

THE ECHO OF TIME

This text was written eight years ago in french. The english translation had limited circulation five years ago. Originally we had hoped to publish it in 1984, but the artwork was lost and only resurfaced recently. We feel that it is useful to publish it now, as the New Right has been gaining in influence and it is important to understand how and why.

The new right has centred itself around fostering a new sense of community through manipulating culture. Camatte's long-standing interest in community enables him to deal with the ideas of Alain De Benoist, one of the originators of the New Right in the seventies. He is particularly concerned to distinguish between community in the sense used by Marx (in some of the text he chose to leave the german word "Gemeinwesen" untranslated) and the "community of capital" which he regards as a fictive community dominated by the relations between different sections of capital (for which he uses the german word "Gemeinschaft", a central concept of Nazism with their "Volksgemeinschaft" or "People's Community").

We hope this text helps people develop a clear understanding and critique of the New Right, as this ideology has come to play a major role in the defence and reform of capital.

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JACQUES CAMATTE

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THE ECHO OF TIME

by

JACQUES CAMATTE

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Other English translations of Camatte are as follows:

The Wandering of Humanity
Black and Red, PO Box 9546 Detroit MI 48202

Community and Communism in Russia
David Brown, BM 381 London UK WC1N 3XX

This world we must leave
David Brown, as above

Origin and function of the party form
Charlatan Stew, PO Box 31461 Seattle WA 98103

Against domestication
Falling Sky Books, 97 Victoria St Nth, Kitchener
Ontario N2H 5C1

By Camatte and Collu:

Transition (In Dis^ease)
Falling Sky Books

On organisation
Out of print ?

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The false generics "man" and "mankind" etc., which appear
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So that we can properly understand the significance of each current
of thought and each reflection which bears on the development of our
species, it's necessary to 'place' the phenomenon of capital and to
outline the situation to which it has led. Accordingly, we shall
now present a small synthesis of this, describing our present position.

Capital, considered as the phenomenon which overthrew feudal
society in order to form capitalist society and the capitalist
mode of production, appeared originally as an agrarian revolution:
the separation of humans from their means of production, from the
land. This was made possible by an increase in agricultural
productivity creating a surplus population who were then
constrained directly or indirectly, to live in towns. Very often
it was these people who sensed that an epoch was ending, and
accordingly sought to live a new life, thus embarking on various
large and small-scale migrations. This then was the phase of
liberalism and individualism: restrictions had to be abolished,
the spirit of enterprise and the drive to accumulate had to be
encouraged. Hence the role of the protestant ethic, which Marx
noted long before Weber spoke of it. (The question still remains
however, as to why humans launched themselves on a course towards
individual realization, and sought to salvage their loss by
making practical gains, despairing in a way, of heaven.)

The growth of surplus value was able to be represented by the
accumulation of gold during the preceding phase of intense mercantilism.
This was an essential phase in the development of capital, and
it could allow us to date the beginnings of the capitalist mode of
production in the fifteenth century. More important however,
is the question of what was happening with the growth of surplus
value during the phase of capital's formal domination in the
production process, which can also be termed the phase of the
formal submission of labour to capital, characterized by the
importance of absolute surplus value and labour power, and hence
variable capital.

At the end of the 18th century there occurred an essential revo-
lution ; it had, as Marx noted, a tendency to renew itself, a fact
which makes the industrial revolution definitive and unique, and
all of its aftermath merely consequential (and this includes the

self-styled postindustrial revolution in which man is totally eliminated and representation predominates). The development of mechanism then paved the way for the production of relative surplus value, and laid the basis for the real submission of labour to capital, or the real domination of capital in the process of production.

Nevertheless capital cannot really develop unless it comes to dominate the society. It must pass from the phase of formal domination, which corresponds to bourgeois society, to the phase of real domination over society where the community of capital blossoms into being. This starts to happen at the beginning of this century, and is now realised throughout the whole of the Western world.

The capitalist mode of production was born with two antagonistic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, struggling together against the feudal mode of production, which they opposed either from a contemporary standpoint or with an eye to the future. As a result of this struggle, the process of the capitalization of society was speeded up. Capital however, cannot dominate a non-capitalist society, and so instead of using the expression "the real domination of capital over the society", which suggests that this is a transitory development anyway, it is important that we now speak of our period as the period of the community of capital.

The course of development of the capitalist mode of production, leading to the community of capital, was accompanied by the elimination of the two fundamental classes, and the formation of new middle classes. If capital rose to power by the efforts of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, then it has been the growth of these new middle classes which has acted to bring about the realization of the community of capital. (cf. nazism, fascism, but also gaullism, francoism, salazarism, peronism, etc.)

PRESUPPOSITIONS OF CAPITAL

Capital is therefore the end point of the phenomena of democratization, individualization and massification, all of which had begun to emerge well before capital had become a determinant element in the society. This is why we often speak of the presuppositions of capital: in order for capital to be able to appear, these elements must be produced (though

their historical rise doesn't necessarily imply their ultimate historical production).

These presuppositions are: production and autonomization of the individual, together with a related movement - production of private property; production of the state and its autonomization; production of exchange value, which can assume highly developed forms. These elements or presuppositions, which appeared at the time of the Greek polis, are bound up with a representation which justifies the rupture with nature and with the community, the domination of men over animals and plants, and the domination of men over women.

In the ancient world there was a cycle which commenced with the Greek polis and ended with the fall of the Roman Empire. It was a cycle in which exchange value tended to autonomize itself, but there was also a tendency towards the autonomization of a world: Rome was a state which came to govern different communities, all of which tended to become Romanized. Here the state was a general equivalent, but it didn't attain complete autonomy, just as exchange value also failed to become completely autonomous. The most appropriate representation for this phase of capital was Christianity which adopted unto itself the rule of Rome.

In this cycle, which came to an end in the fifth century A.D., one can point to certain phenomena which are very closely comparable to those which were operative in the development of capital at its earliest beginnings in the fifteenth century - expropriation, concentration, autonomization etc. But given that labour power in the ancient world could never become a commodity, exchange value could not attain a sufficient degree of autonomy to provide a foundation for capital.

Clearly Christianity was able to accomplish its role as an appropriate representation within the Roman world only because it had been despoiled of its revolutionary dimension. Fundamentally this consisted of its struggle for the liberation of the slaves, to raise them into the ranks of human beings; and in order to bring this about, Christianity had to come into conflict with the Roman state. ⁽⁰¹⁾ This is what gave

(01)

The second century Latin writer Celsus produced a critique of Christianity which is vitally important even today, though it

Christianity its ability to revirginize itself by returning to its primitive impetus. It explains as well why it was able to play a role in mobilizing the insurgent masses at the time when feudalism was disintegrating and the bourgeoisie was beginning to rise, and it further explains its present day role in certain parts of the world where the capitalist mode of production has not yet arrived at the stage of real domination.

Once the slaves have been freed and the proletariat exists secure in the community of capital, Christianity no longer has any base or any social foundation; it can only be a representation of capital; it is no more than an echo of the past. In order to survive, it must conduct itself almost entirely on the terrain of transcendence, of invariance. But in that sphere, it has to confront not only other representations which were contemporary or which have arisen since, but also the whole representation which humans have been more or less conscious of since their rupture with nature; this has been their search for a foundation for who they are, non-immediate beings who are not directly linked with reality, who are, in other words transcendent.

fails to fully confront its object since it overlooks this aspect of Christianity. The same holds true for the New Right's critique of Christianity.

In their case, the refusal of Christianity is quite probably a secondary issue. In fact, the New Right's opposition is essentially directed at Marxism. Its followers believe that Marxism demands an equality by levelling - which they reject. Thus they regard it as impossible to eliminate Marxism without also eliminating its apparent presupposition, since Christianity was the first universal theory to preach such an equality. Hence in his book Vu de Droite, Alain de Benoist presents an analysis of Gerard Walter's The Origin of Communism (a superficial work, though interesting from the point of view of documentation). He points to the cult of the poor developed by various Christian groups, which established the equation poor = elect, just as the Maoists in the 60's and 70's were to propose the equation proletarian = revolutionary (another echo from the past !) In certain cases this leads to making a cult out of weakness and degeneracy, and to a dressing up of stupidities as sovereign generalities.

De Benoist provides important materials for a critique of what Marx called the communism of envy, or alternatively, rebellion by resentment. Beings moved by envy cannot create another world; they can only alter the distribution of that which they covet i.e. wealth. /over

It is not possible to speak of capitalism when describing the economies of the ancient world. This is particularly true of Greece which did come to know of capitalist forms (what Marx called the ante-diluvian forms of capital - usury capital and commercial capital), but we view them as such only because they are recognizable in their developed forms in the structure which has been realized today in the community of capital.

During the middle ages the development of exchange value towards autonomy was slowed down considerably. It even tended to disappear, as men and women sought to establish communities which excluded it. They aimed also to halt the autonomization of power and the state. This project was a failure however, since with the realization of feudalism a new state was able to establish itself. Exchange value was however, banned for a certain period. It was able to resume its movement towards

Nietzsche analyzed Christianity by reference to its relation to the poor, the disinherited, the downcast and the weak, defining it as a religion of pity. (The Anti-Christ). He was right. It was, after all, spoken of as the religion of slaves. He accuses the gospel of being " an insurrection of the lowly against the elevated ". More important still is his denunciation of the whole aberrant problem of fault and the practice of renunciation. And here again, if one obscures the dimension of the struggle against slavery, it makes any real critique of Christianity impossible, particularly when it is remembered that this aspect of the Christian religion emerged at a time when the hope of an immediate transformation had faded away. The religion of slaves is an adaptation to the world, just as Marxism (as distinct from Marx's work) is another adaptation following the revolutionary failure (though this does not suffice to discredit the revolutionary project).

In the end, Nietzsche, in common with the New Right, Vaneigem and others, underestimates the importance of the will to avoid the creation of inequalities, whether among the Jews originally or among the Christians. In both cases, there was a desperate attempt on the part of the community to check the mercantile mechanism which was undermining it. It was not necessarily being proposed that there had been an original and absolute equality of human beings, but what was being violently rejected was the dynamic which separates people by the most atrocious inequalities: the dynamic of exchange value. Thus it is not possible to ridicule Judaism and Christianity for having departed from the fundamental basis of their existence. But this can in no way be directed into a "restoration" of these religions, since they bear witness to an impasse, and an incapacity on the part of certain human groups to find another way other than that which would lead implacably to the genesis of capital.

autonomization only by operating at the periphery, though it was helped along by the destruction of feudal relations, and in particular when it became possible to alienate land. (02)

(02)

cf. Camatte: Capital et Gemeinwesen (Ed. Spartacus). One should bear in mind that this is an outline only. Important historical studies are required in order to define precisely how, when and where this phenomenon came about. The same goes for all other assertions on the subject of capital. Ultimately we shall try to provide some foundation for this, as well as for our contention that the appearance of Christianity did not produce any rupture, because the fundamental cycle was that which began in the sixth century B.C., and comes to an end in our own time.

Fernand Braudel in his book Material Civilization, Economy and Capitalism from the 15th to the 18th Century is able to provide a wealth of materials for his exposition of the phenomenon of capital; however, from the extracts of the book's conclusion, published in Le Monde (18/11/79), it appears that Braudel does not really encompass the historical limits of the phenomenon:

Throughout this work I have argued that a kind of "capitalism" has existed in outline since the dawn of history and that it develops and perpetuates itself during the following centuries.

The mistake is to imagine capitalism as developing through phases or successive leaps: commercial capitalism, industrial capitalism, finance capitalism.... There was of course continual progress from one phase to the other, but "true" capitalism began late, when it seized control over production. Before this, one ought to speak not of commercial capitalism, but of pre-capitalism.

In the part reprinted in Le Monde, no definition of capitalism appears, which makes it difficult to judge, but it certainly seems that he does not in any way reject the assertion that there is a period of commercial capitalism included within the different modes of production, and that it was tolerated precisely because the economic was not, in the pre-capitalist era, autonomized from the political, social and religious spheres. However the possibility of exchange value becoming autonomous has been there right from the beginning, and all of history up to the 16th century (in the West) is about the attempt to block this autonomization.

The fact that this blocking action may finally be eliminated is not explicable in purely economic terms, and hence the great difficulty of providing an exhaustive explanation of the rise of capital.

