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Ruining Performance

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The stress of creativity has intensified. The cold sweat of the new center. A psycho-discursive symptom of the capitalist United-Colors-G8-survival societies. It is most clearly evident among certain segments of metropolitan youth to the age of 45. It signals a development in the mode of societization, a rising simultaneity: the mobilization of forms of living and the attack on them, this ticking make-something-of-yourself, don't get stuck in normality, even the superstar of trash promises - and at the same moment the multiplication of mechanisms of exclusion and exploitation: super poverty, super deportation, super control. While segments of the population - bus drivers, waiters and gas station attendants - are called on to register with the Internet site of the police to receive the cops' wanted notices continuously via SMS, nervousness is rising among segments of urban youth about how to achieve a deviant life style and still be successful. In the end, we see an increase in advertisements, where we can watch people in track suits in their hiply disordered everyday life over blurred stretches of images. Symposia, exhibitions and film festivals are multiplying in the same rhythm, dealing with questions of the political, exhibiting critique, representing the life of newly infamous people, without reaching beyond the few square meters of the institutions and their logics of representation. They usually leave the rotten everyday of

flat hierarchies and imbecilic divisions of labor in these institutions intact.

This is modern life. The norms have been liquefied and solidified. More and more. Maybe we should take up a 19th century whimsy again and take turtles for a walk on a leash to demonstrate the speed one is prepared to achieve in one's own life in comparison with the neo-bourgeois busyness of creativity. But wouldn't that just be closing the circle?! Going forth once again in the early footsteps of deviant capitalist subjectivation, in which it gradually becomes visible how the anti-conventionalist release movement of capital constantly emanates a promise of happiness that bombastically bursts on its way through the double logic of utilization and subjectivating discipline?! The pink-gloved flaneurs that promenaded their turtles through passages around 1840 to let them determine the tempo, bore witness to an early gesture of pop-cultural idiosyncrasy: the loneliness of the joy of looking and the aristocratic distinction of the last dandies in contrast with the coming world of clerks. For Baudelaire, the dandy embodies "a revolutionary and oppositional character", who daily proved his will to "battle triviality". Since then, the strategy of coolness, the beautiful void that is open for the impression of (commodity) things, has been replayed a thousand times over, has been democratized, splintered and has successfully failed. From the distance of the past, the cliffs are visible, where the promise of popular cultural difference is still always shipwrecked: the pressure of subjectivation, self-glorification, anti-bourgeois excess, fucking as a desire for transgression, the desocialization of the revolt.

A remark on just one point. Transgression. In 1848 Baudelaire elegantly turned up with a yellow ammunition belt and a new hunting rifle on the Paris barricades to fight for the Republic. What he later wrote about the experience of the revolt is the

desocialized transgression nonsense that has been typical since then: "I say 'long live the revolution!', as I would say 'long live destruction! Long live penitence! Long live castigation! Long live death!' I would be happy not only as a victim; I would not be displeased to play the henchman as well - to feel the revolution from both sides. We all have the republican spirit in our blood, just as we have syphilis in our bones." For Baudelaire, the pleasure in betrayal and the passion of the barricades occur not only as a social possibility in relation to other social possibilities - the betrayal in relation to the (Christian) dogma of faithfulness unto death, to the fear of moral failure; the kick of the gun and the barricades to the incipient strategic rationalization of proletarian politics and the lust of hate and collective violence. Baudelaire objectifies and autonomizes his proximity to betrayal, hatred and death. Finally, he ascribes this to himself, an early torching of anti-bourgeois excessiveness, an inflation of the ego with a social ratio of forces that his gesture of bohemian provocation first made possible. Baudelaire needs the "bourgeois braggarts", the "public servants", the "so-called good citizens", in contrast to which his written Yes! to destruction, to crime, to prostitution distinguishes itself; his provo-attitude is negatively fixed and is a second-order pleasure that is nourished from the outrage of the others. In some of Baudelaire's wheel-spinning provocations, which still echo today in the anti-PC number, Benjamin recognizes something that will emerge again later in the right-wing revolt, the over-affirmation of violence and destruction. Until tomorrow at the marble cliffs.

