond-scum, nightblooming white flowers, jasmine & datura, urine, children's wet hair, sperm & mud...possessed by cave- spirits, perhaps ghosts of ancient aliens now wandering as demons seeking to renew long-lost pleasures of flesh & substance. Or else the Zone has already been reborn, already a nexus of autonomy, a spreading virus of chaos in its most exuberant clandestine form, white toadstools springing up on the spots where Trog boys have masturbated alone in the dark...

NIETZSCHE & THE DERVISHES

RENDAN, "THE CLEVER ONES." The sufis use a technical term *rend* (adj. *rendi*, pl. *rendan*) to designate one "clever enough to drink wine in secret without getting caught": the dervish version of "Permissible Dissimulation" (*taqiyya*, whereby Shiites are permitted to lie about their true affiliation to avoid persecution as well as advance the purpose of their propaganda).

On the plane of the "Path," the *rend* conceals his spiritual state (*hal*) in order to contain it, work on it alchemically, enhance it. This "cleverness" explains much of the secrecy of the Orders, altho it remains true that many dervishes do literally break the rules of Islam (*shariah*), offend tradition (*sunnah*), and flout the customs of their society--all of which gives them reason for *real* secrecy.

Ignoring the case of the "criminal" who uses sufism as a mask--or rather not sufism per se but *dervish*-ism, almost a synonym in Persia for laid-back manners & by extension a social laxness, a style of genial and poor but elegant amorality--the above definition can still be considered in a literal as well as metaphorical sense. That is: some sufis do break the Law while still allowing that the Law exists & will continue to exist; & they do so from spiritual motives, as an exercise of will (*himmah*).

Nietzsche says somewhere that the free

spirit will not agitate for the rules to be dropped or even reformed, since it is only by breaking the rules that he realizes his will to power. One must prove (to oneself if no one else) an ability to overcome the rules of the herd, to make one's own law & yet not fall prey to the rancor & resentment of inferior souls which define law & custom in ANY society. One needs, in effect, an individual equivalent of war in order to achieve the becoming of the free spirit--one needs an inert stupidity against which to measure one's own movement & intelligence.

Anarchists sometimes posit an ideal society without law. The few anarchist experiments which succeeded briefly (the Makhnovists, Catalan) failed to survive the conditions of war which permitted their existence in the first place--so we have no way of knowing empirically if such an experiment could outlive the onset of peace.

Some anarchists, however, like our late friend the Italian Stirnerite "Brand," took part in all sorts of uprisings and revolutions, even communist and socialist ones, because they found in the moment of insurrection itself the kind of freedom they sought. Thus while utopianism has so far always failed, the individualist or existentialist anarchists have succeeded inasmuch as they have attained (however briefly) the realization of their will to power in war.

Nietzsche's animadversions against "anarchists" are always aimed at the egalitarian-communist narodnik martyr types, whose idealism he saw as yet one more survival of post-Xtian moralism--altho he sometimes praises them for at least having the courage to revolt against majoritarian authority. He never mentions Stirner, but I believe he would have classified the Individualist rebel with the higher types of "criminals," who represented for him (as for Dostoyevsky) humans far superior to the herd, even if tragically flawed by their obsessiveness and perhaps hidden motivations of revenge.

The Nietzschean overman, if he existed, would have to share to some degree in this "criminality" even if he had overcome all obsessions and compulsions, if only because his law could never agree with the law of the masses, of state & society. His need for "war" (whether literal or metaphorical) might even persuade him to take part in revolt, whether it assumed the form of insurrection or only of a proud bohemianism.

For him a "society without law" might have value only so long as it could measure its own freedom against the subjection of others, against their jealousy & hatred. The lawless & short-lived "pirate utopias" of Madagascar & the Caribbean, D'Annunzio's Republic of Fiume, the Ukraine or Barcelona--these would attract him because they promised the turmoil of becoming & even "failure" rather than the bucolic

somnolence of a "perfected" (& hence dead) anarchist society.

In the absence of such opportunities, this free spirit would disdain wasting time on agitation for reform, on protest, on visionary dreaming, on all kinds of "revolutionary martyrdom"--in short, on most contemporary anarchist activity. To be *rendi*, to drink wine in secret & not get caught, to accept the rules in order to break them & thus attain the spiritual lift or energy-rush of danger & adventure, the private epiphany of overcoming all interior police while tricking all outward authority--this might be a goal worthy of such a spirit, & this might be his definition of crime.

(Incidentally, I think this reading helps explain N's insistence on the MASK, on the secretive nature of the proto-overman, which disturbs even intelligent but somewhat liberal commentators like Kaufman. Artists, for all that N loves them, are criticized for *telling secrets*. Perhaps he failed to consider that--paraphrasing A. Ginsberg--this is *our* way of becoming "great"; and also that--paraphrasing Yeats--even the truest secret becomes yet another mask.)

As for the anarchist movement today: would we like just once to stand on ground where laws are abolished & the last priest is strung up with the guts of the last bureaucrat? Yeah sure. But we're not holding our breath. There are

certain causes (to quote the Neech again) that one fails to quite abandon, if only because of the sheer insipidity of all their enemies. Oscar Wilde might have said that one cannot be a gentleman without being something of an anarchist--a necessary paradox, like N's "radical aristocratism."

This is not just a matter of spiritual dandyism, but also of existential commitment to an underlying spontaneity, to a philosophical "tao." For all its waste of energy, in its very formlessness, anarchism alone of all the ISMs approaches that one *type* of form which alone can interest us today, that strange attractor, the shape of *chaos*--which (one last quote) one must have within oneself, if one is to give birth to a dancing star.

--Spring Equinox, 1989

RESOLUTION FOR THE 1990's: BOYCOTT COP CULTURE!!!

IF ONE FICTIONAL FIGURE can be said to have dominated the popcult of the eighties, it was the Cop. Fuckin' police ev- erywhere you turned, worse than real life. What an incredible bore.

Powerful Cops--protecting the meek and humble--at the expense of a half-dozen or so articles of the Bill of Rights--"Dirty Harry." Nice human cops, coping with human perversity, coming

out sweet 'n' sour, you know, gruff & knowing but still soft inside--*Hill Street Blues*--most evil TV show ever. Wiseass black cops scoring witty racist remarks against hick white cops, who nevertheless come to love each other--Eddie Murphy, Class Traitor. For that masochist thrill we got wicked bent cops who threaten to topple our Kozy Konsensus Reality from within like Giger- designed tapeworms, but naturally get blown away just in the nick of time by the Last Honest Cop, Robocop, ideal amalgam of prosthesis and sentimentality.

We've been obsessed with cops since the beginning--but the rozzers of yore played bumbling fools, Keystone Kops, *Car 54 Where Are You*, booby-bobbies set up for Fatty Arbuckle or Buster Keaton to squash & deflate. But in the ideal drama of the eighties, the "little man" who once scattered bluebottles by the hundred with that anarchist's bomb, innocently used to light a cigarette--the Tramp, the victim with the sudden power of the pure heart--no longer has a place at the center of narrative. Once "we" were that hobo, that quasi-surrealist chaote hero who wins thru *wu- wei* over the ludicrous minions of a despised & irrelevant Order. But now "we" are reduced to the status of victims *without* power, or else criminals. "We" no longer occupy that central role; no longer the heros of our own stories, we've been marginalized & replaced by the Other, the Cop.

Thus the Cop Show has only three

characters--victim, criminal, and policeperson--but the first two fail to be fully human--only the pig is *real*. Oddly enough, human society in the eighties (as seen in the other media) sometimes appeared to consist of the same three cliché/archetypes. First the victims, the whining minorities bitching about "rights"--and who pray tell did *not* belong to a "minority" in the eighties? Shit, even cops complained about their "rights" being abused. Then the criminals: largely non-white (despite the obligatory & hallucinatory "integration" of the media), largely poor (or else obscenely rich, hence even more alien), largely perverse (i.e. the forbidden mirrors of "our" desires). I've heard that one out of four households in America is robbed every year, & that every year nearly half a million of us are arrested just for smoking pot. In the face of such statistics (even assuming they're "damned lies") one wonders who is NOT either victim or criminal in our police-state-of-consciousness. The fuzz must mediate for *all of us*, however fuzzy the interface-- they're only warrior-priests, however profane. *America's Most Wanted*--the most successful TV game show of the eighties--opened up for all of us the role of Amateur Cop, hitherto merely a media fantasy of middleclass resentment & revenge. Naturally the truelife Cop hates no one so much as the vigilante--look what happens to poor &/or non-white neighborhood self-protection groups like the Muslims who tried to eliminate crack dealing in

Brooklyn: the cops busted the Muslims, the pushers went free. Real vigilantes threaten the monopoly of enforcement, *l'Ése majest-*, more abominable than incest or murder. But media(ted) vigilantes function perfectly within the CopState; in fact, it would be more accurate to think of them as *unpaid* (not even a set of matched luggage!) *informers*: telemetric snitches, electro-stoolies, ratfinks- for-a-day.

What is it that "America most wants"? Does this phrase refer to criminals--or to crimes, to objects of desire in their real presence, unrepresented, unmediated, literally stolen & appropriated? America most wants...to fuck off work, ditch the spouse, do drugs (because only drugs make you feel as good as the people in TV ads appear to be), have sex with nubile jailbait, sodomy, burglary, hell yes. What unmediated pleasures are NOT illegal? Even outdoor barbecues violate smoke ordinances nowadays. The simplest enjoyments turn us against some law; finally pleasure becomes too stress- inducing, and only TV remains--and the pleasure of revenge, vicarious betrayal, the sick thrill of the tattletale. America can't have what it most wants, so it has *America's Most Wanted* instead. A nation of schoolyard toadies sucking up to an elite of schoolyard bullies.

Of course the program still suffers from a few strange reality-glitches: for example, the dramatized segments are

enacted cinema verit- style by *actors*; some viewers are so stupid they believe they're seeing actual footage of real crimes. Hence the actors are being continually harassed & even arrested, along with (or instead of) the real criminals whose mugshots are flashed after each little documentoid. How quaint, eh? No one really experiences anything--everyone reduced to the status of ghosts--media-images break off & float away from any contact with actual everyday life-- PhoneSex-- CyberSex. Final transcendence of the body: cybergnosis.

The media cops, like televangelical forerunners, prepare us for the advent, final coming or Rapture of the police state: the "Wars" on sex and drugs: total control totally leached of all content; a map with no coordinates in any known space; far beyond mere Spectacle; sheer ecstasy ("standing-outside-the-body"); obscene simulacrum; meaningless violent spasms elevated to the last principle of governance. Image of a country consumed by images of self-hatred, war between the schizoid halves of a split personality, Super-Ego vs the Id Kid, for the heavyweight championship of an abandoned landscape, burnt, polluted, empty, desolate, unreal. Just as the murder-mystery is always an exercise in sadism, so the cop-fiction always involves the contemplation of *control*. The image of the inspector or detective measures the image of "our" lack of autonomous substance, our transparency before the gaze of

authority. Our perversity, our helplessness. Whether we imagine them as "good" or "evil," our obsessive invocation of the eidolons of the Cops reveals the extent to which we have accepted the manichaeian worldview they symbolize. Millions of tiny cops swarm everywhere, like the qliphoth, larval hungry ghosts--they fill the screen, as in Keaton's famous two-reeler, overwhelming the foreground, an Antarctic where nothing moves but hordes of sinister blue penguins.