Capitalist forms can be found just as readily in the East, for example in China, but this doesn't mean that capitalism operates there any more than it does in the case of feudalism. The state exists, but it does not autonomize itself. The individual tends to be produced (and is produced at certain times perhaps), but the social ensemble, or more precisely the despotic community, tends in turn to block its emergence. Hence there is a certain ambiguity with Eastern representations: on the one hand individualization is negated, being viewed as a source of sorrow even; but on the other hand, there is also the will to realize it on the part of actual individuals, since it would lead towards another community where hierarchy would cease to exist, and there would be a refusal of the despotic community. In other words, there is an oscillation or an interplay between two fundamental themes: a hyperindividualization in reaction against the despotic community producing a total autonomization of the individual being, which finally swells out until it is the community, or its dissolution. Or, there is an aggravated assertion of the community in which everyone is diluted, so that it is often perceived as a kind of flux, an indeterminate becoming.

The despotic community was realized in China from the third century B.C. onward, and was called into question several times, provoking various periods of turmoil. (03) In the zone which lies between East and West (from Morocco to Persia) there are people who have known neither capitalism in its pure form, nor the true Asiatic mode of production -

(03)

We would add here that not all regions of China are the same and that not all of them were ripe for the imposition of the Asiatic mode of production, since certain of them were able to engender forms which threatened this mode of production and would have destroyed it, had these been able to become autonomized. Thus one can find in China, the heartland of the Asiatic mode, a flourishing of economic forms which would later be developed in the West (as for example in the Song era). This explains why in studies of China it is not so much a question of why certain economic forms failed to appear, but rather why these forms failed to autonomize themselves; and above all, it explains why the two movements, that of the expropriation of humans and the autonomization of exchange value (which is the genesis of capital), never came together until the penetration of the West.

It is also worth mentioning here that the repeated regeneration of the Asiatic mode in China has been linked to the struggle against the nomads.

the despotic community. In fact, there was a tendency for the Asiatic mode to establish itself, but the states which it did found, especially in countries other than Turkey and Iran, were more or less reabsorbed by the earlier communities. (Ibn Khaldoun has made a remarkably good study of this). One can understand then how this world, which had remained unconquered by Rome, could adopt Islam, a religion which postulated a return to the earlier community where the different mediations would be eliminated (cf. "la séparation nécessaire et l'immense refus", Invariance, 1979.) However, Islam does not represent a third type of representation, distinct from Christianity on the one side, and Hinduism and Buddhism on the other, because it is a variant of Judaism, a view which further serves to confirm the intermediate character of the Islamic zone.

What we have been saying about Christianity has not yet become applicable to Islam - but it will undergo the same process. Islam has an advantage in that it is a "transcendence" of a sort, less weighed down than Christianity as a representation of the world. Islam never had any contact with Roman rule, and even if, with Averroes and Avicenna, it encompassed Aristotelian thought, this did not become entrenched at all, due probably to the importance of mystical movements. And finally, because Islam never underwent reform, it has remained younger, closer to its sources, and thus better able to represent a community which it desires to restore. But given its presuppositions, Islam cannot, as we said before, be an alternative to the representation of capital, and nor can it become its own.

It is only when capital arrives at the stage of being a material community that it can begin to implant itself in all those countries where the community cannot otherwise be destroyed. For in these zones the conditions of production have been in contradiction with its presuppositions. On the other hand, historically the process of production in these countries resulted in the community becoming compatible with what was the presupposition of production: i.e. the more or less despotic community. This is why capital extends its domination throughout the world, though it should be remembered that this phenomenon is not inexorable, and that it is even possible that capital will not really succeed in establishing itself in different regions of the globe. In general terms then, we have an historical arc stretching from the more or less natural communities where humans were not separated from their conditions of production (where the process of separation, essential to the definition of capital, had not yet started) ending finally in the community of capital. The phenomenon of capital is included within

this since it began, as far as the West is concerned, with the rise of the Greek polis, whereas for other parts of the globe it begins with the penetration of capital.

There is one other presupposition of capital which we have neglected to mention up to now because it is not unique to western society. This is the phenomenon of patriarchy or the subjection of women to men (a condition which is equally fundamental in the process of individuation). It emerged at the end of the neolithic period and was realized first of all among pastoral peoples at a time when private property also emerged for the first time.

The triumph of patriarchy, which is at the same time the autonomization of power inside the community, did not come about in a linear fashion; there were some great reversals. With the development of big game hunting in the late paleolithic, there was an initial tendency towards male predominance, but this was reabsorbed in the meso and neolithic. It is highly probable that the community of that time no longer had the same characteristics as the earlier one where it wasn't possible to propose a power arrangement nor a mode of being where women could have had an effective predominance (when they did come to acquire it, it was within an already fragmented community), and still less was a matriarchy possible. On the other hand, with the development of animal husbandry in the neolithic, the appearance of private property and the growth of population, there also occurred the rise to power of men, which probably led women to block this development by putting themselves on the same terrain - hence the appearance of matriarchy, which was a mistake - and would explain the often bloody character of certain communities ruled by women, such as the Amazons. However, even with the triumph of males, power and the state were still unable to impose themselves. It is quite probable that the destruction of the Mycenaean civilization on Crete can be put down to a rebellion against power. It required several more centuries of domestication before the state could finally manifest itself in the form of the Greek polis, but in the meantime, the individual had already been produced.

We are now at the end point of an historical arc, and it must be clear that patriarchy, at least in the West, comes to an end within the phenomenon of capital. As of now, we are beyond it. By this I mean that capitalism is not the final phase of patriarchy, since

patriarchy is dissolved within it. Men have lost all their force and can no longer be determinant, whereas capital, having relied on men for its existence in the first place and having drained them of all substance, can now utilize the as yet untapped capacities of women, not in order to accord these capacities their proper "power", but in order to revitalize itself. Hence the great danger of recuperation of the various feminist movements.

Let us now describe some of the directions which the development of capital has taken. As an intermediating movement, capital overpowers representation. The origin of capital was money and money became capital as a result of an increase in its value within the production process - i.e. surplus value. But surplus value can only exist if it is represented (otherwise, it would just be tied to a given process and would be of no consequence). Hence capital moved to take over the general equivalent, i.e. money. But money has to be able to present itself as such, and also to differentiate itself. It has to be an undifferentiated totality where ΔK is not distinguishable from K, and also a differentiated totality where ΔK can present itself as different from K. Again, it must be able to particularize itself, while at the same time being organically linked to capital.

Capital as an intermediating movement overpowers representation on the more phenomenological plane as well. Rising capitalism at first needed three classes: land owning proprietors, the bourgeoisie and wage earning proletarians. Then there were basically two: the bourgeoisie and proletarians. And ultimately a class of proletarians only (since this is the class producing surplus value). Capital triumphs over the society and installs its own community thanks to the new middle classes thrown up by its global production process, classes which are intermediate between the proletariat and capital and dedicated to the circulation of capital and its mediation.

The triumph of capital is the triumph of mediation and the loss of all immediateness for man, who cannot now experience what is immediate except through one of the mediations of capital. This is the source of many present day illusions.

Capital as exchange value is mediation which has become autonomous; it became autonomous by becoming representation and this is how it has now

"escaped". Exchange value was brought to this state through the various revolutions, which as much as anything else, were moments in its continuing liberation. Thus the cycle of revolutions is finished, and the movement of liberation can no longer be envisaged unless there is a conscious desire to avoid sinking back into our old wandering, where annihilation would overtake us.

In the community of capital, there are no longer classes, only generalized slavery, accompanied by the massification and homogenization of human beings and products; this is the final outcome of the democratic phenomenon. Nevertheless, if capital has succeeded in imposing itself thanks to democratic egalitarianism, it can now establish new hierarchies of inequality at various levels, so as to create differences of potential and thus check the entropy which is affecting the system.

The age old project of human beings - that of dominating nature and differentiating themselves from animals - has been realized by capital. Capital has delivered the security which humans have sought after ever since they broke their links with nature and their gemeinwesen. One might well ask whether this incessant searching is the reason why people have been willing to accept the most terrible infamies. Yet capital has now created a society which is without risks, without adventure, without passion. At the same time it engenders the stifling of creativity and even activity. Joseph Schumpeter has to some extent individualized this phenomenon by pointing out how the spirit of enterprise has tended to be lost as human beings are transformed into particles of capital.

THE POTENTIAL DEATH OF CAPITAL

Having realized a human project, that of assuring security, capital comes to be fully anthropomorphized and at the same time nearer to its own potential death because, having desubstantialized everything it simultaneously becomes charged with a substance that inhibits it. Capital desubstantializes by a process of bypassing: thus it bypasses the soil and produces food grown in a simple support system. It bypasses women and babies are produced in vitro. It sidesteps living beings and produces a chimerical life. It does away with matter so that it can produce a material reality out of a combination of more or less evanescent particles. Obviously, this process is only beginning, but it is well within capital's basic determination, which is towards autonomized mediation and reflection

which is without any real roots. Capital is a product of humans' activity which is now autonomous from them; it takes the form of an anthropomorphization, which is the realization, in a hyperpurposeful way (hypertélique), of a fundamental attribute of the species: reflection. From this derives the present day triumph of abstraction and a type of spiritualism/dematerialization. (04)

The movement of capital must surmount all barriers standing in its way; its very existence depends precisely on these limits being there so that it can overcome them. Yet the limit of capital is human beings; but they are a limit which capital can surpass only by integrating them into itself. In this manner, capital poses its own potential death. Its actual death however will come about only through a process of abandonment: the abandonment of the whole phenomenon of capital, including its presuppositions and all that it has integrated.

From the moment that capital becomes autonomous and escapes, it is nothing more than representation. From this point on, it can reintroduce by means of mediations, everything that it has previously bypassed. But in view of the enormous increase in human population, this has to involve such a levelling, such a degradation of human beings that capital is no longer able to regenerate itself. It can survive only on the effect of the impetus it has acquired over past centuries. Capital has encountered its true limit, whereas humanity on the other hand now confronts its own death.

Given the process of anthropomorphosis, it is clear that our own death is also in question here, but this is not death as an absolute cessation but rather as an initiation into a new life. We are now living in very strange times; we are going to have to live through a space/time full of horrible dangers, traps, illusions and fascinations. But from the moment that we understand about the potential death of capital, and of the death within us of a millenium of wandering, nothing can prevent our development into the human community.

What we have been saying is also important in regard to the problems raised by humanity's rupture with the community and nature, which subsequently generated the dichotomies first of exterior / interior and then

(04)

Out of this comes a certain convergence between scientific thought and oriental thought. (see note 16)

of being self/being other. Originally, humans conceived of these two "beings", and the relation between them in terms of aid and commingling. All of life revolved around this: commingling with the other as stranger; with the other as woman, which is love; with the other as non-immediate revelation beyond the senses, which is the sacred and its various hierophanies; and commingling with the other as the beyond, which is death, often considered as an initiation into the other life. Later, these relations increasingly came to be seen in terms of exchange, thus providing the basis for the movement of value. The relation with the other became a valorization. When exchange value and then capital itself become autonomous systems, they proceed to engulf everything, setting up other and different relations: thus human beings and cultures become homogenized; democratization becomes basically a combinative of desubstantialized beings; love is reduced to a sexual combinative; death is no longer seen as having any relation to the beyond, but rather as the simple cessation of the function of one of the elements in the combinative (death democratized). Thus capital is fundamentally a profanation of the sacred. In other words, if anything appears which would be able to challenge capital and which could embody certain more or less irreducible potentialities and would then have to commingle in order to make the flux of life possible, it gets drawn off into one of the operating elements of a combinative within one particular process of capitalization. Since the human being is the sole other of capital, and since capital is anthropomorphized, it means that there is no longer any "other". Hence the potential death of capital (05) In order to block

(05)

A variation on this: once humans had broken with the gemeinwesen, the resulting fragmentation - which is a presupposition for the autonomization of culture - opened the way for the emergence of the other, and through this the basis of binarity as well.

But capital, which is the triumph of binary thought, goes beyond the other and strives to make itself an all-absorbing unity. Yet in doing this, it undermines its own basis, which is binarity, as it realizes more and more its own unity and its despotism.

