

Articles from “Machete” #2

Various Authors

2008

Contents

Piss in the Ballot Boxes	3
Respect Your Dog of a Father	4
On the Good Use of Anti-Religious Racism	5
The Absolute	9
Letter to Aspiring Suicides	11
First Attempt to Come Out from the Logic of Resentment	12
1. A Joy	12
2. Discrepancy	12
3. Old Moons	12
4. The Real End of the “Post-War Period”	12
5. A Young Life Awakening	13
6. Return of the Repressed	13
7. The innocence of becoming	13
8. The Impossible	13
9. Authorized by Oneself	13
10. “Rather Life!”	13
11. Here and now	14
12. Non Serviam	14
13. Many Free Human Beings	14
14. <i>Incitamentum</i>	14
15. The Authentic Place	14
16. A Single Cry: “Be beautiful!”	15
Choose Life	16
Were We Supposed to Excuse Ourselves?	18

Piss in the Ballot Boxes

“At the crossroads in Rome, there were pots and bowls to allow passersby to piss.”

In those days, Chigalev told his followers: “One man in a thousand enjoys an absolute freedom and exercises boundless authority over the other nine hundred and ninety-nine. The others have to give up all individuality, become a herd and through total submission, by means of a series of regenerations, reach a state of primitive innocence, something like Eden, even though they will still all have to work.”

In our day, the vote is in real danger of becoming mandatory. Along public buildings, we are ordered to vote for Dick because Dick is Harry and Harry is Dick. Yesterday evening, Sunday, in a certain place in the capital, near an old church, in a place where school didn't last long enough to spread the idiocy of candidates, panels in the shape of Chinese screens were made available. In the darkness, this formed a toothed fortress. On this fine spring night, lovers occupied the polling stations and a vagrant snored by his litre of red wine.

Respect Your Dog of a Father

In the city of Sravasti, the Buddha entered the house of a certain Sudatta, an extremely poor man. The man wasn't there. There was a white dog on the divan who ate off a plate. On seeing the Buddha, the dog lept to the ground and viciously barked at him.

The Buddha told him, "Silence, you skinflint!"

The dog went to lie down in a corner, all trembling, as if he had been beaten.

When Sudatta got back and saw his dog in such a sad state, he asked who had reduced him to this condition. The residents of the house answered:

"The Buddha, treating him like a skinflint."

Enraged, Sudatta went to demand an explanation from the Buddha.

"First of all, why did you treat him like a skinflint?"

"I merely spoke the truth. That animal is your deceased father. Born as a dog in his new life as punishment for his avarice, he continues to keep an eye on his goods. Force him to show you the treasure he has hidden from everyone, even you."

Sudatta returned home and scolded the dog.

"Since you were my father in your previous existence, everything that belonged to you now belongs to me. Let's go, show me the treasure that you kept hidden from me."

The dog slid under the divan and began to scratch the ground. Sudatta began digging at the spot and brought out a great treasure.

Putting his trust now in the Buddha, he asked him to teach him about actions and sanctions. And, among other things, the Buddha told him: "What happens to everyone is inevitably what he chooses. Will causes action, but action causes sanction, against which willing is no use.

"Poverty is the punishment of the rich.

"The dog's life is the punishment of the rich who think of nothing but being rich.

"Respect your dog of a father. Otherwise, in a future life, you will be dog food."

[Armand Robin]

