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1. Play is desire realized, it is the negation of domination. Play is unmediated activity that does not attempt to produce a specific emotion, indeed, any emotion at all. The result of play may be alternatively orgasm, terror, delight, even death. Play is ambivalent; any one of these conclusions or any multitude of others are possible (there may even be no conclusive result). Yet, each eventuality in its own context is correct because none are specifically elicited except in the content of the play-activity that produces it.

2. In pre-agricultural societies play was common denominator of all activity, in much the same way that the gift was the characteristic mode of exchange. For the primitive, play was the activity that not only defined tribal and familial relationships, it also provided food, clothing and shelter. In the pre-agriculture era of abundance, the outcome of any given hunt was irrelevant. Necessity (and surplus) meant nothing in such societies, consequently food-generating activites were not driven by the alternative of starvation, rather they existed simply as diversion,

play. Further, play was essential to the stability of pre-agricultural societies because of its tendency to exclude coercion, language, even time. The death of play was the triumph of civilization, of domination.

3. Capital has sought to abolish play and replace it with leisure-time; a void that must be filled as opposed to fullfillment that negates the void. Leisure-time is capital's valorization of play, another mediation in the infinite maelstorm of mediations. In capital's dual role of pimp and prostitute it not only creates leisure-time, it produces commodities and spectacles with which to fill it. Such valorization demands passive, stupefied participation (the negation of play) and seeks to elicit a single response, enjoyment. Which is, of course, the pay-off for time/money invested in a specific commodity/spectacle. As a result, play (like language) reverts to its magic form and becomes something dangerous, unmanageable, ultimately lethal; and capital in order to disvourage play portrays it as such.

4. Capital, even in its current manifestation of real domination, has been unable to eradicate play. The "discovery" of play occured repeatedly in this century, occasionally (though on exclusively) in the realm of the avant-garde. Alfred Jarry in the Ubu plays and his system of pataphysics (the science of imaginary solutions) definitively incinerated the continuum of retrograde representational form. In doing so he reintroduced play not as an anaesthetic, but as a wrecking ball. Dada continued the assault, but with the exception of the Berlin variant (and its most impressive non-member, Schwitters) the notion of play became ritualized, dead. The final recuperation of the avant-garde, achieved via the reaction of surrealism and the concomitant resurrection of the representational

form, eliminated play as an element of rejection until the re-emergence of utopian currents after WWII. A number of post-war cultural movements, most notably Lettrisme, the Situationist International, Mail Art and Neoism all incorporated play into their experimentation. Each movement, however, failed to realize the revolutionary implications of play and in doing so allowed it once again to become formalized, rigid and as such recuperated as mediated activity.

5. Play has become an integral part of revolutionary activity. Even Lenin, the idiot father of the authoritarian left, could (correctly) describe the Paris Commune 1871 as a "festival of the oppressed," though he (like Marx) arrived at an erroneous conclusion concerning the failure of the uprising. There are a plethora of examples of the inclusion of play in the activity of the Communards, particularly of play in its destructive aspect. This is not surprising, given the Commune's lack of resources, military contingencies and the fact that the entire rebellion lasted some 72 days. Still, the toppling of the column at the Place Vendome (a universally hated symbol of the Napoleonic victories), as well as the attempt by a few of the more extreme Communards to put Notre Dame to the torch can hardly be interpreted as anything but play. Such manifestations also crept into the behavior of individual Communards. Recall the story of the young rebel who confronted a suspect bourgeois on the street. The nervous capitalist protested that he had never had anything to do with politics, to which the Communard replied, "That's precisely why I'm going to kill you." Though the story ends here in historical accounts, it is not hard to imagine the young rebel flashing a fiendish grin at the shaken bourgeois and then walking off to take his place on the barricades…bon chance, Citoyen!

6. Modern revolutionary eruption have also exhibited certain elements of play. The May-July events of 1968 in France immediately bring to mind the joyful, indignant posters produced by the students of the insurgent Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Further, through the blood, tear-gas and concussion grenades of the nights of barricade fighting (May 6-11th), there emerged numerous examples of play. Most observers concur on this point, Priaulx and Ungar describe the defiant students as "one big frantic family;" even the partisan Trotskyite account by Seale and McConville includes an anecdote about the leftbank café, Le Luxembourg. During one night of rioting the café had been invaded and transformed into a makeshift battlefield, after the insurgents and police moved off the manager was directed by a prefect to close his establishment, to which he replied, "tonight Le Luxembourg will not close its doors; it has none left!" More recently, during the suppression of Solidarity in Poland, a hand full of militants produced a mask with billed officer cap and dark glasses that affected a likeness in the wearer to General Jaruzelski. The twist was that the mask was designed to fit dogs. Evidently, during the last crackdown on Solidarity the police would spend their days breaking up demonstrations and nights chasing stray canines who were, for all intents and purposes, impersonating the General Secretary of the Communist Party.

7. The very existence of "theses" that attempt to define and illuminate historical examples of play stands in some sad way as a testament to the alienation from the activity they seek to describe. The terminal malaise that has characterized revolutionary theory and culture for at least the past two decades must be interpreted as the triumph of formalized technique, the crushing baggage of intellectualism. Even the ultra-left communist and anarchist movements seem condemned to stumble the same squalid path traversed by social democracy almost a century ago. The "revolutionary" belief that the "liberation" of women, ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians or the Third World will take a significantly differant form than the "liberation" of the working class via better wages, open employment policies and "benefits" exists as an iron-clad example of the pervasive disintegrative consciousness, on the other hand, seems to currently reside in the refusal of all dominative forms, the permanent contestation of every assumption; in a word, play. If the new society gestates in the womb of the old, then its first duty is quite obviously matricide. **Workers of the world, come out to play!**