Robert Jaulin has made a magnificent study of societies preoccupied with the self and those preoccupied with the other. (Le Paix Blanche. Ed. Le Seuil; Gens de Soi, Gens de l'Autre, Ed. 10/18). The argument of his work represents a vast difference from that put forward by the New Right.

Space should be the site of our differences, the site and the means of multiple dialogues -

this mortal tendency, capital has only one recourse: violence. (06)

During the latter stages of this vast movement we have been describing, there has emerged what we originally called the biological dimension of the revolution, but which we now prefer to call the biological dimension of our development into the human community. Certainly men and women dispossessed of the qualities of action, language, rhythm and imagination will want to reappropriate these things. But more broadly than this, it may be said that life in all its aspects has, through the agency of the human species, been brought to an impasse, an impasse produced by the hypertelity ("hyper-purposiveness") of our thought, which is capital autonomizing/abstracting/desubstantializing, a process which is creating enormous dangers for the whole of the living world. But capital must try to check this process; it has to find another way of realizing thought, which is the function of our species, not only for itself but for the whole of the living world. But thought cannot exist unless living beings continue in direct, immediate existence at various levels; it requires therefore the continued existence of all the forms of life.

whereas we are making it the site of an identity and a silence; we make it into a repetition of ourselves; we are stripped fleshless, artificialized, fleeing into infinity.

(La Paix Blanche)

White conquest is the negation of the other or of the universe, the white death is our own death also.

(Idem)

While Jaulin affirms diversity, he doesn't feel the need to insist on inequality, which means that he has gone beyond the sterile debate of equality/ inequality. Aside from this, his discourse is made even more forceful in that he raises the question of the West's misdeeds towards other peoples, while at the same time pointing to the deadly homogenizing effect of americanization. It is a cause for suspicion that many French people discover this loss of difference only now when their country is no longer in a position to carry out ethnocide (as it has done so often in the past), and when they themselves have become the victims, the "colonized" (often coupled with a nostalgia for their own past roles as colonizers.)

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cf. " La révolution intégrée " (Inv. Sér. III No.4.)

So this is not simply a problem of culture, but one of nature - it means that autonomized culture has to be eliminated as a precondition for the accession of life to thought (which becomes possible only when the human species has finally put an end to its wandering). Thus the famous debate about the opposition of nature and culture, and the arguments about the primacy of the latter as the essential determination of the human species serve only to obscure the reality which still has to be confronted. These debates relate only to a tiny moment in the human phenomenon, wherein a being with the human presuppositions such as bipedal upright posture and manual ability, developed its brain, acquired language, tools, conceptual thought and so became human - a process which has taken millions of years.

MOVEMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO CAPITAL

In order to judge the worth of a theory which sets out to expound a non-capitalist way, as for example the New Right (La Nouvelle Droite) pretends to do, one has to consider not just the phenomenon of capital, but also the different movements which oppose it.

The opposition presented by these movements is not as clear and distinct as our presentation of them will suggest. In fact, these opponents of capital very often fail to recognise themselves for what they are. Thus the reactionary movement, which was very powerful and virulent at the beginning of the nineteenth century, conducted a struggle primarily against the bourgeoisie and then against it and the proletariat, with the latter progressively becoming the main enemy, and all this without ever recognizing that its enemy was capital; it stood opposed to everything which would allow capital to blossom.

This movement underwent numerous variations as and when the development of bourgeois society required it. Thus in spite of being very strongly sceptical of progress, it did come to accept science. On the other hand, it maintained its opposition to democracy and its demand for an organic community, which seemed all the more necessary as the movement of capital was manifestly an expropriation affecting the society at various levels. Hence also the demand, among others, for roots, which was eventually to manifest itself in a cult of the earth and the fatherland !

The proletarian movement was another opposition to capital, also on the basis of class and aiming to create a new community: communism. But it went further than this and it acquired fairly rapidly a knowledge of the reality of its adversary, which it saw as capital and not simply the bourgeoisie. It carried within it the necessity of bringing about the blossoming of individuality, while at the same time realizing the human community. The anarchists were particularly concerned with individuality, the Marxists with community.

The vital elements in the proletarian movement were its international character and its perception of the unification of the species - which is why this concept had a real importance with people as different as Marx and Kropotkin. The proletarian movement thus went further than the bourgeois movement which at its high point during the French revolution had envisaged both the unification of the human race (a preoccupation which can be found in all manifestations of "humanism"), as well as the emancipation of the individual. The difference between the two movements is that the bourgeoisie thought it could attain its goal through the establishment of institutions which would have limited the development of capital, whereas the proletarian movement postulated that such a goal was unattainable as long as there were classes and the exploitation of one class by another. Thus it required the elimination of capital altogether.

But the proletarian movement unfortunately retained certain presuppositions of capital, in particular the dichotomy of interior/exterior; the vision of progress; the exaltation of science; the necessity of distinguishing the human from the animal, with the latter being considered in every case inferior; the idea of the exploitation of nature, even if Marx had proposed a reconciliation with it. All this meant that the demand for a human community was kept within the limits of capital, and, because there was to be no draconian break with it, it was impossible to give a concrete vision of what the community could have been.

To make my argument easier to understand I intend to rely particularly on the viewpoint of Marx as well as my exposition in a forthcoming book called Marx dans son éternité humaine (if I can find a publisher!) which will enlarge upon the themes of an earlier work Marx au-delà de Marx. Marx was a theoretician not only of the proletarian movement but also of the close of

the historical phase which had begun with the Greek city, which was also the time at which the presuppositions of his thought were originally engendered. To declare that Marxism has now fallen must imply therefore a rejection of the whole historical/theoretical phenomenon which underlies it.

Marx explained how the movement of democratization/massification and individuation had come to an end, and how these had involved a generalization to all people of certain attributes or privileges originally reserved for a few; how the hierarchies founded on human attributes had been eliminated and been replaced by ones founded on capital; and finally he showed that this phenomenon as a whole was truly a degradation of the species. Marx clearly demonstrated the totally limited character of democracy, and he accepted it only as a demand within the context of the struggle against feudalism. His fundamental concern was always for another community, and this is entirely consistent with his perspective that the capitalist mode of production was an altogether transitory phase in human history.

Marx elaborated the conditions under which science was produced, and the rules of "scientism" which involves the elimination of humans in their role of doing and determining. This was the foundation too of structuralism, even though the school of thought currently bearing that name was propounded by people who thought they were being original and independent with respect to Marx's work. (cf. 1857 Intro. and Pref. to Crit. of Pol. Econ.)

Marx's exposition of the genesis of value and his theory of the general equivalent (cf. Capital Bk I; Contrib to Crit. of Pol. Econ; Grundrisse) provide the key to explain not only the phenomenon of value and the genesis of capital, but also the formation of all values (often called ideas), such as justice, liberty, equality etc. Thus thought is explained as being linked to definite forms of human behaviour, and the human tendency to idealize is shown to have an equally concrete basis. This makes it possible then to understand the dynamic whereby each idea / value / general equivalent can overwhelm the whole of reality and make it submit. And here we have the very essence of the dynamic of the racket: everybody is required to make themselves equivalent to whatever the fundamental element is which characterizes the particular racket; this element determines whether one belongs or is excluded. Eventually it aims to expand outwards until it becomes the whole

community (either as ideas or as people).

Marx provided all the materials necessary in order to understand the real domination of capital over the society (though he only spoke of domination within the production process), the formation of the community of capital, and the escape of capital.

Starting in the nineteenth century, there was one movement of opposition to capital which conducted itself not on the terrain of class, but on the basis of a community: this was the case of Russia.⁽⁰⁷⁾ It constituted the highest expression of the revolutionary movement, because it raised the possibility of leaping over the phase of capitalism. The populists considered that this could be done, and Marx agreed. We have described already how events turned out in practice, and how this possibility was quashed. (cf. Camatte: Community and Communism in Russia.) Following the Russian revolution of 1917, the same perspective revealed itself afresh for the non-white peoples of the world. (Why it was not fully taken up by the proletarian movement is a subject we have taken up elsewhere). But after the 1939-45 war, when the revolutionary struggles for emancipation among these people could no longer be contained, the various communities both in Asia and Africa, in the 1960's, ignored the whole populist question and, as a general rule, the various liberation movements adopted a capitalist formula. As representations, the various Asiatic and African socialisms were compromises between thoroughgoing capitalism and a defence of national identity (though in reality, and whatever their intentions, they couldn't have been other than capitalist). There was no desire to leap over the capitalist phase. It is true that Julius Neyerere for example, spoke of grafting socialism directly onto the African community, which implied that some sort of

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In fact, this phenomenon was already in operation during the French revolution but it was masked by the phenomenon of class. (cf. "Les caractères du mouvement ouvrier français" Inv. Sér. I, No. 10. Kropotkin: The Great Revolution).

It is highly probable that the Vendéan revolt cannot at all be explained according to the bourgeois schema or even according to Marxist traditional views: i.e. as a revolutionary movement in favour of the nobles. In fact, the Vendéans were having to defend the old community against the encroachments of the capitalist mode of production, which was politically in favour of Jacobin policy. Confirmation of this view is starting to emerge in studies devoted to this peasant movement.

"socialism" actually already existed. For the populists, socialism would have come about as a result of western techniques being grafted onto the Russian peasant community (Obchtchina).⁽⁰⁸⁾ In our period, at any rate, we are beyond this. It's no longer a question of grafting anything, even supposing that the community receiving the graft retained sufficient vitality. What is required now is a questioning of western techniques, unless we want to embark on another wandering. What we are left with now is the fact that the global human community can only exist on the basis of multiple and diverse communities, founded upon the specific historical and geographical foundations of each zone.

For the moment, yet again, all we have here is an echo of the past.

When the proletarian movement, which also had as a goal the liberation of women, was halted, this rendered a separate women's movement necessary. The feminist movement, which really made itself felt after the last war, has had an undeniable importance because of its critique of the shortcomings of the classical revolutionary movement, showing the degree to which revolutionaries had become infested with notions of power and domination; it has unmasked all the subtle forms of phallocracy, the degenerate but still obnoxious offspring of patriarchy. Moreover, feminism also derived from a

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It would seem that the Incas, in their schemes for the future community, also encountered the populist problematic.

In Bolivia, the supporters of the Mink'a movement (formed in 1969) believe that ayllus = village communities. In an article in Le Monde (21/4/79) entitled " The Indians no longer want to be spectators of their own history", they are reported as saying the following:

Our principle object is to educate and " bring to consciousness " the Indian people of Collasuyo. We have had enough of being eternally left behind and the spectators of own history. We want to become the principle actors again. It is time to recover our true history... By reappropriating our ancestral values we will be able to affirm our own Indianness.

A member of another group, the T.K.R.M. (Tupac Katari Revolutionary Movement) states, also in Le Monde:

We want our own laws which will take account of our customs and our personality, so that we can link up with the socialism of our ancestors. The Bolivia of the white minority and the mestizos which oppresses us, is not ours. Our country is Collasuyo.

questioning of roles: it posed very clearly the question of what women are and what men are. Feminism has provoked an extremely salutary rupture within the prevailing representation.

The regionalist movement is also a product of the same fundamental causes: the failure of the workers movement; the fact that the contradictions were, during the course of the historical movement, absorbed but not resolved; the search for identity and the refusal of homogenization. As well, one can hardly deny its importance in having questioned a whole and more or less monolithic tradition of domination - such as that of the Catholic church for example, which suffocated all local cultures in so far as it revalorized paganism and professed the importance of the body which is, in its own way, another manifestation of what we call the biological dimension of the revolution.

As the movement of opposition to capital gets progressively more fragmented and particularized, it tends to put its roots down into an older reality, seeking an identity in a more remote past, hoping thereby to recover a more abundant reality, a plenitude. In the case of the regionalists, they go back to the period of the Roman conquest, while the feminists look to neolithic times, the period of gynocracies, as Françoise d'Eaubonnes calls them, but this doesn't stop them from also making multiple incursions into the paleolithic in order to locate the beginning of women's subjugation to men ⁽⁰⁹⁾. On the other hand, this opposition movement, or rather certain of the people within it, tends to become radicalized and no longer satisfied with the simple reversal of power which the classical revolutionaries alone envisaged - that is, they are opposed not only to capital as it now is, but also to that which, at some time in the past, had destroyed their culture or inhibited their being. This does involve however, a loss of universality. At a deeper level, this shrinking of the

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cf. Les Femmes avant le Patriachat (ed. Payot), an extremely interesting and stimulating book which definitely ought to be read. There is however one rather troublesome aspect about it : the implicit idea that men had usurped an essential feminine element.