On the Good Use of Anti-Religious Racism

On the Internet in the spring of 2000, the first disinformation campaign aimed at giving credence to the idea of religious racism in Europe was developed. It made a strong contribution to the *about-face* of some left and ultra-left militants. These militants didn't hesitate in renouncing a project, a thought and a language rooted in three centuries of revolutionary battle. The refusal of their history in the name of anti-colonialism is only explained by the abandonment of the anti-clerical universalism of this history. They no longer defend a cause with conviction as masters of their choice, but rather defend the cause that others have chosen for them. Why should they raise doubts, in an unusual manner, about the reasons for their solidarity? Has this world truly changed? Aren't the forms of domination the same everywhere? Hasn't capitalism been a pure, unchanging negativity for some time now? Mincing in their certitudes, they judge their moral rectitude to be incontestable. Like in the Victorian era, they have their poor, and they have found the truly guilty once and for all. They even judge those whose critiques don't spare the social, cultural and religious practices of the victims that these militants claim to defend unfailingly to be suspect or reactionary. How could they admit that their *systematic* support facilitates the very specific interests of certain *victims* who aspire to become new masters? In the final analysis, what must be understood is the way that the language of these militants has been falsified to the point where they confuse the anti-clerical and the religious; *why*, for example, have they been born along from support of the Palestinian cause to defense of Muslim associations, going from the denunciation of racist aggression and police violence in urban ghettos to the denunciation of anti-muslim racism?

In the name of an "*ethnic redefinition of culture*", relativism has become a conceptual jumble that allows any question of the integralist tendency of religion or any *specific* critique of the fate reserved for women in the urban ghettos, to be described as racist. In an upside-down world, the critique of religion is no longer a prelude to every critique; it is downright hostile to it. The effects of such a theoretical shift can be measured by the wretched reflections of a leftist, post-feminist writer: "When the economic level is right and social mixture is assured, no threat — real or imagined — comes to bear; religions are respected and assume the most inoffensive form, coming back by themselves to the doghouse." It isn't easy to specify which is the most dismaying aspect of such a statement: the bad faith, the idiocy or the flagrant absence of historical memory. In this so very natural way of hastily repeating the worst counter-truths, one recognizes the effectiveness of those who have *all the time in the world to think them up and spread them*. Seeing the excellence of the result, one might fear that, from now on, religious integralism¹ has all the means for transforming society, *on the basis of its advantage*. Analyzing religion in terms of cultural relativism and a post-modern ideology of diversity denying that the natural tendency of every religion is integralism renders religion and its *foreseeable* consequences unassailable.

¹ I have chosen to translate "*integralismo*" as "integralism" rather than "fundamentalism" in order to make it clear that the problem is not one of a literal interpretation of scriptures, but of trying to bring the whole of society under religious control, to integrate all of society into a religious body. — translator

The struggle *for* freedom has always been carried out *against* religion, against its self-evident desire to control society and impose its ways and customs with violence. In Europe, it was through merciless struggle that religion was put aside in the sphere of private life; that the freedom of blasphemy was able to prefigure the refusal of any censorship; that the opposition to the religious fetish preceded the attack against commodity fetishism. The democratic simulacrum that is the supposed improvement of the standard of living doesn't get rid of the religious question at all, and the example of the United States provides evidence of this every day. So-called "secular society" has no reason to renegotiate the separation that it has *imposed* between church and state, nor to dialogue with religions *in the name* of religion. Defending the excluded by identifying ourselves in a *centrally* totalitarian religion is subjecting society to an attack with fatal consequences: its *dissolution*.

In the name of the right to difference, of parity between all cultures, all critique of religion gets transformed into a racist crime. It has gone so far as to equate the refusal of the Islamic veil to xenophobia or colonial nostalgia., not to the critique of a religion that oppresses women. One can measure the expected effects by the surprising declarations of some post-feminists for whom "the ease with which European women make love from the first encounter can attack women of other cultures for whom the gift of their body is a spiritual and irreversible experience." This sudden cultural tolerance in fact implies a cultural vassalage and a condemnation for the fault of sexual freedom that would thus no longer be a universal conquest. It teaches us about a certain basic ambiguity regarding the religious question. The depreciation of atheist positions prepares the terrain for a *high-pressure* return to moral values, through an opportune media overkill.

When blasphemy takes on the pope, it is thought of as an "obsolete practice", whereas when it attacks the prophet of Islam, it becomes colonial aggression. Here we see how, through a sort of "deconstruction of discourse", north African and black African immigrants, including youths and new-born babies, get reduced to their mere religious origins. It is necessary to convince them that their history and their culture are summed up in the passive role as victim of the colonial European past. In this way, they are bullied into becoming one of the faithful and submitting to a Muslim nation that doesn't exist anywhere, but that imposes its freedom-killing project everywhere. Their only "positive" existence passes through religion. They are kept away from any anti-Islamic culture² within the Islamic world, since recognizing the existence of such a thing would imply that Europe didn't have a monopoly on *Enlightenment*.