We propose an esoteric hermeneutical exegesis of the Surrealist slogan "*Mort aux vaches!*" We take it to refer not to the deaths of individual cops ("cows" in the argot of the period)--mere leftist revenge fantasy--petty reverse sadism--but rather to the death of the *image* of the *flic*, the inner Control & its myriad reflections in the NoPlace Place of the media--the "gray room" as Burroughs calls it. Self-censorship, fear of one's own desires, "conscience" as the interiorized voice of consensus-authority. To assassinate these "security forces" would indeed release floods of libidinal energy, but not the violent running-amok predicted by the theory of Law 'n' Order.

Nietzschean "self-overcoming" provides the principle of organization for the free spirit (as also for anarchist society, at least in theory). In the police-state personality, libidinal energy is dammed & diverted toward self-repression; any threat to Control results in spasms of

violence. In the free-spirit personality, energy flows unimpeded & therefore turbulently but gently--its chaos finds its strange attractor, allowing new spontaneous orders to emerge.

In this sense, then, we call for a boycott of the image of the Cop, & a moratorium on its production in art. In this sense...

MORT AUX VACHES!

CONTINUE

THE TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE

"...this time however I come
as the victorious Dionysus,
who will turn the world into a
holiday...Not that I have
much time..."

--Nietzsche (from his last "insane"
letter to Cosima Wagner)

Pirate Utopias

THE SEA-ROVERS AND CORSAIRS of
the 18th century created an
"information network" that spanned the
globe: primitive and devoted primarily
to grim business, the net nevertheless
functioned admirably. Scattered
throughout the net were islands,
remote hideouts where ships could be
watered and provisioned, booty traded
for luxuries and necessities. Some of
these islands supported "intentional
communities," whole mini-societies
living consciously outside the law and
determined to keep it up, even if only
for a short but merry life.

Some years ago I looked through a lot
of secondary material on piracy hoping
to find a study of these enclaves--but it
appeared as if no historian has yet
found them worthy of analysis. (William

Burroughs has mentioned the subject, as did the late British anarchist Larry Law--but no systematic research has been carried out.) I retreated to primary sources and constructed my own theory, some aspects of which will be discussed in this essay. I called the settlements "Pirate Utopias."

Recently Bruce Sterling, one of the leading exponents of Cyberpunk science fiction, published a near-future romance based on the assumption that the decay of political systems will lead to a decentralized proliferation of experiments in living: giant worker-owned corporations, independent enclaves devoted to "data piracy," Green-Social-Democrat enclaves, Zerowork enclaves, anarchist liberated zones, etc. The information economy which supports this diversity is called the Net; the enclaves (and the book's title) are *Islands in the Net*.

The medieval Assassins founded a "State" which consisted of a network of remote mountain valleys and castles, separated by thousands of miles, strategically invulnerable to invasion, connected by the information flow of secret agents, at war with all governments, and devoted only to knowledge. Modern technology, culminating in the spy satellite, makes this kind of *autonomy* a romantic dream. No more pirate islands! In the future the same technology-- freed from all political control--could make possible an entire world of *autonomous zones*. But for now the concept remains

precisely science fiction--pure speculation.

Are we who live in the present doomed never to experience autonomy, never to stand for one moment on a bit of land ruled only by freedom? Are we reduced either to nostalgia for the past or nostalgia for the future? Must we wait until the entire world is freed of political control before even one of us can claim to know freedom? Logic and emotion unite to condemn such a supposition. Reason demands that one cannot struggle for what one does not know; and the heart revolts at a universe so cruel as to visit such injustices on *our* generation alone of humankind.

To say that "I will not be free till all humans (or all sentient creatures) are free" is simply to cave in to a kind of nirvana-stupor, to abdicate our humanity, to define ourselves as losers.

I believe that by extrapolating from past and future stories about "islands in the net" we may collect evidence to suggest that a certain kind of "free enclave" is not only possible in our time but also existent. All my research and speculation has crystallized around the concept of the TEMPORARY AUTONOMOUS ZONE (hereafter abbreviated TAZ). Despite its synthesizing force for my own thinking, however, I don't intend the TAZ to be taken as more than an *essay* ("attempt"), a suggestion, almost a

poetic fancy. Despite the occasional Ranterish enthusiasm of my language I am not trying to construct political dogma. In fact I have deliberately refrained from defining the TAZ--I circle around the subject, firing off exploratory beams. In the end the TAZ is almost self-explanatory. If the phrase became current it would be understood without difficulty...understood in action.

Waiting for the Revolution

HOW IS IT THAT "the world turned upside-down" always manages to *Right* itself? Why does reaction always follow revolution, like seasons in Hell?

Uprising, or the Latin form *insurrection*, are words used by historians to label *failed* revolutions--movements which do not match the expected curve, the consensus-approved trajectory: revolution, reaction, betrayal, the founding of a stronger and even more oppressive State--the turning of the wheel, the return of history again and again to its highest form: jackboot on the face of humanity forever.

By failing to follow this curve, the *up-rising* suggests the possibility of a movement outside and beyond the Hegelian spiral of that "progress" which is secretly nothing more than a vicious circle. *Surgo*--rise up, surge. *Insurgo*--rise up, raise oneself up. A bootstrap operation. A goodbye to that wretched parody of the karmic round, historical revolutionary futility. The slogan

"Revolution!" has mutated from tocsin to toxin, a malign pseudo-Gnostic fate-trap, a nightmare where no matter how we struggle we never escape that evil Aeon, that incubus the State, one State after another, every "heaven" ruled by yet one more evil angel.

If History IS "Time," as it claims to be, then the uprising is a moment that springs up and out of Time, violates the "law" of History. If the State IS History, as it claims to be, then the insurrection is the forbidden moment, an unforgivable denial of the dialectic--shimmying up the pole and out of the smokehole, a shaman's maneuver carried out at an "impossible angle" to the universe. History says the Revolution attains "permanence," or at least duration, while the uprising is "temporary." In this sense an uprising is like a "peak experience" as opposed to the standard of "ordinary" consciousness and experience. Like festivals, uprisings cannot happen every day--otherwise they would not be "nonordinary." But such moments of intensity give shape and meaning to the entirety of a life. The shaman returns--you can't stay up on the roof forever-- but things have changed, shifts and integrations have occurred--a *difference* is made.

You will argue that this is a counsel of despair. What of the anarchist dream, the Stateless state, the Commune, the autonomous zone with *duration*, a free society, a free *culture*? Are we to abandon that hope in return for some

existentialist *acte gratuit*? The point is not to change consciousness but to change the world.

I accept this as a fair criticism. I'd make two rejoinders nevertheless; first, *revolution* has never yet resulted in achieving this dream. The vision comes to life in the moment of uprising--but as soon as "the Revolution" triumphs and the State returns, the dream and the ideal are *already* betrayed. I have not given up hope or even expectation of change--but I distrust the word *Revolution*. Second, even if we replace the revolutionary approach with a concept of *insurrection blossoming spontaneously into anarchist culture*, our own particular historical situation is not propitious for such a vast undertaking. Absolutely nothing but a futile martyrdom could possibly result now from a head- on collision with the terminal State, the megacorporate information State, the empire of Spectacle and Simulation. Its guns are all pointed at us, while our meager weaponry finds nothing to aim at but a hysteresis, a rigid vacuity, a Spook capable of smothering every spark in an ectoplasm of information, a society of capitulation ruled by the image of the Cop and the absorbant eye of the TV screen.

In short, we're not touting the TAZ as an exclusive end in itself, replacing all other forms of organization, tactics, and goals. We recommend it because it can provide the quality of enhancement

associated with the uprising without necessarily leading to violence and martyrdom. The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the State, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, *before* the State can crush it. Because the State is concerned primarily with Simulation rather than substance, the TAZ can "occupy" these areas clandestinely and carry on its festal purposes for quite a while in relative peace. Perhaps certain small TAZs have lasted whole lifetimes because they went unnoticed, like hillbilly enclaves-- because they never intersected with the Spectacle, never appeared outside that real life which is invisible to the agents of Simulation.

Babylon takes its abstractions for realities; precisely *within* this margin of error the TAZ can come into existence. Getting the TAZ started may involve tactics of violence and defense, but its greatest strength lies in its invisibility-- the State cannot recognize it because History has no definition of it. As soon as the TAZ is named (represented, mediated), it must vanish, it *will* vanish, leaving behind it an empty husk, only to spring up again somewhere else, once again invisible because undefinable in terms of the Spectacle. The TAZ is thus a perfect tactic for an era in which the State is omnipresent and all-powerful and yet simultaneously riddled with cracks and vacancies. And because the TAZ is a

microcosm of that "anarchist dream" of a free culture, I can think of no better tactic by which to work toward that goal while at the same time experiencing some of its benefits here and now.

In sum, realism demands not only that we give up *waiting* for "the Revolution" but also that we give up *wanting* it. "Uprising," yes--as often as possible and even at the risk of violence. The *spasming* of the Simulated State will be "spectacular," but in most cases the best and most radical tactic will be to refuse to engage in spectacular violence, to *withdraw* from the area of simulation, to disappear.

The TAZ is an encampment of guerilla ontologists: strike and run away. Keep moving the entire tribe, even if it's only data in the Web. The TAZ must be capable of defense; but both the "strike" and the "defense" should, if possible, evade the violence of the State, which is no longer a *meaningful* violence. The strike is made at structures of control, essentially at ideas; the defense is "invisibility," a *martial art*, and "invulnerability"--an "occult" art within the martial arts. The "nomadic war machine" conquers without being noticed and moves on before the map can be adjusted. As to the future--Only the autonomous can *plan* autonomy, organize for it, create it. It's a bootstrap operation. The first step is somewhat akin to *satori*--the realization that the TAZ begins with a simple act of realization.

(Note: See Appendix C, quote by Renzo Novatore)

The Psychotopology of Everyday Life

THE CONCEPT OF THE TAZ arises first out of a critique of Revolution, and an appreciation of the Insurrection. The former labels the latter a failure; but for us *uprising* represents a far more interesting possibility, from the standard of a psychology of liberation, than all the "successful" revolutions of bourgeoisie, communists, fascists, etc.

The second generating force behind the TAZ springs from the historical development I call "the closure of the map." The last bit of Earth unclaimed by any nation-state was eaten up in 1899. Ours is the first century without *terra incognita*, without a frontier. Nationality is the highest principle of world governance--not one speck of rock in the South Seas can be left *open*, not one remote valley, not even the Moon and planets. This is the apotheosis of "territorial gangsterism." Not one square inch of Earth goes unpoliced or untaxed...in theory.

The "map" is a political abstract grid, a gigantic *con* enforced by the carrot/stick conditioning of the "Expert" State, until for most of us the map *becomes* the territory- -no longer "Turtle Island," but "the USA." And yet because the map is an abstraction it

cannot cover Earth with 1:1 accuracy. Within the fractal complexities of actual geography the map can see only dimensional grids. Hidden enfolded immensities escape the measuring rod. The map is not accurate; the map *cannot* be accurate.