Also on this subject, we should mention Edouard Borneman : le Patriachat, origine et avenir de notre système social , which we read in the German edition because the French one seemed less complete. This book provides a mass of materials for understanding the different movements of the passage to patriarchy. We shall return to it later.

gemeinwesen means that communitarian dimension is experienced only very narrowly and exclusively. This is community as gemeinschaft , the grouping together of people possessing a particular identity and having certain roots, which then become their domain of exclusive being, engendering apartness and exclusion of others. The famous phrase of Marx " The human being is the true gemeinwesen of man " is a reality which can be grasped only when we also comprehend the totality of men and women and their becoming. If such movements triumph, capital would not at all be called into question and the human species would be placing itself at great risk.

The same holds true for other groups forming in rebellion against capital. They share the same roots (dissolution of the workers' movement etc..), but they emphasize much more strongly " the biological dimension of the revolution " by their interest in rhythm, movement, etc., as with groups centred around music, and other communities we've already spoken of. A multitude of microcommunities is now growing up based on defending a modality of being which can either be opposed to capital or in complete compatibility with it. The species is being restructured in order that the despotic community of capital can be imposed and realized. This loss of substance, the disintegration of the individual, implies that another mode of being is in the process of being formed out of the liberated particles. Thus beyond the more or less stable 'nuclear relationships', exclusive microcommunities form themselves, produce their own languages, and recreate a caricature caste system. They express a will to differentiate themselves in opposition to both capitalist homogenizing and the dilution of the species brought on by overpopulation. The individuals / slaves of the community of capital define themselves by their separateness from one or other microcommunity, which is something that can only aggravate the difficulties that humans have in communicating.

With these microcommunities, the roots are real and immediate; within others, there are people who have got to the stage of advocating oblivion, by their rejection of the past and the future, in order to put everything into the present, the here and now where everything is resolved - thus they favour certain modalities of being, such as the pursuit of unrestrained enjoyment, and the acquisition of the means

which will bring it about more quickly or side-step a process of real transformation (i.e. drugs). All this certainly shows an impatience which is admittedly necessary, but it is also a destruction of the fullness of the human-feminine being and a sign of people's incapacity to confront, without prosthesis, without therapeutic means, the problem of our development into another community.

As for the many religious sects, mostly of oriental inspiration, which have multiplied today, they too are expressions of opposition to capital. This is not a new thing in the West, since a similar phenomenon prevailed during the final period of the Roman Empire. This flowering of mysticism is in fact the complement of Western hyper-rationalism; it tends more and more to be integrated, particularly since the ideology of these sects is often a horrible mélange of individualism and communitarian despotism. Furthermore, these sects are fashionable in the left and ultra-left circles where they have effected many conversions, which shows how far advanced is the disarray, the incapacity for thought and sick followerism.

All the forms of rebellion have been explored. All utopias have become impossible, particularly in view of the fact that capital now proposes a utopia of its own. There is no longer a space where human beings could once again realize a rebellion. And there can no longer be bandits or pirates constituting counter-societies (10).

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Piracy, even more than banditry has had a utopian dimension. Both function as a safety valve for the society. The formation of a band of brigands in ancient China was of great importance as is shown in the novel Shui-hu-zhuan (The Watermargin) .

The novel is more in the nature of a chronicle of the life of people who want to go outside a world which is sickly, austere, treacherous, dominated by trickery, money etc.....It is a utopia. All the outlaws are "goodies" who have to liquidate the "baddies". For this reason, they are pursued by the forces of justice. Being unable to live within the existing society, they go to the Liang mountains where they finally form themselves into a community.

The novel illuminates one of the despotic community's modes of regeneration. The outlaw community gathers together all the healthy characters, in contrast to the existing society, which is decayed and rotten. The emperor has only to grant a general amnesty in order to recuperate the community of "goodies", who then reconfer life on the degenerate organism, and again the cycle recommences.

THE NEW RIGHT

Having got to this point, we are now in a position to investigate the discourse of the New Right (la Nouvelle Droite). In doing this, we are not claiming that the New Right is of any great importance; rather it's because we have never properly analyzed representations of the right and what they imply for capital.

The May 68 movement reactivated all the fundamental themes which had been confronted in the 1920's by the avant-garde artists, philosophers, revolutionaries etc. The discontinuity of May 68 found a representation in what was already to hand, a re-echoing of ideas which had dominated their own earlier period. The current calling itself the New Right is a resuscitation of something that originally emerged more than fifty years ago. (11)

The people on the left in the 20's and 30's did not really want to take account of and analyze the ideas put forward by the Nazi movement and related currents, and this was in spite of the fact that many of their number were ultimately to suffer under Nazi repression. Generally speaking, there was no serious attempt to appreciate the originality or otherwise of what was coming. They analyzed it only in its immediate manifestations, and these usually tended to be in a reduced form. More importantly, no one realized that a number of its pretensions had a real foundation. Nazism did have a claim to be revolutionary since it effectively put an end to the old bourgeois society. People on the left justify themselves a posteriori by looking at what that movement led to and then declaring that Nazism has been definitively defeated and eliminated.

Today, when there has been a strong re-emergence of these ideas,

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As De Benoist himself fully realizes:

Nor is it a coincidence that people's continuing rediscovery of Marcuse, Adorno, Luxemburg and Reich only leads them to see that the essential ideas in contemporary debates had already been enunciated in the course of the 1920's.

Contemporary Europe begins to resemble a huge Weimar republic.

(Le Figaro, 30/8/78)

the people who espouse them are immediately disqualified and treated as Nazis. All debate, supposedly relished by democrats, is avoided. Any consideration of the existential reality of the people who reproduce and defend these ideas is feared because it would reveal that the questions raised by Nazism have not found satisfactory answers, even though that movement itself has been eliminated. Obviously, one should not forget that these ideas now operate on a new basis and within a new geo-social context. Today there are no more colonies. Peoples once taxed with infantilism, inability to govern themselves and so on, have now been free of their masters for over twenty years and the predicted/hoped for catastrophes still haven't happened. The relationship between the sexes has been profoundly disrupted by the emergence or re-emergence of the women's liberation movement in almost all countries. The notion of normality has been badly shaken by the eruption of the gay movement. And while the concentration camps in Germany have disappeared, the ones in the U.S.S.R. are still there (the Gulag), which shows how difficult it is to be both racist and totalitarian - and which is why these ideas today take the form of a condemnation of egalitarianism and homogenization, and an affirmation of diversity, difference, necessity of elites, etc.

Now that the Old Right, which based its opposition to capital on a past which had totally disappeared, has either itself disappeared or been roped in as a manager of capital, who is now going to represent continuity, tradition, preservation ? This role falls to the New Right which now has to defend science against attacks by various left currents, as it must defend also the presuppositions of capital, because capital is itself already a tradition - which could also mean that already capital is no longer the fundamental element in the lives of men and women who are seeking for a way to break out. The New Right shows its false historical consciousness by opposing capital while preserving its foundations.

If Nazism was a movement which allowed the passage from the formal to the real domination of capital over society, then what can the rise of these ideas correspond to, ideas which bear some resemblance to those that inspired Nazism ? More generally, what do they mean within the general ensemble of representations supporting or opposing capital ?

Are they able to suggest an alternative ? What relationship can these ideas have to the total cycle of capital ?

To answer these questions, we want to look at the work of the best known representative of the New Right - Alain de Benoist. In general terms, we can say straight away that his position states and defines a search for a non-capitalist way of development. Not only do his ideas have an affinity with positions held by the Nazi and pre-Nazi currents of the 20's and 30's, as others have already remarked (and via them with romanticism and the early nineteenth century reactionary movement), but also, and this has not been noted, they have an affinity with the whole of the Russian movement which struggled against the westernization of Russia - slavophilism and panslavism. ⁽¹²⁾

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Andrzej Walicki: The Slavophile Controversy: History of a Conservative Utopia in 19th Century Russia (Oxford, 1975) p.356:

Slavophile theology and the concept of "organic togetherness" (the doctrine of sobornost) postulated a supra-individual collective consciousness which precluded the isolation of individual human beings and their "superfluosity".

The "superfluous men" were all the intellectuals who had been expropriated from their community and who no longer felt involved in any process of life. They went on to form the intelligentsia.

The slavophile theory of an integrated, harmonious personality - a pre-individuation ideal - was the antithesis of the divided, anxiety-ridden personality of the superfluous men; their philosophy of history represented an attempt to explain the chain of events which - in the West as well as in Russia - had produced rationalism, individualism, the disintegration of traditional communities and the alienation and "orphanization" of the individual that accompanied them.

Nazism proposed a community, the volks-gemeinschaft, to all the people uprooted and expropriated by the movement of capital when it was undergoing its mutation to the stage of real domination.

De Benoist's theory is a reflection of the disarray experienced by people who have arrived at individualization but who still long for the moment when they were immersed in a community (cf. for example, his partiality for a corps of the elite). The communitarian dimension is further and further degenerated.

...../over

But because de Benoist has not made any analysis whatsoever of capital, and therefore can have no understanding of its presuppositions, his thought is totally immersed in the representation of capital. What is more, he seems absurdly unaware of the fact that some of his statements are in no way antagonistic to those of Marx. For example: "Man is not the master of his capacities, but he is master of how they are used. He is the demiurge of forms, der Herr des Gestalten", (Vu du Droite, Editions Copernic, p. 93). Yet for Marx, what is labour if not the capacity to create forms, the activity which allows forms to be realized? Forms are engendered by the act of production, which makes something appear, and gives form to something material. The concept of production here is not at all limited to the economic domain: it also signifies a process of formation, a genesis designed to strip away all the magic from the rising of living beings, from all things and from all historical formations, etc.

Alain de Benoist is aiming to produce a global representation and then to establish it as a means of shifting intellectual power towards the Right, so that society can be transformed. Moving on the same terrain as his adversary, de Benoist wants to erect a theory (13) which will be able to eclipse Marxism by employing a method often used by others making the same attempt: i.e. relying on science in order to show that Marxism is not scientific. To do this, he has recourse to the most up to date research in biology and physics. This he uses to help ground his nominalism, which is the lynchpin of his representation, allowing him to reject all theories which he considers to be universalist, and Marxism in particular.

Because he is a nominalist, he is also allowed to be an anti-reductionist

As regards the German view, see Edmund Vermeil Doctrinaires de la Revolution Allemande, p. 31.

We might recall here Thomas Mann's great dream of restoring the epoch of rising bourgeoisie (a kind of mercantile aristocracy), when there had been a great flourishing of art. We shall return to this in a study of art in general.

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There is, as we have already noted, a possible contradiction between the will to establish a theory and the adoption of a nominalist position vis-à-vis reality. We don't however want to go into that here; instead, we prefer to concentrate on the present day significance of the nominalist revival.

(a term which is very fashionable now among critics of Marxism), and this he presents as being the main characteristic of the New Right.

It is true that universalism is a way of by-passing the differences that exist, and de Benoist is right to refuse, as Marx does, to speak of man in himself. Thus, "there is no such thing as man in himself; there are only cultures with all their different characteristics" (Les Idées à l'endroit, p. 39). But he himself is a reductionist to the extent that he loses completely the dimension of gemeinwesen. He has a particularist/ particulate vision of the world. His philosophical equivalent would be an aggravated existentialism; his scientific counterpart is the modern theory in physics and biology which says that knowledge of the real can be acquired from the individualization of elementary particles based on a study of phenomena seeming to be irreducible among themselves. The theory rests on a questioning of the philosophical and scientific principle of the objectivity of the universe: knowledge of the universe cannot be separated from the subject which forms this knowledge. Another way of expressing this is to say that the knowledge we have of the world is a representation of it. At a deeper level, it is possible to see how this is related to the development of capital. Capital has in fact a dual evolution: on the one hand, it does in fact present itself as a community and a universal; but on the other hand, it actually exists only through particular capitals, suggesting that it may not be possible to speak of capital in general after all, and what we really have are single capitals firmly delineated in space and time. This duality, which is not inherent in capital but which is carried within it in an extreme form, provides the basis for the position of those who think in terms of invariants and universals (and who are preoccupied with the unity of man) - but it is also the basis of the nominalists' position. Thus we have two valid but partial representations each posing a separation within reality. (14)

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De Benoist is criticizing an ideology which is that of the bourgeoisie. Given that Marx retained elements such as the idea of progress and the necessity of the development of productive forces, it becomes possible for De Benoist to construct an amalgam.