For the defenders of political Islam, the attack carried out against Houellebecq's novel, *Platform* (he is reproached because one of his characters describes Islam as *the stupidest religion in the world*) has been the beginning of a campaign that is *always* in its preliminary stages, aimed mainly at transforming the freedom of blasphemy into a racial crime and preparing public opinion for a new surprise attack. As the signal of an early victory, the media would speak from that time on of anti-Moslem racism. The Houellebecq trial was followed by the affair of the Danish cartoons, coming in to remind the most skeptical of what is really at stake in this semantic war. The other monotheistic religions have clearly understood where their interests lie and have aligned themselves with the Moslems.

² For example, Qadarism in the 7th and 8th century, whose refusal of divine fatalism led to the execution of Ma'bad al-Jahuni in 699 and Ghaylan al-Dimashqi in 743 by the Caliphs; or rationalist Mutazilism in the 9th century with the famous "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad where Nestorian physicist Hunayn ibn-Ishaq (called Joannitius) translated Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Categories* and *Physics*. Qadarism and Mutazilism were judged as heretical

In less cowardly times, Luis Buñuel filmed a Christ who survived a bloody orgy of 120 days and the execution of a pope; Benjamin Peret spit on priests; Spanish acraties³ distributed a flyer in the midst of the church and throughout Franco's dictatorship that proclaimed: *Christ is in the shit!*

Like Salman Rushdie, Taslim Nasreen rightly observes that the condemnation of religious ideology restores to the men and women that this ideology alienates their status, no longer as believers, but as human beings. Defending this point of view today means risking a *fatwa*, as in other times it meant the Inquisition's executioners. In a world where people speak more and more commonly about the Christian West, where politicians lay claim to secularity to preserve, if not strengthen, the privileges of Christianity, the humanitarian and revolutionary message can still be heard in the clear identification of its two enemies: capitalism and religion (two forms of the same fetish?) Can one still assert the struggle of those who still consider atheistic thought as one of the forms of the battle for liberation; who hope that the cult of man replaces that of heaven; who curse the cassock because it teaches submission, maintains superstition and favors exploitation? Yes, the histories of Islam and of Christianity are made of cruel and misogynist practices; and yes, the fight against religion is a fight for freedom and not the expression of a colonialist desire to impose the model of the white man everywhere.

The last few generations have underestimated the return of the religious. In their opinion, from the beginning of the 20th century, the religious question was obsolete and its critique, having become out-dated, served no purpose. Not only was the Islamic influence underestimated, but people often felt a sense of guilt that they could not cast off or understand where it came from. This blindness resembles that of the "moral" left. To avoid making the repressive play of the right and being accused of xenophobia, i.e., racism, one adopts a position of principle favorable to immigrants and urban youth by refusing to analyze the religious subordination of many of them. While violence against immigrant is inexcusable, this does not at all justify the humiliating religious vassalage of women that is far too often present in their lives.

The "moral" left can be recognized by its lack of historical culture. What it confronts always seems new. It is convinced that the presence of believers in leftist and ultra-leftist organizations is a recent phenomenon, specifically linked to the development of Islam in France. A superficial study of the organizational practices of proletarian movement of the second half of the 19th century prove otherwise.

In Spain, the militants of the founding cells of the International Workers' Association had to convince and organize workers and peasants whose daily life was blindly submitted to the dogmas of the violently reactionary Catholic church. These militants, noting that religious obscurantism was universal, radically cut to the heart of the problem by prohibiting any religious manifestations in the proletarian organizations and transforming this ban into a daily critique of religious alienation in social life and state organizations.

Their developmental strategy was ruled by a cultural and educational practice that, alone, might liberate the people from superstition.

by orthodox Islam and condemned. In 922, the well-known mystic al-Hallaj was whipped, mutilated, hanged on the gallows, beheaded and his corpse burned.