So--Revolution is closed, but insurgency is open. For the time being we concentrate our force on temporary "power surges," avoiding all entanglements with "permanent solutions."

And--the map is closed, but the autonomous zone is open. Metaphorically it unfolds within the fractal dimensions invisible to the cartography of Control. And here we should introduce the concept of psychotopology (and -topography) as an alternative "science" to that of the State's surveying and mapmaking and "psychic imperialism." Only psychotopography can draw 1:1 maps of reality because only the human mind provides sufficient complexity to model the real. But a 1:1 map cannot "control" its territory because it is virtually identical with its territory. It can only be used to *suggest*, in a sense *gesture towards*, certain features. We are looking for "spaces" (geographic, social, cultural, imaginal) with potential to flower as autonomous zones--and we are looking for times in which these spaces are relatively open, either through neglect on the part of the State or because they have somehow escaped notice by the mapmakers, or

for whatever reason. Psychotopology is the art of *dowsing* for potential TAZs.

The closures of Revolution and of the map, however, are only the negative sources of the TAZ; much remains to be said of its positive inspirations. Reaction alone cannot provide the energy needed to "manifest" a TAZ. An uprising must be *for* something as well.

1. First, we can speak of a natural anthropology of the TAZ. The nuclear family is the base unit of consensus society, but not of the TAZ. ("Families!-- how I hate them! the misers of love!"-- Gide) The nuclear family, with its attendant "oedipal miseries," appears to have been a Neolithic invention, a response to the "agricultural revolution" with its imposed scarcity and its imposed hierarchy. The Paleolithic model is at once more primal and more radical: the *band*. The typical hunter/gatherer nomadic or semi-nomadic band consists of about 50 people. Within larger tribal societies the band-structure is fulfilled by clans within the tribe, or by sodalities such as initiatic or secret societies, hunt or war societies, gender societies, "children's republics," and so on. If the nuclear family is produced by scarcity (and results in miserliness), the band is produced by abundance--and results in prodigality. The family is *closed*, by genetics, by the male's *possession* of women and children, by the hierarchic totality of agricultural/industrial society. The band is *open*--not to everyone, of

course, but to the affinity group, the initiates sworn to a bond of love. The band is not part of a larger hierarchy, but rather part of a horizontal pattern of custom, extended kinship, contract and alliance, spiritual affinities, etc. (American Indian society preserves certain aspects of this structure even now.)

In our own post-Spectacular Society of Simulation many forces are working--largely invisibly--to phase out the nuclear family and bring back the band. Breakdowns in the structure of Work resonate in the shattered "stability" of the unit-home and unit-family. One's "band" nowadays includes friends, ex-spouses and lovers, people met at different jobs and pow-wows, affinity groups, special interest networks, mail networks, etc. The nuclear family becomes more and more obviously a *trap*, a cultural sinkhole, a neurotic secret implosion of split atoms--and the obvious counter-strategy emerges spontaneously in the almost unconscious rediscovery of the more archaic and yet more post-industrial possibility of the band.

2. The TAZ as *festival*. Stephen Pearl Andrews once offered, as an image of anarchist society, the *dinner party*, in which all structure of authority dissolves in conviviality and celebration (see Appendix C). Here we might also invoke Fourier and his concept of the senses as the basis of social becoming--"touch-rut" and "gastrosophy," and his paean to the neglected implications of

smell and taste. The ancient concepts of jubilee and saturnalia originate in an intuition that certain events lie outside the scope of "profane time," the measuring-rod of the State and of History. These holidays literally occupied gaps in the calendar-- *intercalary intervals*. By the Middle Ages, nearly a third of the year was given over to holidays. Perhaps the riots against calendar reform had less to do with the "eleven lost days" than with a sense that imperial science was conspiring to close up these gaps in the calendar where the people's freedoms had accumulated--a coup d'etat, a mapping of the year, a seizure of time itself, turning the organic cosmos into a clockwork universe. The death of the festival.

Participants in insurrection invariably note its festive aspects, even in the midst of armed struggle, danger, and risk. The uprising is like a saturnalia which has slipped loose (or been forced to vanish) from its intercalary interval and is now at liberty to pop up anywhere or when. Freed of time and place, it nevertheless possesses a nose for the ripeness of events, and an affinity for the *genius loci*; the science of psychotopology indicates "flows of forces" and "spots of power" (to borrow occultist metaphors) which localize the TAZ spatio-temporally, or at least help to define its relation to moment and locale.

The media invite us to "come celebrate

the moments of your life" with the spurious unification of commodity and spectacle, the famous *non-event* of pure representation. In response to this obscenity we have, on the one hand, the spectrum of *refusal* (chronicled by the Situationists, John Zerzan, Bob Black *et al.*)--and on the other hand, the emergence of a *festal culture* removed and even hidden from the would-be managers of our leisure. "Fight for the right to party" is in fact not a parody of the radical struggle but a new manifestation of it, appropriate to an age which offers TVs and telephones as ways to "reach out and touch" other human beings, ways to "Be There!"

Pearl Andrews was right: the dinner party is already "the seed of the new society taking shape within the shell of the old" (IWW Preamble). The sixties-style "tribal gathering," the forest conclave of eco-saboteurs, the idyllic Beltane of the neo-pagans, anarchist conferences, gay faery circles...Harlem rent parties of the twenties, nightclubs, banquets, old-time libertarian picnics--we should realize that all these are already "liberated zones" of a sort, or at least potential TAZs. Whether open only to a few friends, like a dinner party, or to thousands of celebrants, like a Be-In, the party is always "open" because it is not "ordered"; it may be planned, but unless it "*happens*" it's a failure. The element of spontaneity is crucial.

The essence of the party: face-to-face,

a group of humans synergize their efforts to realize mutual desires, whether for good food and cheer, dance, conversation, the arts of life; perhaps even for erotic pleasure, or to create a communal artwork, or to attain the very transport of bliss-- in short, a "union of egoists" (as Stirner put it) in its simplest form--or else, in Kropotkin's terms, a basic biological drive to "mutual aid." (Here we should also mention Bataille's "economy of excess" and his theory of potlatch culture.)

3. Vital in shaping TAZ reality is the concept of *psychic nomadism* (or as we jokingly call it, "rootless cosmopolitanism"). Aspects of this phenomenon have been discussed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Nomadology and the War Machine*, by Lyotard in *Driftworks* and by various authors in the "Oasis" issue of *Semiotext(e)*. We use the term "psychic nomadism" here rather than "urban nomadism," "nomadology," "driftwork," etc., simply in order to garner all these concepts into a single loose complex, to be studied in light of the coming-into-being of the TAZ. "The death of God," in some ways a de-centering of the entire "European" project, opened a multi-perspectived post-ideological worldview able to move "rootlessly" from philosophy to tribal myth, from natural science to Taoism-- able to see for the first time through eyes like some golden insect's, each facet giving a view of an entirely other world.

But this vision was attained at the expense of inhabiting an epoch where speed and "commodity fetishism" have created a tyrannical false unity which tends to blur all cultural diversity and individuality, so that "one place is as good as another." This paradox creates "gypsies," psychic travellers driven by desire or curiosity, wanderers with shallow loyalties (in fact disloyal to the "European Project" which has lost all its charm and vitality), not tied down to any particular time and place, in search of diversity and adventure... This description covers not only the X-class artists and intellectuals but also migrant laborers, refugees, the "homeless," tourists, the RV and mobile-home culture--also people who "travel" via the Net, but may never leave their own rooms (or those like Thoreau who "have travelled much--in Concord"); and finally it includes "everybody," all of us, living through our automobiles, our vacations, our TVs, books, movies, telephones, changing jobs, changing "lifestyles," religions, diets, etc., etc.

Psychic nomadism as a *tactic*, what Deleuze & Guattari metaphorically call "the war machine," shifts the paradox from a passive to an active and perhaps even "violent" mode. "God"'s last throes and deathbed rattles have been going on for such a long time--in the form of Capitalism, Fascism, and Communism, for example--that there's still a lot of "creative destruction" to be carried out by post-Bakuninist post-Nietzschean commandos or *apaches*

(literally "enemies") of the old Consensus. These nomads practice the *razzia*, they are corsairs, they are viruses; they have both need and desire for TAZs, camps of black tents under the desert stars, interzones, hidden fortified oases along secret caravan routes, "liberated" bits of jungle and bad-land, no-go areas, black markets, and underground bazaars.

These nomads chart their courses by strange stars, which might be luminous clusters of data in cyberspace, or perhaps hallucinations. Lay down a map of the land; over that, set a map of political change; over that, a map of the Net, especially the counter-Net with its emphasis on clandestine information-flow and logistics--and finally, over all, the 1:1 map of the creative imagination, aesthetics, values. The resultant grid comes to life, animated by unexpected eddies and surges of energy, coagulations of light, secret tunnels, surprises.

The Net and the Web

THE NEXT FACTOR CONTRIBUTING to the TAZ is so vast and ambiguous that it needs a section unto itself.

We've spoken of the *Net*, which can be defined as the totality of all information and communication transfer. Some of these transfers are privileged and limited to various elites, which gives the Net a hierarchic aspect. Other transactions are open to all--so the Net

has a horizontal or non-hierarchic aspect as well. Military and Intelligence data are restricted, as are banking and currency information and the like. But for the most part the telephone, the postal system, public data banks, etc. are accessible to everyone and anyone. Thus *within the Net* there has begun to emerge a shadowy sort of *counter-Net*, which we will call the *Web* (as if the Net were a fishing-net and the Web were spider-webs woven through the interstices and broken sections of the Net). Generally we'll use the term *Web* to refer to the alternate horizontal open structure of info- exchange, the non-hierarchic network, and reserve the term *counter-Net* to indicate clandestine illegal and rebellious use of the Web, including actual data-piracy and other forms of leeching off the Net itself. Net, Web, and counter-Net are all parts of the same whole pattern-complex--they blur into each other at innumerable points. The terms are not meant to define areas but to suggest tendencies.

(Digression: Before you condemn the Web or counter-Net for its "parasitism," which can never be a truly revolutionary force, ask yourself what "production" consists of in the Age of Simulation. What is the "productive class"? Perhaps you'll be forced to admit that these terms seem to have lost their meaning. In any case the answers to such questions are so complex that the TAZ tends to ignore them altogether and simply picks up what it can *use*. "Culture is our Nature"-

- and we are the thieving magpies, or the hunter/gatherers of the world of CommTech.)

The present forms of the unofficial Web are, one must suppose, still rather primitive: the marginal zine network, the BBS networks, pirated software, hacking, phone- phreaking, some influence in print and radio, almost none in the other big media--no TV stations, no satellites, no fiber- optics, no cable, etc., etc. However the Net itself presents a pattern of changing/evolving relations between subjects ("users") and objects ("data"). The nature of these relations has been exhaustively explored, from McLuhan to Virilio. It would take pages and pages to "prove" what by now "everyone knows." Rather than rehash it all, I am interested in asking how these evolving relations suggest modes of implementation for the TAZ.