On the other hand, we have often pointed out that universalist thought (e.g. as represented by the theoreticians of L'unité de l'Homme (Ed. Le Seuil)) is also the thought of capital; at the same time, structuralism can be explained as the expression of the realization of the community of capital.

I would not want to deny in any way that the nominalist position contains an element of revolt, but there is no doubt that it remains within the capitalist problematic if only because

Universalist thought does indeed tend to autonomize general equivalents, which are themselves products of abstraction and reduction,⁽¹⁵⁾ and mediations of capital. But nominalism on the other hand, because it denies that beings and things exist in a continuum, is thought which lacks all dimension of gemeinwesen; it is thought which is isolated and highly individualistic, and it is this solitude which causes it also to be infinitely tragic. The tragic vision of the world, which according to de Benoist is the prerogative of western society, is something which he glorifies and insists upon.

If God is dead, if the world is a chaos in which only a voluntary action can make an organized cosmos, then man is indeed alone.

(Vu du Droite, p. 90)

Present day nominalism is actually a manifestation of the process of decomposition which is affecting the social body ; it is also a manifestation of the impasse affecting science: science is no longer capable of providing a coherent representation of a totality without having its own presuppositions called into question⁽¹⁶⁾. But at the same time, universalist thought can also be an appropriate vehicle for setting up a conservative representation, as is the case with structuralism which poses the eternization of capital.

it is included within that problematic, in so far as it is able to represent the opposition of one particular capital to the totality of capital.

Though he criticizes particular aspects of capital, De Benoist never questions the community of capital, for the simple reason that he doesn't even perceive its existence.

Historically, nominalism appears as a phenomenon of dissolution, as with scholasticism and the old rigid and dogmatic representation which once inhibited the flowering of individual thought - a necessary precondition for the development of the bourgeois phase of capitalism.

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cf. Marx: 1857 Intro. to Contrib. to Crit. of Pol. Econ.

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Recent debates, such as those at the convention at Cordoba (Oct '79) bear this out. The meeting was preoccupied with questions normally outside the scope of science: psychokinesis, vision from afar, transcendental meditation etc.

A number of the scientists present had been influenced by oriental thought, and they considered that present day developments in science

The nominalism of Alcin de Benoist exists wholly within the orbit of capital's representation, because he has not made the slightest break with the mode of thought that he presupposes,

bear out their position. Hence Fritjof Capra believes that quantum theory confirms the Tao:

The world is no longer thought of as a machine made up of a multitude of separate objects, as it was according to Newtonian physics. It must be understood as a unified whole in which the parts are fundamentally interrelated among themselves; they can be understood only as models of a cosmic process (cf. Le Monde 24/1/0/79 " New Frontiers and Old Debates at Cordoba.")

Clearly, the vision of a separate human being no longer having the dimension of the gemeinwesen must have as its antithesis the vision of the human being for whom the gemeinwesen is an integral part of his/her being (as was the case for Lao Tse). The world can no longer be considered according to the model of separation; it has to be considered under the form of totality. From this it follows that the human being must no longer be a separate being.

The essential point here seems to be that science is a representation determined by a given human behaviour. It does not have the absolute universality that the scientists pretend it has. And it is certainly not the only valid mode of knowledge of our species. At root, science was the expression of a dissociated whole, where the community could no longer be represented except by the state. Now that capital is progressively installing its despotic community, science can no longer be an adequate representation; from this derives the solution of orientalism which imports a communitarian dimension and which begins to manifest itself at every level of western society. This phenomenon was experienced at the end of the Roman Empire, during a period when a greater and more despotic community was beginning to form itself. Christianity was in part a product of this phenomenon.

This is an immense question, and we shall return to it at a future date. In the meantime, we would add the following: We have arrived at the point where two previously separated modes of thought must now converge, allowing the development of official science on the one hand, and the occult sciences on the other. The first occupies itself with necessity, with what is multiple, repeatable, reproducible in the realization of being. It has limits within which it operates. The process of knowledge implies a separation of subject and object. Science can progress but man is left unchanged. There is neither soteriology (" doctrine of salvation" - tr.) nor anxiety.

The occult sciences, on the other hand, are preoccupied with what is unique, with what can happen only once, (which is beyond the sphere of chance) in the realization of being. They do not recognize limits (hence their excessiveness), but they can reimpose necessity by introducing an element of foundation. The

thought which is binary, individualist, etc. What's more, his thought is not even radical, as the author himself admits. De Benoist brings out universals and invariants as and when he needs them to help him defend his ideas on race, justice, honour, etc. The only nominalist of any consequence in the modern period was Stirner who wrote The Ego and its Own, and who said: " I have founded my cause on nothing ". (17)

Nominalism has always flourished at critical moments in the evolution of philosophical and scientific thought. Marx himself was being a nominalist when he makes the startling remark that there is no such thing as man in himself or justice in itself, but that human beings are determined by the mode of production in which they happen to find themselves. All of justice, he says, is tied

process of knowledge implies a union of subject/object; hence the importance of the transformation of the conscious being through activities which aim at a particular transformation of material reality. The soteriological dimension has enormous scope, since it can sometimes actuate itself to save the divinity which is immersed in the material. Anxiety is important here, because it is concerned with accomplishing a creation which no one is sure will ever be able to happen.

(17)

These days, a contemporary writer such as E.M. Cioran seems to take nominalism to the extreme :

In itself, every idea is neutral, or should be.

When we refuse to admit the interchangeable character of ideas, blood flows.

(A Short History of Decay (Blackwell, Oxford, 1975)

Any universalism is impossible here. The other side of this shows a loss of feeling and passion. Indifferentiation and indifference permit a combinative to install itself.

Cioran individualizes the racket:

It is enough for me to hear someone talk sincerely about ideals, about the future, about philosophy, to hear him say "we" with a certain inflection of assurance, to hear him invoke "others" and regard himself as their interpreter - for me to consider him my enemy.

This is really sinking into solitude !

to a given class (which evolves over time) and also to a state etc.... This is the reason why it was so important for him to see history as the unveiling of the various magical mysteries which conceal differences.

In a similar way, it could be said of us that we are being nominalist by pointing to the phenomenon of the idea/racket.

One can recognize certainly that Marx then went against his own nominalism by making the proletariat into a universal abstract; but it was his followers who really produced that universal-operator. For Marx, the proletariat could only have a universal consciousness, able that is, to hold forth the problems for the whole of the species. The proletariat was important because of its relationship to the gemeinwesen which was to come: the human being. This is why when the human being has been eliminated the proletariat becomes an idea/ racket, with a multitude of rackets being created in its name.

In regard to history, de Benoist says nothing that hasn't already been said by Marx and Hegel.

De Benoist declares:

History has no meaning: it has meaning only for those who accord a meaning to it. History is about man only to the extent that it is activated by him in the first instance.

(Les Idées à l'Endroit p.38)

What does Marx say ?

History does nothing, it 'possesses no immense wealth', it 'wages no battles'. It is man, real, living man who does all that, who possesses and fights; "history" is not as it were, a person apart using man as a means of achieving its own aims; history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims.

(The Holy Family)

De Benoist writes:

The question of whether one can or cannot "relive the past" has become

a dead issue. The past, when understood for what it is, always lives on in the whole of the present; it is one of the perspectives which man uses to elaborate his projects and forge a destiny.

(Les Idées à l'Endroit p. 38)

Yet this is precisely what Hegel demonstrated in his historical dynamic founded on the Aufhebung (18).

Moreover, and in spite of what some people may think, Marx had no essential difficulty about the concept of the end of history, since it was to usher in an era of perpetual peace, where the human species would no longer have to struggle, because communism was beyond the dichotomy of war and peace; a whole historical phase is brought to a close with the communist revolution, beyond which a new human history begins.

In common with many theoreticians who find themselves on the Left, de Benoist rails against the linear view of history, he himself being a follower of the "spherical" conception. Nevertheless, certain of his statements amount to a view of history as indefinitely linear, while lacking in progress:

(18) What is fundamental in Hegel's thought is the idea that nothing can have happened in vain. In comparison to religious thinkers, who privilege two moments - the first, that of sin and catastrophe, and the last, that of redemption - Hegel is the thinker of the intermediary movement, which had previously been considered as secondary. He was unable to believe that what happens might be of no consequence and could be forgotten. He could not accept that those who made errors had to disappear, since they were the representatives of the false, which is also a moment of the true. It follows that in order that truth may be and may finally reveal itself, as Heidegger would say, all of the moments of truth must be maintained as present.

In this sense, therefore, Hegel was a thinker who irreversibly eliminated God from the historical process. It was an extreme profanation of the sacred, which Marx was to develop further.

However, this cognitive approach can in fact be the means of setting into place a generalized justification, which is also a conservative aspect of Hegelian thought. Then it must also be possible to perceive (penser) the discontinuities that eliminate certain givens. But is it necessary to forget totally? Here we run into a difficulty. For if one refuses linear time, and even quite simply time itself, one still has to find a way of integrating, in a permanent and dynamic way, the totality of that which has happened, is happening and will happen.

[Man] will survive as long as he continues, as a natural thing, to take up the challenges he hurls himself into.

Here, the linearity of history, which follows from the invariance of human nature, is a dialectic of defiance. And so where does this leave nominalism?

This statement, like others of his on the inevitability of power and the state, constitutes the very essence of the representation which capital confers on humans: everything is questionable; happiness is impossible; struggle, work and pain are permanently necessary; the world is inhibited by a flaw which one can only work to minimize - except that the very act of doing so only empowers the dynamic whereby human beings give themselves over to a movement which is meaningless, in as much as its goal is forever unattainable. (19)

The nominalist position of de Benoist also leads him to refuse determinism (necessity) within the human and cultural domain:

We refuse all determinism whether "spatial" or "temporal". It is here that we separate ourselves from any natural "order".

(Les Idées à l'Endroit)

We intend to explain how this attitude stems basically from a will to do two things at once: to defend a tradition whose roots must be sought in a biological debasement, and at the same time to put forward something which is outside

(19)

This comes about because of this invariant: struggle is perennial because history has no end, which in turn suggests that institutions are necessary and permanent (the state in particular), and that the established order must therefore persist.

The "superhumanist" response consists of saying that man must transform himself in order to retake possession of the world that he has transformed.

(Vu de Droite p.329)

Therefore we must adapt ourselves to the various degenerations of animal and vegetable species, to catastrophes, destruction, various kinds of pollution and the mineralization of nature.

of liberalism and marxism - both of which require determinism. But first we should call attention to the fact that his statement (" We refuse all determinism ") is incoherent: how can he justify his will to take intellectual power by saying that Marx came before Lenin, and still be able to say there is no determinism ?

His mode of thought is quite obviously dichotomizing and binary:

Culture is also everything which adds itself to nature. Yet "nature" is necessity: it works upon all those who go outside of it. Whereas culture is chance; it depends on choices which are only potentially predetermined. To speak of culture is to speak of man, which means that the reality of existence is chance, and this is the only reality.

(Vu de Droite, p. 324)

So Nature is governed by a determinism, and man, who looks at Nature from the perspective of chance, then longs to organize it so as to make it into a realm of order (= human determinism !)

Either there exists an order in the universe and the task of man is to conform to it (thus the establishment of public order would conform to the search for truth and the essence of politics would come down to morality) or, the universe is a chaos and man must undertake the task of giving it form.

(Les Idées a l'endroit, p. 101)

To use Hobbes' language: The state of nature is civil war. The world is a chaos.