³ "Acratic" is a term that anarchists in Spain and other places have often used for themselves. It indicates that they are for acrary — *no* government — rather than democracy — government by the people. If only more present day anarchists would get this. — translator

It's difficult to imagine militants of the AIT participating in meetings where militants of Islamic organizations could defend Koranic dogma. It is difficult to imagine them presenting petitions and preparing actions together with religious associations that exclude women from social and political life. They would never put up with the lie, which has gone on too long, that there is such a thing as anti-islamic racism. In their day they would have responded in the way that we can respond today: there is such a thing as anti-Arab racism that needs to be fought, but there is no anti-Muslim racism. Islam is an ideology, and must be fought as an ideology, in the same way as capitalism, Nazism, Hinduism, Catholicism. What we have conquered through hard struggle cannot be compromised by making peace with any cult.

The Absolute

Of course, man invented God so that someone greater than him could defend his misery. God is the dialectical antithesis of human imperfections. Ideal entities serve as compensations for misery. Thus, the qualities given to gods describe through contradiction the defects and sordidness of those who create the gods.

The absolute is the sum of compensations for human misery. To create such a perfect notion, man had to renounce his own miserable content. The absolute is potent because it is perfectly empty. This characteristic is what allows it to represent the ultimate truth. Nothing can be demonstrated through the absolute: the absolute is precisely the highest truth which cannot be demonstrated. Only the details, the pauses, can be demonstrated. But the impossibility of testing the absolute is what makes it unassailable. It is impossible to budge a lie that has no object and so cannot be related to anything. The lie can only be effectively seen if an object that is easily grasped at a glance doesn't seem to fit, in other words, in cases that don't matter. The lie that is limited by an object that may be tested, but never the artifice of a construction, because this excludes the object. And so works of art cannot be demonstrated, because, like the absolute, they are separate from the object.

The absolute is the greatest expenditure of energy that man makes. He then tries to recover this lost energy through prayer, where we can see that man doesn't sustain his energy, since he is forced to separate it from himself to maintain balance. In addition, man first of all fears himself and his creations, imaginary entities that he has separated from himself. This is why he does all that he can to forget his dreams since he fears his wandering mind. I believe that man is less afraid when facing the universe than when facing himself, because he doesn't know the world, just one tiny corner.

The absolute has been man's greatest endeavor, thanks to which he has gone beyond the mythological stage. But at the same time, it has been his greatest defeat, because he invented something greater than himself. He created his own servitude. This absolute is identical to the void and to that which has no object. That is how man dies through the absolute, which is at the same time his means of freedom. Man murders himself, killed by his own fetishes, which exist more or less in the absolute.

It seems that philosophy is the degeneration of the mythological state. In fact, in the philosophical epoch the absolute is weakened so much that it needs to be demonstrated. When something is so weak that, after having accepted it without thinking, we still have to prove it, it is defined as a fact of science or knowledge.

In the beginning, absolute gods were the ancestors of rulers who deified themselves in order to increase servitude and fear. The neutral absolute, like money, is a tool of power: both can be changed into anything since they have no precise qualities. The absolute belongs to leaders, priests, lunatics, animals and plants. On the one hand, the powerful and kings, on the other hand, beings without any power, entirely separated from objects and free through their own poverty.

The power of the absolute is shown in its identity with the unconditional. It has been assimilated in essence and in its own being, and it is through the absolute that one becomes immortal. So much fear of death! Words are supposed to begin to be seen through death so that people can become immortal spirits like them. Words, created by man, become his nightmares, and notions are the isolation chambers of logic. It is through notions that duration gets tangled.

The absolute belongs to tectonic, ecstatic sorts. The “snake-man” of today believes only in his banal and flat “I”. Thus, he has found the most vulgar form of the absolute and a freedom that, after forgetting death, has ceased to be limited by “taboos” and is merely petty and vulgar.