The TAZ has a temporary but actual location in time and a temporary but actual location in space. But clearly it must also have "location" *in the Web*, and this location is of a different sort, not actual but virtual, not immediate but instantaneous. The Web not only provides logistical support for the TAZ, it also helps to bring it into being; crudely speaking one might say that the TAZ "exists" in information- space as well as in the "real world." The Web can compact a great deal of time, as data, into an infinitesimal "space." We have noted that the TAZ, because it is temporary, must necessarily lack some

of the advantages of a freedom which experiences *duration* and a more-or-less fixed *locale*. But the Web can provide a kind of substitute for some of this duration and locale--it can *inform* the TAZ, from its inception, with vast amounts of compacted time and space which have been "subtilized" as data.

At this moment in the evolution of the Web, and considering our demands for the "face-to-face" and the sensual, we must consider the Web primarily as a support system, capable of carrying information from one TAZ to another, of defending the TAZ, rendering it "invisible" or giving it teeth, as the situation might demand. But more than that: If the TAZ is a nomad camp, then the Web helps provide the epics, songs, genealogies and legends of the tribe; it provides the secret caravan routes and raiding trails which make up the flowlines of tribal economy; it even *contains* some of the very roads they will follow, some of the very dreams they will experience as signs and portents.

The Web does not depend for its existence on any computer technology. Word-of-mouth, mail, the marginal zine network, "phone trees," and the like already suffice to construct an information webwork. The key is not the brand or level of tech involved, but the openness and horizontality of the structure. Nevertheless, the whole concept of the Net *implies* the use of computers. In the SciFi imagination the

Net is headed for the condition of Cyberspace (as in *Tron* or *Neuromancer*) and the pseudo-telepathy of "virtual reality." As a Cyberpunk fan I can't help but envision "reality hacking" playing a major role in the creation of TAZs. Like Gibson and Sterling I am assuming that the official Net will never succeed in shutting down the Web or the counter-Net--that data-piracy, unauthorized transmissions and the free flow of information can never be frozen. (In fact, as I understand it, chaos theory *predicts* that any universal Control-system is impossible.)

However, leaving aside all mere speculation about the future, we must face a very serious question about the Web and the tech it involves. The TAZ desires above all to avoid *mediation*, to experience its existence as *immediate*. The very essence of the affair is "breast-to-breast" as the sufis say, or face-to-face. But, BUT: the very essence of the Web is mediation. Machines here are our ambassadors--the flesh is irrelevant except as a *terminal*, with all the sinister connotations of the term.

The TAZ may perhaps best find its own space by wrapping its head around two seemingly contradictory attitudes toward Hi-Tech and its apotheosis the Net: (1) what we might call the *Fifth Estate*/Neo-Paleolithic Post-Situ Ultra-Green position, which construes itself as a luddite argument against mediation and against the Net; and (2) the Cyberpunk utopianists, futuro-libertarians, Reality Hackers and their

allies who see the Net as a step forward in evolution, and who assume that any possible ill effects of mediation can be overcome--at least, once we've liberated the means of production.

The TAZ agrees with the hackers because it wants to come into being--in part--through the Net, even through the mediation of the Net. But it also agrees with the greens because it retains intense awareness of itself as *body* and feels only revulsion for *CyberGnosis*, the attempt to transcend the body through instantaneity and simulation. The TAZ tends to view the Tech/anti-Tech dichotomy as misleading, like most dichotomies, in which apparent opposites turn out to be falsifications or even hallucinations caused by semantics. This is a way of saying that the TAZ wants to live in *this* world, not in the idea of another world, some visionary world born of false unification (*all* green OR *all* metal) which can only be more pie in the sky by-&-by (or as *Alice* put it, "Jam yesterday or jam tomorrow, but never jam today").

The TAZ is "utopian" in the sense that it envisions an *intensification* of everyday life, or as the Surrealists might have said, life's penetration by the Marvelous. But it cannot be utopian in the actual meaning of the word, *nowhere*, or NoPlace Place. *The TAZ is somewhere*. It lies at the intersection of many forces, like some pagan power-spot at the junction of mysterious ley-

lines, visible to the adept in seemingly unrelated bits of terrain, landscape, flows of air, water, animals. But now the lines are not all etched in time and space. Some of them exist only "within" the Web, even though they also intersect with real times and places. Perhaps some of the lines are "non-ordinary" in the sense that no convention for quantifying them exists. These lines might better be studied in the light of chaos science than of sociology, statistics, economics, etc. The patterns of force which bring the TAZ into being have something in common with those chaotic "Strange Attractors" which exist, so to speak, *between* the dimensions.

The TAZ by its very nature seizes every available means to realize itself--it will come to life whether in a cave or an L-5 Space City--but above all it will live, now, or as soon as possible, in however suspect or ramshackle a form, spontaneously, without regard for ideology or even anti- ideology. It will use the computer because the computer exists, but it will also use powers which are so completely unrelated to alienation or simulation that they guarantee a certain *psychic paleolithism* to the TAZ, a primordial-shamanic spirit which will "infect" even the Net itself (the true meaning of Cyberpunk as I read it). Because the TAZ is an intensification, a surplus, an excess, a potlatch, life spending itself in living rather than merely *surviving* (that snivelling shibboleth of the eighties), it cannot be defined either by

Tech or anti-Tech. It contradicts itself like a true despiser of hobgoblins, because it wills itself to be, at any cost in damage to "perfection," to the immobility of the final.

In the Mandelbrot Set and its computer-graphic realization we watch--in a fractal universe--maps which are embedded and in fact hidden within maps within maps etc. to the limits of computational power. What is it *for*, this map which in a sense bears a 1:1 relation with a fractal dimension? What can one do with it, other than admire its psychedelic elegance?

If we were to imagine an *information map*--a cartographic projection of the Net in its entirety--we would have to include in it the features of chaos, which have already begun to appear, for example, in the operations of complex parallel processing, telecommunications, transfers of electronic "money," viruses, guerilla hacking and so on.

Each of these "areas" of chaos could be represented by topographs similar to the Mandelbrot Set, such that the "peninsulas" are embedded or hidden within the map--such that they seem to "disappear." This "writing"--parts of which vanish, parts of which efface themselves--represents the very process by which the Net is already compromised, incomplete to its own view, ultimately un-Controllable. In other words, the M Set, or something

like it, might prove to be useful in "plotting" (in all senses of the word) the emergence of the counterNet as a chaotic process, a "creative evolution" in Prigogine's term. If nothing else the M Set serves as a *metaphor* for a "mapping" of the TAZ's interface with the Net as a *disappearance of information*. Every "catastrophe" in the Net is a node of power for the Web, the counter-Net. The Net will be damaged by chaos, while the Web may thrive on it.

Whether through simple data-piracy, or else by a more complex development of actual rapport with chaos, the Web-hacker, the cybernetician of the TAZ, will find ways to take advantage of perturbations, crashes, and breakdowns in the Net (ways to make information out of "entropy"). As a bricoleur, a scavenger of information shards, smuggler, blackmailer, perhaps even cyberterrorist, the TAZ-hacker will work for the evolution of clandestine fractal connections. These connections, and the *different* information that flows among and between them, will form "power outlets" for the coming-into-being of the TAZ itself- -as if one were to steal electricity from the energy-monopoly to light an abandoned house for squatters.

Thus the Web, in order to produce situations conducive to the TAZ, will parasitize the Net--but we can also conceive of this strategy as an attempt to build toward the construction of an alternative and autonomous Net, "free"

and no longer parasitic, which will serve as the basis for a "new society emerging from the shell of the old." The counter-Net and the TAZ can be considered, practically speaking, as ends in themselves--but theoretically they can also be viewed as forms of struggle toward a different reality.

Having said this we must still admit to some qualms about computers, some still unanswered questions, especially about the Personal Computer.

The story of computer networks, BBSs and various other experiments in electro-democracy has so far been one of *hobbyism* for the most part. Many anarchists and libertarians have deep faith in the PC as a weapon of liberation and self-liberation--but no real gains to show, no palpable liberty.

I have little interest in some hypothetical emergent entrepreneurial class of self-employed data/word processors who will soon be able to carry on a vast cottage industry or piecemeal shitwork for various corporations and bureaucracies. Moreover it takes no ESP to foresee that this "class" will develop its *underclass*--a sort of lumpen yuppeteriat: housewives, for example, who will provide their families with "second incomes" by turning their own homes into electro-sweatshops, little Work-tyrannies where the "boss" is a computer network.

Also I am not impressed by the sort of information and services proffered by contemporary "radical" networks. Somewhere--one is told--there exists an "information economy." Maybe so; but the info being traded over the "alternative" BBSs seems to consist entirely of chitchat and techie-talk. Is this an economy? or merely a pastime for enthusiasts? OK, PCs have created yet another "print revolution"--OK, marginal webworks are evolving--OK, I can now carry on six phone conversations at once. But what difference has this made in my ordinary life?

Frankly, I already had plenty of data to enrich my perceptions, what with books, movies, TV, theater, telephones, the U.S. Postal Service, altered states of consciousness, and so on. Do I really need a PC in order to obtain yet more such data? You offer me *secret* information? Well...perhaps I'm tempted--but still I demand *marvelous* secrets, not just unlisted telephone numbers or the trivia of cops and politicians. Most of all I want computers to provide me with information linked to *real goods*--"the good things in life," as the IWW Preamble puts it. And here, since I'm accusing the hackers and BBSers of irritating intellectual vagueness, I must myself descend from the baroque clouds of Theory & Critique and explain what I mean by "real goods."

Let's say that for both political and personal reasons I desire good food,

better than I can obtain from Capitalism-- unpolluted food still blessed with strong and natural flavors. To complicate the game imagine that the food I crave is illegal--raw milk perhaps, or the exquisite Cuban fruit *mamey*, which cannot be imported fresh into the U.S. because its seed is hallucinogenic (or so I'm told). I am not a farmer. Let's pretend I'm an importer of rare perfumes and aphrodisiacs, and sharpen the play by assuming most of my stock is also illegal. Or maybe I only want to trade word processing services for organic turnips, but refuse to report the transaction to the IRS (as required by law, believe it or not). Or maybe I want to meet other humans for consensual but illegal acts of mutual pleasure (this has actually been tried, but all the hard-sex BBSs have been busted--and what use is an underground with *lousy security?*). In short, assume that I'm fed up with mere information, the ghost in the machine. According to you, computers should already be quite capable of facilitating my desires for food, drugs, sex, tax evasion. So what's the matter? Why isn't it happening?

The TAZ has occurred, is occurring, and will occur with or without the computer. But for the TAZ to reach its full potential it must become less a matter of spontaneous combustion and more a matter of "islands in the Net." The Net, or rather the counter-Net, assumes the promise of an integral aspect of the TAZ, an addition that will multiply its potential, a "quantum jump" (odd how

this expression has come to mean a *big* leap) in complexity and significance. The TAZ must now exist within a world of pure space, the world of the senses. Liminal, even evanescent, the TAZ must combine information and desire in order to fulfill its adventure (its "happening"), in order to fill itself to the borders of its destiny, to saturate itself with its own becoming.