(Vu de Droite, p. 91)

There is in reality another possibility: that the world is indeed a chaos and yet not a chaos. It's not a question of ordering or disciplining it, it's a matter of living it. It is curious that de Benoist, like so many others, is able to state on the one hand that only man is capable of conferring meaning (which is another way of providing security, as we mentioned earlier) but cannot on the other hand, explain how this being could have been produced out of a meaningless world, if not by absolute chance - which

he refuses to do. It may perhaps seem preferable to say that as the human species becomes cognizant of a given meaning this is then an expression of human thought and thus an affirmation of the life phenomenon. This reasoning, however, never gets beyond the binary opposition of meaning/meaninglessness. That the world shows forth different forms is one thing, it is another thing altogether to want to impose form on chaos - it is a presupposition of despotism, as well as being an expression of the need for security. And capital, let us not forget, is the great organizer of forms, it is an organizing. (20)

Alain de Benoist's thinking is sometimes magical: culture appears as a given, originating with the rise of man. But where does it come from, and how is it formed ? De Benoist does indeed say that " hominization is itself a rupture with nature " (Vu du Droite, p. 324), but he does not explain what the process of this rupture consists of, because man and culture are always thought of as inseparable.

Not only is man always the subject of nature, through his transformation of it and utilization of its resources, but it is through this activity that he constitutes himself as man. It could be said then that culture is the nature which, among other possibilities, man took upon himself, and thus made himself Man.

(Idem p. 324)

Here culture is made to preexist human nature !

It seems that binary thought is unable to avoid falling into the trap of anthropocentrism (as is evident from the preceding quotations) which is what Alain de Benoist claims he wants to eliminate. Yet a Latin writer Celsus (author of The True Discourse); whom de Benoist freely quotes had already understood that culture is not a prerogative of man. " The visible world ", he wrote, " has not been ordained just for man. All things are born and perish for the common good of the whole, through an incessant transformation of elements." He goes on to say that God does not favour man over the other animals and that we are not lords; he mentions the social behaviour of ants and bees and points out that it was the ants

(20)

The question of chaos and the question of energy are as fundamental today as they were at the dawn of human reflection. We shall come back to this later.

who invented breeding and cultivation. (21)

His anthropocentrism is structural because chance is defined by him in relation to man - chance is choice - and it is from this standpoint that he then proceeds to define culture, also as choice. And only then, and by way of opposition to this, does he describe what nature is.

Furthermore, he accepts as definitive the process of autonomization of man in relation to nature - as if it had no repercussions on the whole of life, and was separate from the ecological consequences which are now obvious to all. Yet the phenomenon of human culture is included in the total developmental process of nature (what defines humans is not so much culture but rather their autonomization), and what we are seeing today is a contradiction between the two. The human species' accession to thought concerns all species. Sooner or later the autonomization of our species will have to be stopped in order that the different forms of life can continue to exist: if we don't do this, men and women would, at least for this purpose, be immersed in nature.

Alain de Benoist's exposition contains a multitude of contradictions and superficialities. Exposing them here is not of great importance, since our aim is not to polemicize but rather to present what is affirmed as a body of doctrine and to see if it can really represent the development of capital or an alternative to it, as it aspires to do. As de Benoist himself says, we are in a good position to provide a foundation for that alternative because we have arrived at a singular moment, the end of the cycle which began with the neolithic. De Benoist thinks that human beings are capable of finding a solution, as they found one then, thanks to the placement of the tripartition of the Indo-Europeans. But again this reduces the scope of the problem, since the same problem is being faced by the Chinese who were totally unaware of this tripartition (and a multitude of

(21)

Quotations from Celsus are from Louis Rougier: Celse contre les crétiens (Ed. Copernic) p.206.

There is no doubt that binary thought is linked to anthropocentrism, but it still remains necessary to define it precisely. It seems plausible to think that it might also be linked to bilateral symmetry. Yet bilateral symmetry, which is one modality of life's being, and which is perhaps itself a reduction, may yet prove to have major advantages. We have spoken elsewhere of how art is an attempt by human beings to recover a radiating symmetry, and in so doing to set up communication with other forms of life. This radiating consciousness marks a complete escape from reductive anthropocentrism.

other peoples are in the same position). And besides, how did it happen that this tripartition was able to give birth to two different modes of evolution: that of the West, with the production of the individual, autonomization of the state and capital, and that of India, which engendered a communitarian despotism ?

Alain de Benoist's solution to the grave problems we face today consists of wanting to return to ancestral social forms as models (though not a return, pure and simple, since he does desire a creation), which will permit a blossoming of human groups (he avoids speaking of races), and a flowering of cultures in all their diversity, together with social forms which will have need of hierarchies, power, a state etc....

A representation such as this can have no future. It is of no use to capital since it cannot represent it in its entirety and nor is it able to suggest an alternative to it. I am well aware of the fact that false consciousness is able to make happen what it wants to happen, and that a theory may serve ends which are different from its avowed aim. Obviously, the contents of Mein Kampf (a deranged and superficial work, steeped in bad faith) reveal nothing of moment about what might be termed the representation necessary for the passage from the formal to the real domination of capital over the society. And yet, a "community of the people" was able to provide, in an immediate way, for the needs of all the dispossessed of Europe early in this century (and of course today there exists yet another kind of "community" !)

The representation of the New Right combines elements of the representation of capital as it exists today with elements of representation produced by previous modes of production.

The New Right's fixation on the past is largely a measure of how far the notion of community has been reduced; it puts most of the emphasis on individuality, personality and ethnic community (which is unavoidable, given the regionalist movement's concern with the necessity of communities where a certain mode of being, a difference can sustain itself). On the other hand, the total community of humans is something the New Right refuses, because it refuses to envision the species.

De Benoist speaks ironically of "speciety". Yet in my view, this is an essential acquirement which developed over the last two centuries, during which a consciousness of the species arose asserting its unity and the fact that it contained invariant elements. Moreover, this consciousness is in no way a demand for homogenization of the kind we see being realized today, and which is capital's way of unifying the species.

There are many people who are in fact aware of the phenomenon of species, and this is especially true of certain science fiction writers, whose exposition of it always stresses at the same time the vital necessity for diversity. The theme of identity therefore, is often central to their work (cf. A.E. Van Voigt, Spinrad, Malaguti, Herbert, Ursula Le Guin etc...) These writers are preoccupied with the perennisation of the species in the cosmos, but for them this does not involve a domination vis-à-vis other living beings on the planet, as has been the case up to now, but rather a symbiosis and a harmony with other "conscious" species. We are seeing here also a supercession of anthropocentrism, a theme which has frequently preoccupied writers of science fiction. (22)

A reduction of the spatial and temporal dimensions of the community only invites a return to what nazism did: it is a dead end. Capital cannot be content with a restricted community, which is why nazism wasn't able to prolong itself - nazism was itself done away with not by democracy, but rather by capital's despotic community which is based on the reduction of human beings to undifferentiated particles (which is how the democratic phenomenon comes to be reabsorbed).

We've said before we find the concept of the species limiting, both because its implications are too zoological, and also because it risks acceptance of the idea that men and women are merely "animal".

(22)

The affirmation of the unity of man involves the recognition that the other is also "man", and that in spite of gross differences, all participate in the same being, the same reality. Hence, killing and torture become impossible acts.

The same result may be arrived at by a defence of different and specific cultures - though there is a danger that this could lead to a shrinking of horizons.

Also, to use the concept is to remain within the ambit of capital, within that mode which capital in its representation uses to individualize the unification of men and women, and within which all of us are treated as objects. On the other hand, to reject the concept of species in favour of micro-communities (especially of the kind envisaged by Alain de Benoist) is not at all a denial of capital, because they can all be integrated, thus preventing men and women moving towards an understanding of the situation in which they find themselves today.

Even assuming the realization of the unity of men and women (through their having recovered a reality they have been despoiled of) and the elimination of capital, this would not signify the end of all struggle: human beings will not live their lives enclosed in a cocoon and anchored in "security", since in order to ensure their continued existence on this earth, they will always have to face situations which require struggle. One can imagine the possibility of glacial movements, upheavals caused by subterranean shifts which will cause earthquakes and volcanoes. Great energy will be necessary because that is what is required for life to survive in the cosmos.

Those who think that a terrestrial paradise could ensue after a revolution or a catastrophe, are saying that the present situation should be replaced by its negative opposite - which is reductive, because it envisages the elimination of certain essential attributes of life, in the manner of those who think that one day there will be no more pain, that suffering will be abolished and so on. (23)

One final note on this subject: the community is almost always envisaged as a prosthesis and hence as a therapeutic. A realized community is necessary so that men and women, who have been divided, can be reunified. Community is their means of doing this. It is not to be viewed as the spontaneous result of a union at planetary level (as the totality of the species), nor at the level of actual geographical zones, (as a limited grouping of human beings). And the dimension of community is definitely not to be seen as being internal to the human being, though this is a necessary precondition for the founding of the human community.

(23)

This is why we have always emphasised the grave dangers lurking within the formula "abolition of work".

Returning now to the question of the relationship between nature and culture (which is the principle axis of de Benoist's investigations), it is important to note that the problem really began to make itself felt under capitalism in its very early mercantilist and liberal phase, and that it was later taken up by both the reactionaries and the revolutionaries. Marx for example, suggested and strove for their reconciliation. De Benoist however, presents us with a theorization of the autonomous development of the human species as a cultural fact - an attempt which is in perfect harmony with the representation of capital, since this latter can only be the anthropomorphosis of an autonomized being.

However De Benoist cannot dispense with nature altogether, because for him nature serves a purpose by allowing him to say that certain (to him) essential determinations are perennial - like private property for example, the roots of which lie in the territorial instinct, or the incessant struggles within human societies, which are seen as indications of man's killer nature and original aggressiveness. The problem about culture echoes that which besets nominalism : it is not the operation of chance.

The exaltation of culture and chance is intended as a reaffirmation of man's importance (man here is a universal), and as opposed to structuralism which also postulates the primacy of culture. Yet in his desire to find a biological and scientific base for his theory of human diversity and inequality, De Benoist relies on sociobiology, which is a model of biological structuralism. The living being, the human being, is of no importance; what matters is their genes, and how these interrelate.

He cites Richard Dawkins writing in Le Figaro (June 1979) :

Genes multiply within enormous colonies (ourselves) in complete security, (24) isolated from the exterior world and manipulating it from a distance. These genes have created us, mind and body, and their preservation is the ultimate reason of our existence. We are their survival machines.

(24)

This is an anthropocentric "anxiety".

(This is a more sophisticated expression of the old formulation of Weismann on the soma and the germen.) But if genes - which, being particulars, are expressions of nominalism - do actually determine us, how does chance operate in our lives ? How can we choose ? Is chance contained as a possibility in a gene ? True, De Benoist does have some reservations about this, and he makes some criticisms at the end of the article, but these relate to certain other exaggerated claims of sociobiology, and not at all to the present questions. He concludes:

Dawkins is right to make the point that man, contrary to the obstinate genes which "make use of him", is alone capable of foresight. This is the reason why "we alone on this earth are capable of rebelling against the tyranny of the egotistical replicators". The struggle of the future perhaps may come down to this: the revolt of the ephemeral prevoyants against the blind immortals.

This invoking of science fiction leaves everything unanswered, for what is it that makes man see into the future and rebel ? Is it certain genes ? or other elements ? or is this the operation of true chance ?

The oscillation between nominalism, culture and chance (which are very visibly favoured) and universalism, nature and determinism (which are left obscure) is related to the search for identity and roots. Identity is permanence; it shouldn't be troubled by any discontinuity, which is why it needs to be firmly anchored, because identity carries with it or at least implies the need for security (25). De Benoist claims that the identity of western peoples is determined by their belonging to the Indo-European ethnic group, and that they have to recover this group's tradition. Further, he seeks to justify (which is another aspect of identity) the value of this culture - ruled by landed property, the individual, the state etc - which in their turn require some incontestable foundation, to be sought in the order

(25)

The New Right is not immune from the difficulty now facing all groups engaged in the search for an identity which can distinguish them - the will to establish a theory of the Right and the will to establish an identity are intimately related. In a future study, I want to go further into the concept of identity which can be analyzed only in the context of related concepts, such as representation, value, etc.

of nature. (26)

The order of nature plays an essential role in justifying violence and therefore also the internecine struggles within the species. Many theoreticians accept the thesis that man has been a killer from the very beginning. Hence if there is this killer instinct within the culture, then the aim of education must be to neutralize and inhibit it. The pleasure principle is no longer that of enjoying to the full (and not only sexually speaking), but that of killing. As a consequence, social life becomes repression and sublimation, and love a diversion from the act of killing! At most, love is a general equivalent, a mediation; the lost immediacy was to be found again in Christian love (27), which becomes the means of reuniting what has been divided, abolishing inequalities and contradictions, uniting unlike things. Its character as a general equivalent is perfectly

(26)

Even Robert Vacca wants to establish a tradition which has to be strong and new, one in which knowing must prevail over having - thus providing for real efficiency:

The refusal of efficiency - in an overpopulated world - implies a decision to allow great masses of people to die.