[Carl Einstein]

Letter to Aspiring Suicides

If we address ourselves to you, men and women who have reached the point of essential revulsion and who nothing and no one could any longer rescue from a tragic destiny, it is not to remind you of a non-existent duty in the face of a life that isn't worth living. We don't lack respect for your decision, because you and you alone know the precise extent of the pain and anguish that poison your existence. Those who do not feel that pain and anguish, those who have never even come close to this because they are kissed by fortune or soft in the head due to faith, have no reason to censure your fatal decision.

So we don't want to preach you any sermon or keep you from acting on your decision. We only intend to ask a favor of you, a small favor for you who have decided to abandon this world, but one that would give great joy to those of us who have decided, for the moment, to stay here. Since you are resolved to embark on the Great Voyage, while you are at it, could you maybe bring a few of the known calamities, that made your days on this earth unbearable with, you? Wanting to take the last step in solitude is understandable, it is human. But to do it in company is sublime; it is godlike. Besides, what do you have to fear? For once, no one will get to harass you, throwing the consequences of your gesture in your face. To give an example, you could swallow your poison after making the congressman, who has given you the poison of his lies to drink for years, taste it. Do you want to add a bit of weight to your brain? Very good, but not before supplying some of it to the bank manager who ruined you. If instead you want to squeeze a noose around your neck, it would be good if you first got some practice on the neck of the industrialist who fired you. Before going into the beyond, you could give the bishop who excommunicated your consciousness a surprise by arranging an immediate meeting for him with the Supreme Boss. And why not drag the cop who is standing beside you waiting for the train or subway with you onto the rails? He will finally lose his ugly habit of imprisoning other people's freedom. Not to offend you, but we have never understood why courthouses and stock exchanges don't excite the fantasies of you desperate ones in the way schools seem to in the United States: Target practice on judges and financial speculators would be a stirring goodbye gift to your companions in misfortune.

Imagine what might happen if only a fifth of the inflexible suicides of all countries were to associate their last breath with that of a despicable person in power? Thanks to you – you suicides who are usually reviled – we would be witness to a great ethical awakening. On high, anyone who managed to avoid you would think twice before casting other human beings into desperation. At the bottom, we cowards who aren't capable of making a revolution might find the strength to bring the work that you have started so generously to term.

We ask you, we beg you, if we may, great desperate ones of five continents, have heart one last time. Don't die alone and ignored, a sardonic conclusion to a life already lacking in joy. Select an institutional celebrity and knock him off allong with yourself.

First Attempt to Come Out from the Logic of Resentment

1. A Joy

I recall happy *faces*, for the most part young people, if not even just teenagers — it takes fifty years to make a man, and most of us were not yet half that age — A *joy* — very special because it was a *historical* joy, with an incomparable tone. I have searched high and low for its equal, and I don't see it.

2. Discrepancy

A discrepancy without equal, in most of the militant groups, between the event and its representation: typical, outdated, compromised, overused discourses — when not downright antithetical, clumsy, stupid, awkward, false (the “pro-Chinese” shamelessly praised Stalin, the gulags, the Moscow trials, Enver Hoxha!). The most timid unduly praised the “popular front” and the “Resistance”; in short: whatever took place in another time, through the pure inability to consider what had never taken place. The Unknown overwhelmed them from all sides, inebriated them, would have left them breathless if it hadn't been for the old emaciated refrains: their youth, freed from the servile duty to prohibitions that had just the day before limited the possibilities in play to the usual conflicts with heavy overcoats.

3. Old Moons

The beginning of the end for the old moons that had launched pale glows into earlier skies. Retrospective statement of the obvious about a relationship (underground, but direct) between the French May and the internal collapse of the pyramid of state lies and terror that had assumed the appearance of a fatal future in the East for three or four decades. It took the living dead a quarter of a century to realize that they were living dead, but on May 13 for the first time, “the stalinist scoundrels were in the caboose”.