Perhaps the Neo-Paleolithic School are correct when they assert that all forms of alienation and mediation must be destroyed or abandoned before our goals can be realized--or perhaps true anarchy will be realized only in Outer Space, as some futuro-libertarians assert. But the TAZ does not concern itself very much with "was" or "will be." The TAZ is interested in results, successful raids on consensus reality, breakthroughs into more intense and more abundant life. If the computer cannot be used in this project, then the computer will have to be overcome. My intuition however suggests that the counter-Net is already coming into being, perhaps already exists--but I cannot prove it. I've based the theory of the TAZ in large part on this intuition. Of course the Web also involves non-computerized networks of exchange such as samizdat, the black market, etc.--but the full potential of non-hierarchic information networking logically leads to the computer as the tool par excellence. Now I'm waiting for the hackers to prove I'm right, that my intuition is valid. Where are my turnips?

"Gone to Croatan"

WE HAVE NO DESIRE to define the TAZ or to elaborate dogmas about how it *must* be created. Our contention is rather that it has been created, will be created, and is being created. Therefore it would prove more valuable and interesting to look at some TAZs past and present, and to speculate about future manifestations; by evoking a few prototypes we may be able to gauge the potential scope of the complex, and perhaps even get a glimpse of an "archetype." Rather than attempt any sort of encyclopaedism we'll adopt a scatter-shot technique, a mosaic of glimpses, beginning quite arbitrarily with the 16th-17th centuries and the settlement of the New World.

The opening of the "new" world was conceived from the start as an *occultist operation*. The magus John Dee, spiritual advisor to Elizabeth I, seems to have invented the concept of "magical imperialism" and infected an entire generation with it. Hakluyt and Raleigh fell under his spell, and Raleigh used his connections with the "School of Night"--a cabal of advanced thinkers, aristocrats, and adepts--to further the causes of exploration, colonization and mapmaking. *The Tempest* was a propaganda-piece for the new ideology, and the Roanoke Colony was its first showcase experiment.

The alchemical view of the New World associated it with *materia prima* or

hyle, the "state of Nature," innocence and all-possibility ("Virgin-ia"), a chaos or inchoateness which the adept would transmute into "gold," that is, into spiritual perfection *as well as* material abundance. But this alchemical vision is also informed in part by an actual fascination with the inchoate, a sneaking sympathy for it, a feeling of yearning for its formless form which took the symbol of the "Indian" for its focus: "Man" *in* the state of nature, uncorrupted by "government." Caliban, the Wild Man, is lodged like a virus in the very machine of Occult Imperialism; the forest/animal/humans are invested from the very start with the magic power of the marginal, despised and outcaste. On the one hand Caliban is ugly, and Nature a "howling wilderness"--on the other, Caliban is noble and unchained, and Nature an Eden. This split in European consciousness predates the Romantic/Classical dichotomy; it's rooted in Renaissance High Magic. The discovery of America (Eldorado, the Fountain of Youth) crystallized it; and it precipitated in actual schemes for colonization.

We were taught in elementary school that the first settlements in Roanoke failed; the colonists disappeared, leaving behind them only the cryptic message "Gone To Croatan." Later reports of "grey-eyed Indians" were dismissed as legend. What really happened, the textbook implied, was that the Indians massacred the defenseless settlers. However,

"Croatan" was not some Eldorado; it was the name of a neighboring tribe of friendly Indians. Apparently the settlement was simply moved back from the coast into the Great Dismal Swamp and absorbed into the tribe. And the grey-eyed Indians were real--they're *still there*, and they still call themselves Croatans.

So--the very first colony in the New World chose to renounce its contract with Prospero (Dee/Raleigh/Empire) and go over to the Wild Men with Caliban. They dropped out. They became "Indians," "went native," opted for chaos over the appalling miseries of serfing for the plutocrats and intellectuals of London.

As America came into being where once there had been "Turtle Island," Croatan remained embedded in its collective psyche. Out beyond the frontier, the state of Nature (i.e. no State) still prevailed--and within the consciousness of the settlers the option of wildness always lurked, the temptation to give up on Church, farmwork, literacy, taxes--all the burdens of civilization--and "go to Croatan" in some way or another. Moreover, as the Revolution in England was betrayed, first by Cromwell and then by Restoration, waves of Protestant radicals fled or were transported to the New World (which had now become a *prison*, a place of *exile*). Antinomians, Familists, rogue Quakers, Levellers, Diggers, and Ranters were now introduced to the occult shadow of wildness, and rushed

to embrace it.

Anne Hutchinson and her friends were only the best known (i.e. the most upper-class) of the Antinomians--having had the bad luck to be caught up in Bay Colony politics--but a much more radical wing of the movement clearly existed. The incidents Hawthorne relates in "The Maypole of Merry Mount" are thoroughly historical; apparently the extremists had decided to renounce Christianity altogether and revert to paganism. If they had succeeded in uniting with their Indian allies the result might have been an Antinomian/Celtic/Algonquin syncretic religion, a sort of 17th century North American *Santeria*.

Sectarians were able to thrive better under the looser and more corrupt administrations in the Caribbean, where rival European interests had left many islands deserted or even unclaimed. Barbados and Jamaica in particular must have been settled by many extremists, and I believe that Levellerish and Ranterish influences contributed to the Buccaneer "utopia" on Tortuga. Here for the first time, thanks to Esquemelin, we can study a successful New World proto-TAZ in some depth. Fleeing from hideous "benefits" of Imperialism such as slavery, serfdom, racism and intolerance, from the tortures of impressment and the living death of the plantations, the Buccaneers adopted Indian ways, intermarried with Caribs,

accepted blacks and Spaniards as equals, rejected all nationality, elected their captains democratically, and reverted to the "state of Nature." Having declared themselves "at war with all the world," they sailed forth to plunder under mutual contracts called "Articles" which were so egalitarian that every member received a full share and the Captain usually only 1 1/4 or 1 1/2 shares. Flogging and punishments were forbidden-- quarrels were settled by vote or by the code duello.

It is simply wrong to brand the pirates as mere sea-going highwaymen or even proto-capitalists, as some historians have done. In a sense they were "social bandits," although their base communities were not traditional peasant societies but "utopias" created almost ex nihilo in terra incognita, enclaves of total liberty occupying empty spaces on the map. After the fall of Tortuga, the Buccaneer ideal remained alive all through the "Golden Age" of Piracy (ca. 1660-1720), and resulted in land-settlements in Belize, for example, which was founded by Buccaneers. Then, as the scene shifted to Madagascar--an island still unclaimed by any imperial power and ruled only by a patchwork of native kings (chiefs) eager for pirate allies-- the Pirate Utopia reached its highest form.

Defoe's account of Captain Mission and the founding of Libertatia may be, as some historians claim, a literary hoax meant to propagandize for radical Whig

theory--but it was embedded in *The General History of the Pyrates* (1724-28), most of which is still accepted as true and accurate. Moreover the story of Capt. Mission was not criticized when the book appeared and many old Madagascar hands still survived. *They* seem to have believed it, no doubt because they had experienced pirate enclaves very much like *Libertatia*. Once again, rescued slaves, natives, and even traditional enemies such as the Portuguese were all invited to join as equals. (Liberating slave ships was a major preoccupation.) Land was held in common, representatives elected for short terms, booty shared; doctrines of liberty were preached far more radical than even those of *Common Sense*.

Libertatia hoped to endure, and *Mission* died in its defense. But most of the pirate utopias were meant to be temporary; in fact the corsairs' true "republics" were their ships, which sailed under Articles. The shore enclaves usually had no law at all. The last classic example, *Nassau* in the Bahamas, a beachfront resort of shacks and tents devoted to wine, women (and probably boys too, to judge by *Birge's Sodomy and Piracy*), song (the pirates were inordinately fond of music and used to hire on bands for entire cruises), and wretched excess, vanished overnight when the British fleet appeared in the Bay. *Blackbeard* and "Calico Jack" *Rackham* and his crew of pirate women moved on to wilder shores and nastier fates, while others meekly accepted the Pardon and

reformed. But the Buccaneer tradition lasted, both in Madagascar where the mixed-blood children of the pirates began to carve out kingdoms of their own, and in the Caribbean, where escaped slaves as well as mixed black/white/red groups were able to thrive in the mountains and backlands as "Maroons." The Maroon community in Jamaica still retained a degree of autonomy and many of the old folkways when Zora Neale Hurston visited there in the 1920's (see *Tell My Horse*). The Maroons of Suriname still practice African "paganism."

Throughout the 18th century, North America also produced a number of drop-out "tri-racial isolate communities." (This clinical-sounding term was invented by the Eugenics Movement, which produced the first scientific studies of these communities. Unfortunately the "science" merely served as an excuse for hatred of racial "mongrels" and the poor, and the "solution to the problem" was usually forced sterilization.) The nuclei invariably consisted of runaway slaves and serfs, "criminals" (i.e. the very poor), "prostitutes" (i.e. white women who married non-whites), and members of various native tribes. In some cases, such as the Seminole and Cherokee, the traditional tribal structure absorbed the newcomers; in other cases, new tribes were formed. Thus we have the Maroons of the Great Dismal Swamp, who persisted through the 18th and 19th centuries, adopting

runaway slaves, functioning as a way station on the Underground Railway, and serving as a religious and ideological center for slave rebellions. The religion was HooDoo, a mixture of African, native, and Christian elements, and according to the historian H. Leaming-Bey the elders of the faith and the leaders of the Great Dismal Maroons were known as "the Seven Finger High Glisten."

The Ramapauhs of northern New Jersey (incorrectly known as the "Jackson Whites") present another romantic and archetypal genealogy: freed slaves of the Dutch poltroons, various Delaware and Algonquin clans, the usual "prostitutes," the "Hessians" (a catch-phrase for lost British mercenaries, drop-out Loyalists, etc.), and local bands of social bandits such as Claudius Smith's.

An African-Islamic origin is claimed by some of the groups, such as the Moors of Delaware and the Ben Ishmaels, who migrated from Kentucky to Ohio in the mid-18th century. The Ishmaels practiced polygamy, never drank alcohol, made their living as minstrels, intermarried with Indians and adopted their customs, and were so devoted to nomadism that they built their houses on wheels. Their annual migration triangulated on frontier towns with names like Mecca and Medina. In the 19th century some of them espoused anarchist ideals, and they were targeted by the Eugenicists for a particularly vicious pogrom of salvation-

by-extermiation. Some of the earliest Eugenics laws were passed in their honor. As a tribe they "disappeared" in the 1920's, but probably swelled the ranks of early "Black Islamic" sects such as the Moorish Science Temple. I myself grew up on legends of the "Kallikaks" of the nearby New Jersey Pine Barrens (and of course on Lovecraft, a rabid racist who was fascinated by the isolate communities). The legends turned out to be folk-memories of the slanders of the Eugenicists, whose U.S. headquarters were in Vineland, NJ, and who undertook the usual "reforms" against "miscegenation" and "feble-mindedness" in the Barrens (including the publication of photographs of the Kallikaks, crudely and obviously retouched to make them look like monsters of misbreeding).