(Manuale per una improbabile salvezza p.52)

Having said this, Vacca then rejects any questioning of science and technology; he wants them developed to the maximum.

Because there exists in his view, an inequality among people related to the possession of knowledge, he is thus unable to accept democracy in its present form; and proposes that instead of one man one vote there should be a different number of votes for each person. (p.128)

As is so often the case with people whom one could say are of the Right, the critique of democracy never gets beyond the framework of immediate operational efficiency.

(27)

It would seem that the view of love propounded by Mo Tsu (C 5 B.C.) has something of the same quality.

Irwin S. Bernstein's studies of the ethology of primates shows the necessity of relativizing the importance of aggressiveness (cf. La Recherche No.91, 1978):

Once again we see that the key characteristic of primates is their social nature. This is more

revealed by the way in which each particular love comes to be reflected in the love of God on which it is founded. Hence all loves are rendered compatible and operational.

The study of the ethnology of primates has led to the belief that there is an inherent human aggressiveness; yet this work has also revealed the importance of contact and touch among the members within primate groups. How can the two conclusions be reconciled ?

important than their capacity for aggression.

For too long we have envisaged dominance in terms of aggressive capabilities and the show of physical superiority in single combats. From now on I think that the social nature of combat will have to be taken into account. Social alliances at the centre of a troop are remarkably efficient at excluding intruders and lessening the forces tending towards dislocation of the troop.

When speaking of the social dimensions of animal life, it is very important to note what Kropotkin has to say on this in Mutual Aid . He maintains that because the territory of animal species has been reduced due to human pressures, animals have now become more "individualist". It is often said that the existence of primitive peoples is no longer possible because of contamination by other social forms; it is the same with the animals. One is studying beings who have been completely disturbed by our action.

As far as man is concerned, it is wrong to use the behaviour of our ancestors or the social organization of baboons as models to explain ourselves, as Vernon Reynolds very justly points out in his book The Biology of Human Action . The book is particularly interesting for the way in which the author is able to show that the true dimension of human beings in their evolution is their capacity for conceptual thought. It is this, rather than their aggressiveness, which Reynolds sees as having enabled our ancestors to resolve the problems posed by the "adaptation" to the environment of the open savannah.

We intend to enlarge upon this in a study of the phenomenon of the emergence of men and women; at the same time we also propose to expound , in the form of theses, the problem of violence. Here is a rough preliminary definition:

Violence appears or manifests itself when there has been a rupture within a process. Violence is what permits a rupture to happen, whether this be within the physical, cosmic, biological or human spheres. Violence involves the open appearance of forces and the setting in train of energies of varying magnitudes. It involves the implication that this violence should be directed.

The assumption that man is a killer and a carnivore also serves to justify another fact of culture: the enormous consumption of meat. In this case, it serves the ideological interests of the right as well as the left. Thus the extreme left group Communisme ou Civilisation declares that meat eating is the superior diet because it permits man to develop his brain. The followers of this group are relying here on Marx and especially Engels's essay "The role of work in the transformation from monkey to man", which is a veritable oration in favour of animal proteins.

They would have been better advised to consult the work of Oscar Maerth: The Strange Origin of Man. Maerth believes (as does the New Right) that the genesis of man is an entirely cultural fact: men became men by eating the brains of their fellow creatures. Since intelligence appears to be digestible, you can devour your neighbour who happens to be endowed with a more developed brain, and acquire his intelligence. And since women, it seems, were put to one side in this feast, it is possible thereby to explain their inferiority, as well as the inequality between races, and why certain of them are inferior and others superior. (28)

The followers of Communisme ou Civilisation take an even stranger line when they accuse the capitalist mode of production of not satisfying man's carnivorous needs. For them, in effect, capitalism = vegetarianism because the consumption of meat is seen to be diminishing as a cereal based diet becomes generally adopted.

This claim is quite vacuous however, and in fact the contrary is true. Obviously the meat we consume today is no longer the innocent and simple fare such as was eaten by the men of the paleolithic. What's more, given the population explosion and the enormous waste involved in animal husbandry (since the same amount of grain which goes to produce a certain quantity of meat can be used to nourish a greater number of people), it is highly probable that some sort of vegetarianism may come to be imposed upon us by the community of capital. To all

(28)

On the subject of the origin of the human species, Elaine Morgan's book The Descent of Woman makes stimulating and agreeable reading, because in it woman is reintegrated into the process of genesis; it is also interesting because it rests on an extremely astute theory which postulates a return to an aquatic environment.

appearances we will have a solution like that of the neolithic, with the introduction of cereals into human diets. And here again we have an echo from the past, though a very distant and distorted one.

Even those who are not frenetic and extreme devotees of carnivorousness (like the group Communisme ou Civilisation) still take the view that man is omnivorous and therefore also a meat eater. In their impassioned plea for human omnivorism - which links man with pigs - they pass in silence over scholars like Cuvier who in his Lessons in Comparative Anatomy (1801) said:

Comparative anatomy shows that in every respect man resembles the fructivorous [fruit eating] animals and not at all the carnivores... Only by disguising dead flesh and making it more tender by culinary preparation can it be chewed and digested by man, for whom the sight of raw and bloody meat would otherwise provoke horror and disgust.

Both Buffon and Bichat make the same point, in relation that is, to people living before the development of industrial capitalism and the basic agrarian upheaval, and before the beginning of livestock production for profit (an activity which was grafted onto the corn trade).

So here then, as in all spheres, one invokes the scholars one has need of! (29)

(29)

Which is why I will now refer to a current which maintains that man is a frugivore and that all healing measures should be proscribed: this is the American Hygienist movement, which is mainly represented by Shelton. In France, the Nouvelle Hygiene movement has been disseminating and defending its basic positions for several years now. (cf. Inv No.1 Ser.III p.14-15)

The movement itself is about rediscovering what are the fundamental biological givens of man and woman by means of raising cultural barriers. Scientific studies have shown that a great number of the solutions to difficulties posed by certain life phenomena lie in a return to a more natural behaviour; i.e. they involve the elimination of cultural practices. This is the case with childbirth which is now to be viewed from the point of view of the woman, as well as from that of the child. (cf. the Leboyer method of natural childbirth) The same is true for the various psychological problems brought about by the lack of touching, something which is still psycho-genetically important. (cf. the extraordinary book by Ashley Montagu: Touching, which we shall take up later). All this raises the whole problem of the validity of human interventions (though without falling into a westernized Taoism!)

The study of the relationship between nature and culture is most of the time constrained by the problem of having to justify a representation. Nature is apprehended both as a general equivalent and as an operative. It has lost all its immediateness; it is no longer the realm of life. It is therefore important to appreciate the way in which the relationship of nature and culture is understood here, particularly in view of the fact that we are now living through the end-time of a culture, as various theorists like Lévi-Strauss have determined; we must understand that the present problem is how to stop the autonomization of culture. On the other hand, forming our perception of what the future human community will be requires an analysis of all our present day modes of behaviour and those that originally gave rise to them. Thus our behaviour towards animals is to a large degree conditioned by animal husbandry which took hold in the neolithic. It was out of this practice that there grew both the notion of private property and exchange value, and in particular their ability to become autonomous. How then is it possible, in the light of this, to preserve this activity and presupposition of capital's development? What's more, animal husbandry provided the whole basis for the rise of patriarchy. The practice enabled man in effect not only to verify the reality of his role in procreation, but also to manipulate reproduction. Thereafter it became possible for him to alter his attitude towards women. I don't believe, as Françoise d'Eaubonnes does, that animal husbandry enabled men to realize that they had a role in reproduction, but rather that it allowed them to objectify a reality and manipulate it. In a way, animal husbandry was the beginning of the scientific viewpoint which consists of treating the other (whether it be human being, animal, vegetable, thing) or even the self, as an object. (30) This could be seen as consciousness (which is participation) transformed into knowledge (which is manipulation).

Clearly then stock raising has to be abandoned, and domesticated animals should be allowed to return, as far as they are able, to a state of nature. They are not indispensable to agriculture, contrary to the opinion of the followers of biodynamics. A cycle of elements can

(30)

This must of necessity have a considerable bearing on how the other is apprehended. One can understand then, how in places where science has never developed, it is possible to have civilizations based on the other and not on the self.

be realized which will regenerate the soil without recourse to manuring.

What has been said on the subject of animal husbandry applies equally to agriculture. Françoise d'Eaubonnes remarks that the desertification of large areas of the Middle East was the result of man's exploitation. But this was not solely the result of men having destroyed the ancient women's way of doing things, which had implied allowing the land to lie fallow, since the practices of ploughing and irrigation were in fact a more important cause of the exhaustion of the soils. The fact that we cultivate or grow plants has to be questioned, because a new bond with nature has to be found. It's not only a question of finishing with monoculture, which is the principle cause today of soil degradation and parasitism, but also of finding a way of producing our food which will not cause any more trouble or disequilibrium.

Animal husbandry has had yet another essential effect on humanity: humans have had a tendency to see themselves as a herd which they have to make prosper and grow. There is a continuity which runs from the biblical "Increase and multiply", to Adam Smith's conception that the fundamental element in the production process is man (i.e. what Marx called variable capital), to the aphorism of Stalin that "man is the most precious form of capital". This continuity, which is at the same time a false consciousness, rebounds on those who adopt it. The manipulation of things becomes the manipulation of people, the domination of nature becomes the manipulation of people (Adorno and Horkheimer). In other words, the scientific presuppositions established in the neolithic with the spread of animal husbandry went hand in hand with the development towards domestication (which we have examined at length elsewhere). And it shows up again in this vital contradiction: men always want to distinguish themselves from beasts, yet they constantly treat each other like animals. Thus artificial insemination, at first used with animals, now tends to be used for humans (resulting in a flourishing of sperm banks!)

Most of the theoretical debates as well as the various practical attempts to found another mode of life are, as we have said, merely echoes from the past; whereas capital itself is not stagnating, but on the contrary is progressing more and more clearly towards the realization

of the despotic community. It does this by reactualizing certain phenomena which were operative over fifty years ago. Thus it is with the case of inflation. The rise in the price of gold to \$800 an ounce (\$38 in 1968), and the oil price rise are the most spectacular manifestations of this. There are indeed certain parallels with the famous inflation under the Weimar republic in the 1920's ⁽³¹⁾ (and not surprisingly, many of the theoretical debates are an echo of this past time). Inflation in the 20's played a fundamental role as an arm of disorganization within the working class; it provoked the destruction of the old bourgeois society and enabled the passage to the real domination of capital over the society, which became politically operative thanks to nazism. In our time, inflation (understood by reference to various phenomena which we cannot analyze here) at the world level, tends to uproot structures, whether it be the old pre-capitalist social structures or those of bourgeois society, or in the case of the west, the archaic economic representations which are preventing the realization of the despotic community. At a deeper level, inflation leads to an uprooting of the human species, that is, it undermines all its representations of security established originally through the various institutions of society; thus the human species becomes obliged, in the final analysis, to entrust itself to the movement of capital.

Through inflation one can see in outline an alternative solution to the energy problem. In view of the high prices of oil and gold it has become possible to finance research into the use of solar energy, geothermic energy etc, or to invent another source of energy altogether. Paradoxically, this enormous inflation could hasten the introduction of free goods, in which case a generalized representation of exchange will have disappeared. Yet it will, at the same time, herald a yet more powerful despotism, because it will have been arrived at by two opposing routes: the free movement of inflation leading to a disappearance of prices, and the struggle against inflation implying strict controls over wages and prices. Clearly the first way could not produce this result straight away because of the power of ancient representations and

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The slide into protectionism is another manifestation of what was seen to happen in the 20's. Beyond its significance as a purely economic phenomenon, protectionism denotes a will to preserve identity which is under threat from the international movement of capital. This is how it operated with the Nazis.

the actual inability of capital to control everything; in this case therefore, the 'free goods' would be assigned to each one according to his/her function in the total process of capital.