4. The Real End of the “Post-War Period”

The real end of the “post-war period” — After Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, the horrendous colonial wars in Indochina, Algeria, Vietnam, a deep need to look *elsewhere* was noticed. A certain juvenile pleasure in disorder was a way of breaking down the obstacles of the already given. Proselytes of every sort attributed the most diverse aims to the movement. Everyone brought their demands to that flow. The movement welcomed them all. But the unique tone that was its own did not

depend on demands. A fact that may be hard to understand: aware of what it no longer wanted, that May did not have a precise idea of its future and perhaps had no need for one. It went to meet the unknown with a lack of concern never seen in analogous events.

5. A Young Life Awakening

The vital poem of life that awakens. Any poetry other than that of living life would have caused a shrug of the shoulders. Nietzsche: "I am not always sad. I don't always have ideas."

6. Return of the Repressed

The return of the repressed, of all the "madnesses of freedom" — from Saint-Just to Rimbaud, passing through Mallarmé and Sade, the surrealists and Dada. Far from the obsessions of all the police of thought and feeling. Holderlin, Nietzsche, Breton; and not Jdanov, Stalin, Kanapa. History substantially changed direction. At a single stroke, the prefrontal overturning of symbolic activity occurred in history. Goodbye forever, reptilian brain! Goodbye forever, brow ridges!

7. The innocence of becoming

The innocence of becoming became dangerous again. An adventurous search for a bit of authentic unknown in history. What enthusiasm in this leap. Moods and nuances are all that will be remembered of it.

8. The Impossible

Disarmingly guileless hopes were affirmed with the most tender seriousness. The linear History of yesterday, having escaped the bed into which it was channeled by ideological terror, exploded into unpredictable, distant stars, beyond the barriers. The "im-possible" seemed to be the minimum that was desirable.

9. Authorized by Oneself

The two symmetrical infamies that had terrorized the century were delegitimated *together* by the children of the protagonists of the preceding generation, which symmetrically lacked the means for reestablishing moral authorities discredited by so many repetitions and now without a future — The first attempt to come out from the logic of resentment in "revolutionary" movements. A new life wanted to live, which was authorized only by itself.

10. "Rather Life!"

Those whose lives then vibrated to the emotional pitch of freedom and existence will never cease to be affected by it. How could they line up for ordinary life any more — taking care in their

retreat not to pay tribute to the grayness of the day. They certainly didn't fight to get wretched "official recognition" or to go up the ladder — "Rather life!"

11. Here and now

The French May was the first revolutionary movement whose stake was not the conquest of state power. In this perhaps it prefigured the future of truly liberatory human movements: when individuals, many of them, will devote themselves *to themselves*. Concerned with the effective possibilities that they will have at their disposal for entering directly into the new life that they will have the strength to conceive *here and now*. And here they are suddenly becoming responsible.

12. Non Serviam

"Not a society of slaves without masters, but a society of masters without slaves." No revolution despised voluntary servitude as much as the revolution of that May, and, more than this, it distanced itself from the old fatality of separating one's life from oneself. The taste for style again found an effective use. The S.I. gave it back the brilliance it always had with cruelty and genius.

13. Many Free Human Beings

One result that statistical experts and ideologues didn't notice: that May would restore many free human beings *to themselves*, human beings who would never again return to the ranks. This is no small thing. The *tone* of life would change. What more could one want from an effective revolution that didn't limit itself to the expectations of slaves? — We had this.

14. *Incitamentum*

A *mutation* in spirits. A potent *incitamentum*¹ to experimentation with concrete freedom. This bad example given to all would go on feeding new audacities. "Do away with the heritage of May '68", monsieur Sarkozy, is one of the most rhetorical of programs.

15. The Authentic Place

Making the economy ironic. Desecrating the political. The return of complete life as complete, not as mishap, but as possibility, since everything is starting over, with each new young life. The content of real existence — things that have place only once — considered in earnest.

¹ Latin for "incitement" — translator

16. A Single Cry: “Be beautiful!”

The end of the separation between art and life, formulated not as a “demand” that leads to a coalition of desires always frustrated at not achieving their aims, but as a sovereign practice of *life as art*, that suddenly gives everyone what they no longer had a way of “reclaiming” abstractly for an abstract future. The enjoyment of the present, of play, of efforts dared: superior resources of festival and joy. With this, stammerings, so many hints of beautiful moments. — A single cry: “Be beautiful!”