The "isolate communities"--at least, those which have retained their identity into the 20th century--consistently refuse to be absorbed into either mainstream culture or the black "subculture" into which modern sociologists prefer to categorize them. In the 1970's, inspired by the Native American renaissance, a number of groups--including the Moors and the Ramapaughs--applied to the B.I.A. for recognition as *Indian tribes*. They received support from native activists but were refused official status. If they'd won, after all, it might have set a dangerous precedent for drop-outs of all sorts, from "white Peyotists" and hippies to black nationalists, aryan,

anarchists and libertarians-- a
"reservation" for anyone and everyone!
The "European Project" cannot
recognize the existence of the Wild Man-
- green chaos is still too much of a
threat to the imperial dream of order.

Essentially the Moors and Ramapaughs
rejected the "diachronic" or historical
explanation of their origins in favor of a
"synchronic" self-identity based on a
"myth" of Indian adoption. Or to put it
another way, *they named themselves*
"Indians." If everyone who wished "to
be an Indian" could accomplish this by
an act of self-naming, imagine what a
departure to Croatan would take place.
That old occult shadow still haunts the
remnants of our forests (which, by the
way, have greatly increased in the
Northeast since the 18-19th century as
vast tracts of farmland return to scrub.
Thoreau on his deathbed dreamed of
the return of "...Indians...forests...":
the return of the repressed).

The Moors and Ramapaughs of course
have good materialist reasons to think
of themselves as Indians--after all,
they have Indian ancestors--but if we
view their self-naming in "mythic" as
well as historical terms we'll learn more
of relevance to our quest for the TAZ.
Within tribal societies there exist what
some anthropologists call
mannenbunden: totemic societies
devoted to an identity with "Nature" in
the act of shapeshifting, of *becoming*
the totem-animal (werewolves, jaguar
shamans, leopard men, cat-witches,

etc.). In the context of an entire colonial society (as Taussig points out in *Shamanism, Colonialism and the Wild Man*) the shapeshifting power is seen as inhering in the native culture as a whole-- thus the most repressed sector of the society acquires a paradoxical power through the myth of its occult knowledge, which is feared and desired by the colonist. Of course the natives really do have certain occult knowledge; but in response to Imperial perception of native culture as a kind of "spiritual wild(er)ness," the natives come to see themselves more and more consciously in that role. Even as they are marginalized, the *Margin* takes on an aura of magic. Before the whiteman, they were simply tribes of people--now, they are "guardians of Nature," inhabitants of the "state of Nature." Finally the colonist himself is seduced by this "myth." Whenever an American wants to drop out or back into Nature, invariably he "becomes an Indian." The Massachusetts radical democrats (spiritual descendents of the radical Protestants) who organized the Tea Party, and who literally believed that governments could be abolished (the whole Berkshire region declared itself in a "state of Nature"!), disguised themselves as "Mohawks." Thus the colonists, who suddenly saw themselves marginalized vis-- vis the motherland, adopted the role of the marginalized natives, thereby (in a sense) seeking to participate in their occult power, their mythic radiance. From the Mountain Men to the Boy Scouts, the dream of "becoming an

Indian" flows beneath myriad strands of American history, culture and consciousness.

The sexual imagery connected to "tri-racial" groups also bears out this hypothesis. "Natives" of course are always immoral, but racial renegades and drop-outs must be downright polymorphous-perverse. The Buccaneers were buggers, the Maroons and Mountain Men were miscegenists, the "Jukes and Kallikaks" indulged in fornication and incest (leading to mutations such as polydactyly), the children ran around naked and masturbated openly, etc., etc. Reverting to a "state of Nature" paradoxically seems to allow for the practice of every "unnatural" act; or so it would appear if we believe the Puritans and Eugenicists. And since many people in repressed moralistic racist societies secretly desire exactly these licentious acts, they project them outwards onto the marginalized, and thereby convince themselves that they themselves remain civilized and pure. And in fact some marginalized communities do really reject consensus morality--the pirates certainly did!--and no doubt actually act out some of civilization's repressed desires. (*Wouldn't you?*) Becoming "wild" is always an erotic act, an act of nakedness.

Before leaving the subject of the "tri-racial isolates," I'd like to recall Nietzsche's enthusiasm for "race mixing." Impressed by the vigor and

beauty of hybrid cultures, he offered miscegenation not only as a solution to the problem of race but also as the principle for a new humanity freed of ethnic and national chauvinism--a precursor to the "psychic nomad," perhaps. Nietzsche's dream still seems as remote now as it did to him. Chauvinism still rules OK. Mixed cultures remain submerged. But the autonomous zones of the Buccaneers and Maroons, Ishmaels and Moors, Ramapauhs and "Kallikaks" remain, or their stories remain, as indications of what Nietzsche might have called "the Will to Power as Disappearance." We must return to this theme.

Music as an Organizational Principle

MEANWHILE, HOWEVER, WE TURN to the history of classical anarchism in the light of the TAZ concept.

Before the "closure of the map," a good deal of anti- authoritarian energy went into "escapist" communes such as Modern Times, the various Phalansteries, and so on. Interestingly, some of them were not intended to last "forever," but only as long as the project proved fulfilling. By Socialist/Utopian standards these experiments were "failures," and therefore we know little about them.

When escape beyond the frontier proved impossible, the era of revolutionary urban Communes began

in Europe. The Communes of Paris, Lyons and Marseilles did not survive long enough to take on any characteristics of permanence, and one wonders if they were meant to. From our point of view the chief matter of fascination is the *spirit* of the Communes. During and after these years anarchists took up the practice of revolutionary nomadism, drifting from uprising to uprising, looking to keep alive in themselves the intensity of spirit they experienced in the moment of insurrection. In fact, certain anarchists of the Stirnerite/Nietzschean strain came to look on this activity as an end in itself, a way of *always occupying an autonomous zone*, the interzone which opens up in the midst or wake of war and revolution (cf. Pynchon's "zone" in *Gravity's Rainbow*). They declared that if any socialist revolution *succeeded*, they'd be the first to turn against it. Short of universal anarchy they had no intention of ever stopping. In Russia in 1917 they greeted the free Soviets with joy: *this* was their goal. But as soon as the Bolsheviks betrayed the Revolution, the individualist anarchists were the first to go back on the warpath. After Kronstadt, of course, *all* anarchists condemned the "Soviet Union" (a contradiction in terms) and moved on in search of new insurrections.

Makhno's Ukraine and anarchist Spain were meant to have *duration*, and despite the exigencies of continual war both succeeded to a certain extent: not that they lasted a "long time," but they

were successfully organized and could have persisted if not for outside aggression. Therefore, from among the experiments of the inter-War period I'll concentrate instead on the madcap Republic of Fiume, which is much less well known, and was *not* meant to endure. Gabriele D'Annunzio, Decadent poet, artist, musician, aesthete, womanizer, pioneer daredevil aeronautist, black magician, genius and cad, emerged from World War I as a hero with a small army at his beck and command: the "Arditi." At a loss for adventure, he decided to capture the city of Fiume from Yugoslavia and *give* it to Italy. After a necromantic ceremony with his mistress in a cemetery in Venice he set out to conquer Fiume, and succeeded without any trouble to speak of. But Italy turned down his generous offer; the Prime Minister called him a fool.

In a huff, D'Annunzio decided to declare independence and see how long he could get away with it. He and one of his anarchist friends wrote the Constitution, which declared *music to be the central principle of the State*. The Navy (made up of deserters and Milanese anarchist maritime unionists) named themselves the *Uscochi*, after the long-vanished pirates who once lived on local offshore islands and preyed on Venetian and Ottoman shipping. The modern Uscochi succeeded in some wild coups: several rich Italian merchant vessels suddenly gave the Republic a future: money in the coffers! Artists, bohemians,

adventurers, anarchists (D'Annunzio corresponded with Malatesta), fugitives and Stateless refugees, homosexuals, military dandies (the uniform was black with pirate skull-&-crossbones--later stolen by the SS), and crank reformers of every stripe (including Buddhists, Theosophists and Vedantists) began to show up at Fiume in droves. The party never stopped. Every morning D'Annunzio read poetry and manifestos from his balcony; every evening a concert, then fireworks. This made up the entire activity of the government. Eighteen months later, when the wine and money had run out and the Italian fleet *finally* showed up and lobbed a few shells at the Municipal Palace, no one had the energy to resist.

D'Annunzio, like many Italian anarchists, later veered toward fascism--in fact, Mussolini (the ex-Syndicalist) himself seduced the poet along that route. By the time D'Annunzio realized his error it was too late: he was too old and sick. But Il Duce had him killed anyway--pushed off a balcony--and turned him into a "martyr." As for Fiume, though it lacked the *seriousness* of the free Ukraine or Barcelona, it can probably teach us more about certain aspects of our quest. It was in some ways the last of the pirate utopias (or the only modern example)--in other ways, perhaps, it was very nearly the first modern TAZ.

I believe that if we compare Fiume with the Paris uprising of 1968 (also the

Italian urban insurrections of the early seventies), as well as with the American countercultural communes and their anarcho-New Left influences, we should notice certain similarities, such as:--the importance of aesthetic theory (cf. the Situationists)--also, what might be called "pirate economics," living high off the surplus of social overproduction--even the popularity of colorful military uniforms--and the concept of *music* as revolutionary social change--and finally their shared air of impermanence, of being ready to move on, shape-shift, relocate to other universities, mountaintops, ghettos, factories, safe houses, abandoned farms--or even other planes of reality. No one was trying to impose yet another Revolutionary Dictatorship, either at Fiume, Paris, or Millbrook. Either the world would change, or it wouldn't. Meanwhile keep on the move and *live intensely*.

The Munich Soviet (or "Council Republic") of 1919 exhibited certain features of the TAZ, even though--like most revolutions--its stated goals were not exactly "temporary." Gustav Landauer's participation as Minister of Culture along with Silvio Gesell as Minister of Economics and other anti-authoritarian and extreme libertarian socialists such as the poet/playwrights Erich M^ahsam and Ernst Toller, and Ret Marut (the novelist B. Traven), gave the Soviet a distinct anarchist flavor. Landauer, who had spent years of isolation working on his grand synthesis

of Nietzsche, Proudhon, Kropotkin, Stirner, Meister Eckhardt, the radical mystics, and the Romantic *volk*-philosophers, knew from the start that the Soviet was doomed; he hoped only that it would last long enough to be *understood*. Kurt Eisner, the martyred founder of the Soviet, believed quite literally that poets and poetry should form the basis of the revolution. Plans were launched to devote a large piece of Bavaria to an experiment in anarcho-socialist economy and community. Landauer drew up proposals for a Free School system and a People's Theater. Support for the Soviet was more or less confined to the poorest working-class and bohemian neighborhoods of Munich, and to groups like the Wandervogel (the neo-Romantic youth movement), Jewish radicals (like Buber), the Expressionists, and other marginals. Thus historians dismiss it as the "Coffeehouse Republic" and belittle its significance in comparison with Marxist and Spartacist participation in Germany's post-War revolution(s). Outmaneuvered by the Communists and eventually murdered by soldiers under the influence of the occult/fascist Thule Society, Landauer deserves to be remembered as a saint. Yet even anarchists nowadays tend to misunderstand and condemn him for "selling out" to a "socialist government." If the Soviet had lasted even a year, we would weep at the mention of its beauty--but before even the first flowers of that Spring had wilted, the *geist* and the spirit of poetry were crushed, and we have forgotten.