Perhaps we can approach another aspect of the problem of dissidence-capital-biopolitics by turning to Marx and his criticism of the Parisian bohemians, to the extent that they were involved in the class struggles in France. For Marx, they lacked a strategic farsightedness, an organizational ability of the proletarian

standpoint. What were they, the activists among the bohemians? Conspiring conspirators that wanted to make an "ad hoc revolution without the conditions of a revolution". Marx was irritated by their wavering, almost accidental activity, their "life without rules, the only fixed stations of which are the bars of the wine merchants". He contrasted this in the "18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" with the impossible dream of a revolutionary entirely attuned to himself, entirely attuned to his time, his task, his class, untiringly self-critical, self-reflective, soldierly - until the moment has come, "until the situation is created that makes it impossible to turn around and the circumstances themselves cry out: Hic Rhodus, hic salta!" This division of labor between bohemianism and battle, between ludic and serious, provocation and politics, still reproduces today the endless projections between a reduction of style and a reduction of POLITICAL POLITICS that accepts no time-out, no postponement, no losing, no leaving it, no not knowing anything about it, no let's go get drunk instead. In turn, the others blabber on endlessly about glamor, sexiness, being cool, which they actuate in circumstances that are unbearable.

In *Homo sacer*, Agamben pursues the transgression nonsense incipiently heard from a distance in Baudelaire, that Benjamin argues about with the members of the Acéphale group, to which Bataille, Leiris, Klossowski, Calillois belonged, enveloping themselves in the dark aura of a secret circle: the notion of individual sovereignty that is sanctified by an extreme life exposing itself to the excess of experiences of sex, death and violence. Benjamin urged the Acéphale group - Klossowski had translated his *Artwork* essay, after all - to take the German experience seriously, the death kitsch of the Nazis, and to be careful with the notion of a holy sovereignty of the excess: "You are working for fascism." Agamben speaks of an interesting mistake: the Acéphale

group, and especially Bataille, were thought to have revealed the link between sovereignty and a life exposed to a transgressive extreme. Erroneously they had grasped and aestheticized as radically individual what makes up the core of European bio-power: the mechanisms, with which a bare life can be cut out of mobilized forms of living: sick, insane, criminal, alien bodies - material to be interned.

Since 1968 the narrow-minded environment that still provided Baudelaire with the setting of a coming world of clerks has been blown up. The militant revolt of 1966/67 multiplied forms of living, established deviations. For various reasons, the concomitant universal project of socialism has been canceled. The thus resultant - let's use a monster noun for it - post-fordist regime of an imperial biopolitical capitalism mobilizes many historically familiar mechanisms of exploitation and discipline at the same time.

And now? To begin with, maybe develop more love of the melodramatic. Because it deals with the incapacity to intervene in the disaster. Indeed, that would be a passion that the left could devote attention to for a change. I thus address the left: How is power reproduced in the practices of liberation? A fascinating topic. Melodrama works with the grand feeling of IT-IS-TOO-LATE, a change was possible, but now the opportunity is gone, music, grand melancholy feeling of loss, which neither has consequences nor is to be mourned, but rather internalized. Again and again, the departure in slow-motion: "If only you could have recognized what was always yours." Although the change would have been possible, misfortune took its course, social separation, accident, death, despicableness. And at the same time, melodrama promises a sudden reversal, the good fortune that a different era could suddenly emerge, a different fate. In this sense, melodrama is messianic. Just the same way that it is capitalistic in dealing out the

grand promise: you can do it, no, actually you can't. And then the tears flow until the end credits of the melodrama to be reconciled with social passivity, with suffering, with an incapacity for action. Yet they also flow from the passionate feeling of sensing the connection between everyday life and power. This is the birth of the weeping revolutionary. This is where Fassbinder's memory capacity begins, which sought to interlock the grand emotion, disappointment, betrayal and social criticism. A bit manic and repetitive. Admittedly. Start of the screening. Tears. The End (start).

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