“Slaves, we don’t curse life!”

Choose Life

Choose life instead of those prisms with no depth even if their colors are purer
Instead of this hour always hidden instead of these terrible vehicles of cold flame
Instead of these overripe stones
Choose this hear with its safety catch
Instead of that murmuring pool
And that white fabric singing in the air and the earth at the same time
Instead of that marriage blessing wedding my forehead to total vanity

Choose life

Choose life with its conspiratorial sheets
Its scars from escapes
Choose life choose that rose window on my tomb
The life of being here nothing but being here
Where one voice says Are you there where another voice answers Are you there
I'm hardly here at all alas
And even when we might be making fun of what we kill

Choose life

Choose life choose life venerable Childhood
The ribbon coming out of a fakir
Resembles the playground slide of the world
Though the sun is only a shipwreck
Insofar as it resembles a woman's body
You dream contemplating the whole length of its trajectory
Or only while closing your eyes on the adorable storm called your hand

Choose life

Choose life with its waiting rooms
When you know you'll never be shown in
Choose life instead of those health spas
Where you're served by drudges
Choose life unfavorable and long
When the books close again here on less gentle shelves
And when over there the weather would be better than better it would be free yes

Choose life

Choose life as the pit of scorn
With that head beautiful enough
Like the antidote to that perfection it summons and fears
Like the makeup on God's face
Life like a virgin passport
A little town like Pont-à-Mousson
And since everything's already been said

Choose life instead

[Andre Breton]

Were We Supposed to Excuse Ourselves?

How could someone think that he had to make belated “excuses” — or even merely express “regrets” — for the passionate groping path, for the fever that had been?

For desiring only the fiery beauties and comradeships never dared — with a frightening lack of concern (never found again) on all sides in the face of all powers?

It is definitely necessary to *pay* for guilelessness of this caliber. We have seen reason.

But once they were dreamed, could beauties, comradeships, expenditures without calculation ever cease to be — even if we ignored the entire world in which they demanded to have a value?

Besides, how could it have gone differently with regard to knowledge and action, considering what we were in that historical instant and in that moment of our life?

A force drew us, blind as life, without fear or remorse: a possibility, a happiness, an innocence, a festival.

That loss would be expiated through leaps of this kind: and how thoughtless, empty, out of place it would be!

What we wanted so intensely, others will “want” with the same boundless passion, without having “chosen” it first. The world will be young and beautiful once again, each time authentic life abandons its old skin at the winter’s end.

This is not a prophecy. Just a statement of fact.

How could anyone go to meet such an unknown, if not with a blindfold over his eyes?

If “everyone is a Child of his times”, what sense is there at this point in “repenting” in the face of absolutely *destined* passions? And how do we abandon ourselves to repentance, when, contrarily, in these transits we stored up a stock of cloudless joy for so much time? — of fierceness, honor, pride, guilelessness, beauty, courage?

Should we excuse ourselves for having been happy, innocent, mad and beautiful?

Another problem is really knowing how much of our “knowledge”, our words and even our actions we had “chosen”: above all, it was an uncontainable, very youthful, *vital* thrust!

Presuming that then we had not recognized the fantasies that carried us away as fictions — powerful, outdated illuminations. Again: *fated* — , what sense would there be in not recognizing these *illuminations* as such? So that we can be pitifully cross with the boundless drunkenness generated by those battles?

And how will we be able to speak without sadness of any new acquisition of “knowledge”, if we had to barter for it with so much lost joy? — Meager profit, great loss.

Not that we wouldn’t like to think of ourselves as old children.

“A form of life was experienced.” Everyone became someone else.

But at least don’t let our new life pass at the expense of slander against what we were in other times.

An injustice of this sort about the past would leave questionable contributions of expectations for future young lives.

We would teach them resignation — the worst defeat of all.

Anarchist library
Anti-Copyright



Various Authors
Articles from "Machete" #2
2008

Personal communication with the translator

en.anarchistlibraries.net