Imagine what it must have been to breathe the air of a city in which the Minister of Culture has just predicted that schoolchildren will soon be memorizing the works of Walt Whitman. Ah for a time machine...

The Will to Power as Disappearance

FOUCAULT, BAUDRILLARD, *ET AL.* have discussed various modes of "disappearance" at great length. Here I wish to suggest that the TAZ is in some sense a *tactic of disappearance*. When the Theorists speak of the disappearance of the Social they mean in part the impossibility of the "Social Revolution," and in part the impossibility of "the State"-- the abyss of power, the end of the discourse of power. The anarchist question in this case should then be: Why *bother* to confront a "power" which has lost all meaning and become sheer Simulation? Such confrontations will only result in dangerous and ugly spasms of violence by the emptyheaded shit-for-brains who've inherited the keys to all the armories and prisons. (Perhaps this is a crude american misunderstanding of sublime and subtle Franco-Germanic Theory. If so, fine; whoever said *understanding* was needed to make use of an idea?)

As I read it, disappearance seems to be a very logical radical option for our time, not at all a disaster or death for the radical project. Unlike the morbid

deathfreak nihilistic interpretation of Theory, mine intends to *mine* it for useful strategies in the always-ongoing "revolution of everyday life": the struggle that cannot cease even with the last failure of political or social revolution because nothing except the end of the world can bring an end to everyday life, nor to our aspirations for the *good things*, for the Marvelous. And as Nietzsche said, if the world *could* come to an end, logically it would have done so; it has not, so it *does not*. And so, as one of the sufis said, no matter how many draughts of forbidden wine we drink, we will carry this raging thirst into eternity.

Zerzan and Black have independently noted certain "elements of Refusal" (Zerzan's term) which perhaps can be seen as somehow symptomatic of a radical culture of disappearance, partly unconscious but partly conscious, which influences far more people than any leftist or anarchist *idea*. These gestures are made *against* institutions, and in that sense are "negative"--but each negative gesture also suggests a "positive" tactic to replace rather than merely refuse the despised institution.

For example, the negative gesture against *schooling* is "voluntary illiteracy." Since I do not share the liberal worship of literacy for the sake of social ameliorization, I cannot quite share the gasps of dismay heard everywhere at this phenomenon: I sympathize with children who refuse books along with the garbage in the

books. There are however positive alternatives which make use of the same energy of disappearance. Home-schooling and craft-apprenticeship, like truancy, result in an absence from the prison of school. Hacking is another form of "education" with certain features of "invisibility."

A mass-scale negative gesture against politics consists simply of not voting. "Apathy" (i.e. a healthy boredom with the weary Spectacle) keeps over half the nation from the polls; anarchism never accomplished as much! (Nor did anarchism have anything to do with the failure of the recent Census.) Again, there are positive parallels: "networking" as an alternative to politics is practiced at many levels of society, and non-hierarchical organization has attained popularity even outside the anarchist movement, simply because it *works*. (ACT UP and Earth First! are two examples. Alcoholics Anonymous, oddly enough, is another.)

Refusal of *Work* can take the forms of absenteeism, on-job drunkenness, sabotage, and sheer inattention--but it can also give rise to new modes of rebellion: more self-employment, participation in the "black" economy and "*lavoro nero*," welfare scams and other criminal options, pot farming, etc.--all more or less "invisible" activities compared to traditional leftist confrontational tactics such as the general strike.

Refusal of the *Church*? Well, the "negative gesture" here probably consists of...watching television. But the positive alternatives include all sorts of non-authoritarian forms of spirituality, from "unchurched" Christianity to neo-paganism. The "Free Religions" as I like to call them--small, self-created, half-serious/half-fun cults influenced by such currents as Discordianism and anarcho-Taoism--are to be found all over marginal America, and provide a growing "fourth way" outside the mainstream churches, the televangelical bigots, and New Age vapidness and consumerism. It might also be said that the chief refusal of orthodoxy consists of the construction of "private moralities" in the Nietzschean sense: the spirituality of "free spirits."

The negative refusal of *Home* is "homelessness," which most consider a form of victimization, not wishing to be *forced* into nomadology. But "homelessness" can in a sense be a virtue, an adventure--so it appears, at least, to the huge international movement of the squatters, our modern hobos.

The negative refusal of the *Family* is clearly divorce, or some other symptom of "breakdown." The positive alternative springs from the realization that life can be happier without the nuclear family, whereupon a hundred flowers bloom--from single parentage to group marriage to erotic affinity group. The "European Project" fights a

major rearguard action in defense of "Family"--oedipal misery lies at the heart of Control. Alternatives exist--but they must remain in hiding, especially since the War against Sex of the 1980's and 1990's.

What is the refusal of *Art*? The "negative gesture" is not to be found in the silly nihilism of an "Art Strike" or the defacing of some famous painting--it is to be seen in the almost universal glassy-eyed boredom that creeps over most people at the very mention of the word. But what would the "positive gesture" consist of? Is it possible to imagine an aesthetics that does not *engage*, that removes itself from History and even from the Market? or at least *tends* to do so? which wants to replace representation with *presence*? How does presence make itself felt even in (or through) representation?

"Chaos Linguistics" traces a presence which is continually disappearing from all orderings of language and meaning-systems; an elusive presence, evanescent, *latif* ("subtle," a term in sufi alchemy)--the Strange Attractor around which memes accrue, chaotically forming new and spontaneous orders. Here we have an aesthetics of the borderland between chaos and order, the margin, the area of "catastrophe" where the breakdown of the system can equal enlightenment. (Note: for an explanation of "Chaos Linguistics" see Appendix A, then please read this paragraph again.)

The disappearance of the artist IS "the suppression and realization of art," in Situationist terms. But from where do we vanish? And are we ever seen or heard of again? We go to Croatan-- what's our fate? All our art consists of a goodbye note to history-- "Gone To Croatan"--but where is it, and what will we *do* there?

First: We're not talking here about literally vanishing from the world and its future:--no escape backward in time to paleolithic "original leisure society"-- no forever utopia, no backmountain hideaway, no island; also, no post-Revolutionary utopia--most likely no Revolution at all!-- also, no VONU, no anarchist Space Stations--nor do we accept a "Baudrillardian disappearance" into the silence of an ironic hyperconformity. I have no quarrel with any Rimbauds who escape Art for whatever Abyssinia they can find. But we can't build an aesthetics, even an aesthetics of disappearance, on the simple act of *never coming back*. By saying we're not an avant-garde and that there is no avant-garde, we've written our "Gone To Croatan"--the question then becomes, how to envision "everyday life" in Croatan? particularly if we cannot say that Croatan exists in Time (Stone Age or Post-Revolution) or Space, either as utopia or as some forgotten midwestern town or as Abyssinia? Where and when is the world of unmediated creativity? If it *can* exist, it *does* exist--but perhaps only as a sort of alternate reality which

we so far have not learned to perceive. Where would we look for the seeds--the weeds cracking through our sidewalks--from this other world into our world? the clues, the right directions for searching? a finger pointing at the moon?

I believe, or would at least like to propose, that the only solution to the "suppression and realization" of Art lies in the emergence of the TAZ. I would strongly reject the criticism that the TAZ itself is "nothing but" a work of art, although it may have some of the trappings. I do suggest that the TAZ is the only possible "time" and "place" for art to happen for the sheer pleasure of creative play, and as an actual contribution to the forces which allow the TAZ to cohere and manifest.

Art in the World of Art has become a commodity; but deeper than that lies the problem of *re-presentation* itself, and the refusal of all *mediation*. In the TAZ art as a commodity will simply become impossible; it will instead be a condition of life. Mediation is harder to overcome, but the removal of all barriers between artists and "users" of art will tend toward a condition in which (as A.K. Coomaraswamy described it) "the artist is not a special sort of person, but every person is a special sort of artist."

In sum: disappearance is not necessarily a "catastrophe"-- except in the mathematical sense of "a sudden topological change." All the *positive*

gestures sketched here seem to involve various degrees of invisibility rather than traditional revolutionary confrontation. The "New Left" never really believed in its own existence till it saw itself on the Evening News. The New Autonomy, by contrast, will either infiltrate the media and subvert "it" from within--or else never be "seen" at all. The TAZ exists not only beyond Control but also beyond definition, beyond gazing and naming as acts of enslaving, beyond the understanding of the State, beyond the State's ability to *see*.

Ratholes in the Babylon of Information

THE TAZ AS A CONSCIOUS radical tactic will emerge under certain conditions:

1. Psychological liberation. That is, we must realize (make real) the moments and spaces in which freedom is not only possible but *actual*. We must know in what ways we are genuinely oppressed, and also in what ways we are self-repressed or ensnared in a fantasy in which *ideas* oppress us. WORK, for example, is a far more actual source of misery for most of us than legislative politics. Alienation is far more dangerous for us than toothless outdated dying ideologies. Mental addiction to "ideals"--which in fact turn out to be mere projections of our

resentment and sensations of victimization--will never further our project. The TAZ is not a harbinger of some pie-in-the-sky Social Utopia to which we must sacrifice our lives that our children's children may breathe a bit of free air. The TAZ must be the scene of our present autonomy, but it can only exist on the condition that we already know ourselves as free beings.

2. The *counter-Net* must expand. At present it reflects more abstraction than actuality. Zines and BBSs exchange information, which is part of the necessary groundwork of the TAZ, but very little of this information relates to concrete goods and services necessary for the autonomous life. We do not live in CyberSpace; to dream that we do is to fall into CyberGnosis, the false transcendence of the body. The TAZ is a physical place and we are either in it or not. All the senses must be involved. The Web is like a new sense in some ways, but it must be *added* to the others-- the others must not be subtracted from it, as in some horrible parody of the mystic trance. Without the Web, the full realization of the TAZ-complex would be impossible. But the Web is not the end in itself. It's a weapon.
3. The apparatus of Control--the "State"--must (or so we must

assume) continue to deliquesce and petrify simultaneously, must progress on its present course in which hysterical rigidity comes more and more to mask a vacuity, an abyss of power. As power "disappears," our will to power must be disappearance.

We've already dealt with the question of whether the TAZ can be viewed "merely" as a work of art. But you will also demand to know whether it is more than a poor rat-hole in the Babylon of Information, or rather a maze of tunnels, more and more connected, but devoted only to the economic dead-end of piratical parasitism? I'll answer that I'd rather be a rat in the wall than a rat in the cage--but I'll also insist that the TAZ transcends these categories.

A world in which the TAZ succeeded in *putting down roots* might resemble the world envisioned by "P.M." in his fantasy novel *bolo'bolo*. Perhaps the TAZ is a "proto-bolo." But inasmuch as the TAZ exists *now*, it stands for much more than the mundanity of negativity or countercultural drop-out-ism. We've mentioned the *festal* aspect of the moment which is unControlled, and which adheres in spontaneous self-ordering, however brief. It is "epiphanic"--a peak experience on the social as well as individual scale.