At all events, today's inflation with its extraordinarily high lending and interest rates, necessitates a world-wide restructuring, particularly in view of the fact that the Islamic countries occupying that zone which is intermediate between East and West are being convulsed by a questioning of the capitalist dynamic - regardless of whether this is being proposed by the US or the USSR (32). We very much doubt that these countries will be able to find a way other than capitalism, but it's not impossible that they may arrive at some variation of it; but nor again can we exclude the possibility that capitalism will become firmly entrenched there, thus generating a vast zone of instability.

It was not for nothing then that the USSR intervened in Afganistan, quite apart from the fact that this was also a measure of internal significance, since Russia must have an eye to its own Islamic republics.

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In order to resist the two forces of westernization (i.e. the penetration of capital), the people have gone back to Islam, which is the foundation and the cement of their community; it is also about to be given a new content:

Thus Islam has more the appearance of a social conception, a factor of national order and of evolution and the progress of peoples, than of a religion in the narrow sense of the word. This characteristic of Islam, which permeates all aspects of the society, has created a situation in which there is no place for any other philosophy - social, liberal or modernist - which could fit with either the conceptions of a party of the national bourgeoisie, or with the philosophy espoused by the local descendants of Marxism.

Both as a politic and as a civilization, Islam has actually surpassed its own teaching. This has come about because the concept of the Islamic Ummah (which is beyond civilizations, cultures, nations, societies, ethnic groups and the peoples united under Islam) has now extended beyond all the civilizations and cultures which existed in these regions before the beginnings of Islam. (Anouar Abde-Malek: " One of the Universal Civilizations " Le Figaro 18/1/80) ... (over)

Further, events could hasten the appearance of a form of opposition to capital in Black Africa (where the capitalist process may have been slowed down but certainly not abolished) and this would be happening in an area even less able to accommodate capitalism than the Islamic countries. The vast populations of uprooted people in Africa may also be able to launch themselves on a movement to found an identity of their own, as happened during the cultural revolution in China in the 60's when the Russian model was virulently rejected in favour of a Chinese specificity. This phenomenon, which appeared frequently during the course of Chinese history with accompanying periods of xenophobia, could very well manifest itself again and engender yet another impulse towards destabilization.

What we are seeing today is a speeding up movement, such as is highlighted by the process of inflation, together with the first beginnings of an alternative energy path. (All decisive moments in history have been accompanied by upheavals in the field of energy). Any stabilization is impossible under this inflationary wave: people who oppose capital are finding it difficult to fall back on some position from which they would then be able to make a compromise between their own needs and the development of capital; it is something they are finding they can no longer ignore.

As regards the perception of westernization, whether this derives from the American or the Soviet side :

Westernization, of the East as well as the West, brings a relentless struggle between two systems, both of them tending to supplant each other - whereas the Iranian, the Afghan, the Muslim-Arab and perhaps all third world peoples, see but two degrees of the same process of westernization which awaits them, two moments of the same tendency of the West to impose itself universally, to deny the other.

In this region, socialism does not constitute an egalitarian response to capitalist exploitation, but on the contrary, a capitalist response to the absence of capitalism, a response to that which places itself outside of the Western economic, cultural and political universe.

(Salah Bechir: "Two degrees of the same battle" Le Monde, 15/1/80

This perception is part of the general maturing of understanding, both of what the Russian revolution of 1917 was about, and also of the stage we are at today. It is a vital part of a new and rising representation which has nothing in common with our own, but which is a step forward.

Thus we have a double phenomenon: the global ensemble is being restructured and peoples not yet really controlled by capital are being domesticated. As regards the latter, the various local guerilla wars in Indochina, the Soviet intervention in Africa and Afganistan, and the internal struggles in Iran all entail the suppression of the various communities which have raised opposition, often to the extent of totally eliminating them. The global, international community of capital is in fundamental agreement on this point; it means that the Soviet-American confrontations are nothing but political farces and an obvious covering over of their immediate divergent interests. These cannot lead to a third world war as certain revolutionaries think, and as various journalists would have us believe.

The separation vis-à-vis the old representations is getting wider, along with the refusal of capital's becoming. However, in the West, this refusal is often expressed by a simple renouncement which borders on passivity, indicating a profound loss of energy among human beings. It is true that with 1980 must begin, as is being proclaimed in various quarters, the era of catastrophes. The fear of this is having a stifling effect on people, leading them to propose and then live out the attitude of "who cares?" that comes of resignation. (33)

There are people who want to break or who are breaking with the dynamic of capital but whose thought is blocked because it is immersed in representations which are really no more than combinatives

(33)

The technique of diversion (*détournement*) realizes complementarity, thus permitting a tightening up of the combinative. It is thought that a connection is being broken, and hence that something is uprooted:

What is this knowledge, founded on the tacit assumption that one is never so badly served than by oneself.....

(Vaneigem: Le livre des plaisirs (Ed. Encre p.13)

From a diversion of a popular adage one can produce the symmetry of what was being propagated before. Nothing is subverted.

As a logical consequence of this, we can have a right wing commentator like Gregory Pons writing in Le Figaro of 22/9/79:

The constant brake which market society applies,

of unitary ideological elements issuing from out of the left or the right, often pale reflections of thought of the past.

We must flee from time, we must create a life which is feminine and human - it is these imperative objectives which must guide us in this world heavy with catastrophes.

CAMATTE Jacques

February 1980.

in confiscating life and perverting man's pleasures and desires, reveals a clear convergence between Vaneigem's Le livre des plaisirs and the new currents of thought such as that of Alain de Benoist, who bases a large part of his critique of contemporary ideas on the refusal of "market imperialism": between the two poles of intellectual sphere, sparks begin to crackle which could form a flux of energy.

("The New Right: Nietzsche buries Marcuse ")

Afterword on the subject of the anthropomorphosis and the escape of capital.

The anthropomorphosis of capital is remarkably evident in the work of the new economists, who base their thinking on the fact that man is rational and will seek his own greatest advantage (this proposition forms the basis of microeconomics, and according to liberals it can be verified in reality); and if man is rational, then he must be rational in all the dimensions of his individual and social life. Economic science, the science of rational choices, imposes itself into all spheres of activity and ultimately into all disciplines; it is social science par excellence. And here one encounters again Adam Smith's original and unifying conception as expounded by him in The Wealth of Nations (1776). To make the point easier to understand, here is a picturesque example taken from the highly esteemed Chicago review Journal of Political Economy (February 1978): The article is called " A theory of extra-marital affairs ". In it, an analysis is made of the time spent with one's spouse and with one's lover, and the conclusion is reached that: " At the optimum, the marginal utility of time spent in the marriage is equal to the marginal utility of time spent in the affair ($df/dt_1 = df/dt_2$)". The decision to take a lover is analogous to the decision to commit a crime, although the degree of religious faith appears in the calculations !

On the subject of criminality as economic activity, Jenny writes: " Criminal activities are attractive to those individuals who see in them a particular of risk, i.e. that of being apprehended and punished (either by fine, imprisonment or execution). For the economist, the point of departure for the analysis is that the breaking of the law results from a choice on the part of the individual seeking to maximize his hope for utility or profit; thus the traditional economic calculations are applicable to participation in illegal activities". (l'Economie retrouvée " in Problèmes Economiques No.1598 p.28)

Marx had already taken up this question (though he addresses it from an objective viewpoint - the role of the criminal in the production process -, and not from the subjective viewpoint of the criminal himself - the economic motivation for the crime), in order to make a scathing denunciation of the inhumanity of capitalist society. In Capital and Gemeinwesen (Ed. Spartacus p.131 f), we referred to the section in "Theories of Surplus Value" where this inhumanity is examined. We used this text to explain how it is that the middle classes cannot be said to be producers, and we went on to say that given the growth of what we called the new middle classes, there has been a generalization of what Marx put forward in his exposition (and which is now cynically flaunted by the new economists). Finally, we have explained in detail how this was an expression of the real domination of capital over the society, and how it has developed over time.

Rationality, which, as we saw earlier is defined as the search for the greatest advantage, is the rationality of capital, which integrates the rationality of both value and exchange. The new economists prefer to speak of "economicity". But what are they actually saying?

The birth of a child corresponds to an investment; it draws on immediate expenditures which are then able to procure future resources.

(Problèmes Economiques No.159 p.28)

According to Jean Jacques Rosa, in a couple there is an economic exchange: the man brings in an income which is set against the domestic work carried out by the woman.

(Ibid p.29)

Politics is a market where promises are exchanged for votes.

(Ibid p.29)

The theory of "human capital" was developed at Chicago. This method allows one to study the effectiveness of education, the functioning of the labour market, the distribution of wages etc. Naturally, Professor Becker has perfected the theory of the consumer and has attempted to show that the distinction between "true" and "false" needs is an artificial one; advertising in particular sees itself rehabilitated because it reduces costs.

(Ibid No.1615 p.12)

The new economists represent a type of man that Mandeville had perceived; in Marx's case, it evoked a nightmare; for the marginalists, (who are the theoreticians of the autonomization of capital) it is seen as fixed and well established: it is a type of man that has totally interiorized the dynamic of capital. This man cannot live alone; he needs a community, which is the market. The economists of the Renaissance had perceived this, and it was spoken of by Mark in the Grundrisse.

Pierre Rosanvallon makes the same observation:

This is simply an actualization of the economic utopia of the 17th century, which saw in the market the archetype of all social relations and the form of organization which would be sufficient for all of society. Curiously, this economic utopia was in decline by the 19th century with the development of capitalism. It seemed difficult to speak of universal harmony and the market as guaranteeing social equality and international peace, when in concrete terms, capitalism rested on exploitation and war.

(Ibid No.1615 p.17)

Further on he insists that this provides "for a capitalism which is in crisis a fighting ideology, permitting it to break out of the defensive situation, culturally speaking, in which it finds itself today".

But it's not a question of a crisis or a defensive situation; what is needed is a clear and explicit affirmation (however inadequately expressed) of the real domination of capital.

Economicity and the market community of which the individual is a member, are no more than images or superficial expressions of the reality of the community of capital. The same applies to

the New Right's concept of the "market society", which is even more superficial.

Market society appears essentially as a society in which the values of the market have overthrown and corrupted the non-economic and non-commercial structures. These typically market criteria of behaviour and judgement also infiltrate certain non-commercial fields of the economy such as productive investment.

(Pierre Vial: Pour une renaissance culturelle
Ed. Copernic p.56)

If one compares the two conceptions - that of the new economists and that of the New Right - one becomes aware of the compromise that the latter is seeking to realize. But it is not possible to deflect the development of capital, which will impose itself regardless: only an abandonment of the whole dynamic can provoke its end.

Thus the immediate given of the New Right comes into better perspective. It was born in opposition to May 68 which had demanded, in a confused way, a new mode of life. Not having grasped the profundity of this, the New Right sets itself up as a sort of "counter-reform"; this is well explained in Vial's book Pour une renaissance culturelle. This would indicate that one can slow down a movement without being able to stop it. As an illustration of this, it could be said that the May movement posed the questions for the planet as a whole, whereas the New Right envisages only Europe, for it can no longer base itself uniquely on France.

Our perception of the reality of today's world, which has been clouded by ancient representations, must become sharper. We must understand that we have arrived at an impasse, and that capital has escaped from human control. This does not exclude the onset of a deflationary situation, in the near or not too distant future (related particularly to the difficulty of reinjecting petrodollars into the productive mechanism); it is a circumstance which could engender troubles comparable to those of 1929.

We are living in a time when globally we could see any number of different developments .

One can agree with the New Right in the recognition of the importance of culture in the evolution of man; but this analysis does not exhaust the question, neither at the purely material level, nor on the spiritual plane. Thus time is indeed an invention of men to dominate women and to dominate the process of production and reproduction. It is possible to have - being man - another mode of behaviour towards the other as woman, and towards the other as the world; this involves the possibility of no longer needing time (bearing in mind that the autonomization of the other is an historical fact.) Out of this arises a multitude of modes of behaviour which will be taken up at some time in the future.