Liberation is realized struggle--this is the essence of Nietzsche's "self-

overcoming." The present thesis might also take for a sign Nietzsche's *wandering*. It is the precursor of the *drift*, in the Situ sense of the *derive* and Lyotard's definition of *driftwork*. We can foresee a whole new geography, a kind of pilgrimage-map in which holy sites are replaced by peak experiences and TAZs: a *real* science of psychotopography, perhaps to be called "geo-autonomy" or "anarchomancy."

The TAZ involves a kind of *ferality*, a growth from tameness to wild(er)ness, a "return" which is also a step forward. It also demands a "yoga" of chaos, a project of "higher" orderings (of consciousness or simply of life) which are approached by "surfing the wave-front of chaos," of complex dynamism. The TAZ is an art of life in continual rising up, wild but gentle--a seducer not a rapist, a smuggler rather than a bloody pirate, a dancer not an eschatologist.

Let us admit that we have attended parties where for one brief night a republic of gratified desires was attained. Shall we not confess that the politics of that night have more reality and force for us than those of, say, the entire U.S. Government? Some of the "parties" we've mentioned lasted for two or three *years*. Is this something worth imagining, worth fighting for? Let us study invisibility, webworking, psychic nomadism--and who knows what we might attain?

--Spring Equinox, 1990

Appendix A. Chaos Linguistics

NOT YET A SCIENCE but a proposition:
That certain problems in linguistics
might be solved by viewing language as
a complex dynamical system or "Chaos
field."

Of all the responses to Saussure's
linguistics, two have special interest
here: the first, "antilinguistics," can be
traced--in the modern period--from
Rimbaud's departure for Abyssinia; to
Nietzsche's "I fear that while we still
have grammar we have not yet killed
God"; to dada; to Korzybski's "the Map
is not the Territory"; to Burroughs' cut-
ups and "breakthrough in the Gray
Room"; to Zerzan's attack on language
itself as representation and mediation.

The second, Chomskyan Linguistics,
with its belief in "universal grammar"
and its tree diagrams, represents (I
believe) an attempt to "save" language
by discovering "hidden invariables,"
much in the same way certain scientists
are trying to "save" physics from the
"irrationality" of quantum mechanics.
Although as an anarchist Chomsky
might have been expected to side with
the nihilists, in fact his beautiful theory
has more in common with platonism or
sufism than with anarchism. Traditional
metaphysics describes language as
pure light shining through the colored
glass of the archetypes; Chomsky
speaks of "innate" grammars. Words
are leaves, branches are sentences,

mother tongues are limbs, language families are trunks, and the roots are in "heaven"...or the DNA. I call this "hermetalinguistics"--hermetic and metaphysical. Nihilism (or "HeavyMetalinguistics" in honor of Burroughs) seems to me to have brought language to a dead end and threatened to render it "impossible" (a great feat, but a depressing one)- - while Chomsky holds out the promise and hope of a last- minute revelation, which I find equally difficult to accept. I too would like to "save" language, but without recourse to any "Spooks," or supposed rules about God, dice, and the Universe.

Returning to Saussure, and his posthumously published notes on anagrams in Latin poetry, we find certain hints of a process which somehow escapes the sign/signifier dynamic. Saussure was confronted with the suggestion of some sort of "meta"-linguistics which happens *within* language rather than being imposed as a categorical imperative from "outside." As soon as language begins to play, as in the acrostic poems he examined, it seems to resonate with self- amplifying complexity. Saussure tried to quantify the anagrams but his figures kept running away from him (as if perhaps nonlinear equations were involved). Also, he began to find the anagrams *everywhere*, even in Latin prose. He began to wonder if he were hallucinating--or if anagrams were a natural unconscious process of *parole*. He abandoned the project.

I wonder: if enough of this sort of data were crunched through a computer, would we begin to be able to model language in terms of complex dynamical systems? Grammars then would not be "innate," but would emerge from chaos as spontaneously evolving "higher orders," in Prigogine's sense of "creative evolution."

Grammars could be thought of as "Strange Attractors," like the hidden pattern which "caused" the anagrams-- patterns which are "real" but have "existence" only in terms of the sub-patterns they manifest. If *meaning* is elusive, perhaps it is because consciousness itself, and therefore language, is *fractal*.

I find this theory more satisfyingly anarchistic than either anti-linguistics or Chomskyanism. It suggests that language can overcome representation and mediation, not because it is innate, but *because it is chaos*. It would suggest that all dadaistic experimentation (Feyerabend described his school of scientific epistemology as "anarchist dada") in sound poetry, gesture, cut-up, beast languages, etc.-- all this was aimed neither at discovering nor destroying meaning, but at *creating* it. Nihilism points out gloomily that language "arbitrarily" creates meaning. Chaos Linguistics happily agrees, but adds that language can overcome language, that language can create freedom out of semantic tyranny's confusion and decay.

Appendix B. Applied Hedonics

THE BONNOT GANG WERE vegetarians and drank only water. They came to a bad (tho' picturesque) end. Vegetables and water, in themselves excellent things--pure zen really--shouldn't be consumed as martyrdom but as an epiphany. Self-denial as radical praxis, the Leveller impulse, tastes of millenarian gloom--and this current on the Left shares an historical wellspring with the neo-puritan fundamentalism and moralic reaction of our decade. The New Asceticism, whether practiced by anorexic health-crankers, thin-lipped police sociologists, downtown straight-edge nihilists, cornpone fascist baptists, socialist torpedoes, drug-free Republicans...in every case the motive force is the same: resentment.

resentment

In the face of contemporary pecksniffian anaesthesia we'll erect a whole gallery of forebears, heroes who carried on the struggle against bad consciousness but still knew how to party, a genial gene pool, a rare and difficult category to define, great minds not just for Truth but for the *truth of pleasure*, serious but not sober, whose sunny disposition makes them not sluggish but sharp, brilliant but not tormented. Imagine a Nietzsche with good digestion. Not the tepid Epicureans nor the bloated Sybarites. Sort of a spiritual hedonism, an actual Path of Pleasure, vision of a good life which is both noble and *possible*,

rooted in a sense of the magnificent
over-abundance of reality.

Shaykh Abu Sa'id of Khorassan
Charles Fourier
Brillat-Savarin
Rabelais
Abu Nuwas
Aga Khan III
R. Vaneigem
Oscar Wilde
Omar Khayyam
Sir Richard Burton
Emma Goldman
add your own favorites

Appendix C. Extra Quotes

As for us, He has appointed the job of
permanent unemployment.
If he wanted us to work, after all,
He would not have created this wine.
wine
With a skinfull of this, Sir, *this*
would you rush out to commit
economics?

--Jalaloddin Rumi, *Diwan-e Shams*

Here with a Loaf of Bread beneath the
Bough,
A flask of Wine, A Book of Verse--and
Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness--
And Wilderness is Paradise enow.
Ah, my Beloved, fill the cup that clears
To-day of past Regrets and future Fears--
-
Tomorrow?--Why, Tomorrow I may be
Myself with Yesterday's Sev'n Thousand

Years.

Ah, Love! could thou and I with Fate
conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things
entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits--and
then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's
Desire!

--Omar FitzGerald

History, materialism, monism,
positivism, and all the "isms" of this
world are old and rusty tools which I
don't need or mind anymore. My
principle is life, my end is death. I wish
to live my life intensely for to embrace
my life tragically.

You are waiting for the revolution? My
own began a long time ago! When you
will be ready (God, what an endless
wait!) I won't mind going along with
you for awhile. But when you'll stop, I
shall continue on my insane and
triumphal way toward the great and
sublime conquest of the nothing! Any
society that you build will have its
limits. And outside the limits of any
society the unruly and heroic tramps
will wander, with their wild & virgin
thoughts--they who cannot live without
planning ever new and dreadful
outbursts of rebellion!

I shall be among them!

And after me, as before me, there will
be those saying to their fellows: "So

turn to yourselves rather than to your Gods or to your idols. Find what hides in yourselves; bring it to light; show yourselves!"

Because every person; who, searching his own inwardness, extracts what was mysteriously hidden therein; is a shadow eclipsing any form of society which can exist under the sun! All societies tremble when the scornful aristocracy of the tramps, the inaccessible, the uniques, the rulers over the ideal, and the conquerors of the nothing resolutely advances.

So, come on iconoclasts, forward!

"Already the foreboding sky grows dark and silent!"

--Renzo Novatore Arcola, January, 1920

PIRATE RANT

Captain Bellamy

Daniel Defoe, writing under the pen name Captain Charles Johnson, wrote what became the first standard historical text on pirates, *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pirates*. According to Patrick Pringle's *Jolly Roger*, pirate recruitment was most effective among the unemployed, escaped bondsmen, and transported criminals. The high seas made for an instantaneous levelling of class inequalities. Defoe

relates that a pirate named Captain Bellamy made this speech to the captain of a merchant vessel he had taken as a prize. The captain of the merchant vessel had just declined an invitation to join the pirates.

I am sorry they won't let you have your sloop again, for I scorn to do any one a mischief, when it is not to my advantage; damn the sloop, we must sink her, and she might be of use to you. Though you are a sneaking puppy, and so are all those who will submit to be governed by laws which rich men have made for their own security; for the cowardly whelps have not the courage otherwise to defend what they get by knavery; but damn ye altogether: damn them for a pack of crafty rascals, and you, who serve them, for a parcel of hen-hearted numbskulls. They vilify us, the scoundrels do, when there is only this difference, they rob the poor under the cover of law, forsooth, and we plunder the rich under the protection of our own courage. Had you not better make then one of us, than sneak after these villains for employment?

When the captain replied that his conscience would not let him break the laws of God and man, the pirate Bellamy continued:

You are a devilish conscience rascal, I am a free prince, and I have as much authority to make war on the whole world, as he who has a hundred sail of ships at sea, and an army of 100,000

men in the field; and this my conscience tells me: but there is no arguing with such snivelling puppies, who allow superiors to kick them about deck at pleasure.

THE DINNER PARTY

The highest type of human society in the existing social order is found in the parlor. In the elegant and refined reunions of the aristocratic classes there is none of the impertinent interference of legislation. The Individuality of each is fully admitted. Intercourse, therefore, is perfectly free. Conversation is continuous, brilliant, and varied. Groups are formed according to attraction. They are continuously broken up, and re-formed through the operation of the same subtle and all-pervading influence. Mutual deference pervades all classes, and the most perfect harmony, ever yet attained, in complex human relations, prevails under precisely those circumstances which Legislators and Statesmen dread as the conditions of inevitable anarchy and confusion. If there are laws of etiquette at all, they are mere suggestions of principles admitted into and judged of for himself or herself, by each individual mind.

Is it conceivable that in all the future progress of humanity, with all the innumerable elements of development which the present age is unfolding, society generally, and in all its relations, will not attain as high a grade

of perfection as certain portions of society, in certain special relations, have already attained?

Suppose the intercourse of the parlor to be regulated by specific legislation. Let the time which each gentleman shall be allowed to speak to each lady be fixed by law; the position in which they should sit or stand be precisely regulated; the subjects which they shall be allowed to speak of, and the tone of voice and accompanying gestures with which each may be treated, carefully defined, all under pretext of preventing disorder and encroachment upon each other's privileges and rights, then can any thing be conceived better calculated or more certain to convert social intercourse into intolerable slavery and hopeless confusion?

--S. Pearl Andrews *The Science of Society*