

"How To?"

How to?
Don't know what I want,
but I know how to get it.
— Sex Pistols, "Anarchy in the UK"

I
TWENTY YEARS. Twenty years of counter-revolution. Of preventive
counter-revolution.
In Italy.
And elsewhere.
Twenty years of a sleep behind security gates, haunted with security guards. A sleep
of the bodies, imposed by curfew.
Twenty years. The past does not pass. Because war continues. Ramifies. Extends.
In a global networking of local devices. In an original calibration of the subjectivities.
In a new superficial peace.
An armed peace
well made to cover the course of an imperceptible civil war.
Twenty years ago, there was
punk, the 77 movement, Autonomy,
the metropolitan Indians and diffuse guerrilla.
All at once appeared,
as if born of some underground region of civilization,
a whole counter-world of subjectivities
that no longer wanted to consume, that no longer
wanted to produce,
that no longer even wanted to be subjectivities.
The revolution was molecular, the counter-revolution
too.
A whole complex machine to neutralize all that carries
intensity
was offensively,
then durably
disposed.
A machine to defuse all that could explode.
All the dangerous individuals,
all the indocile bodies,
all the autonomous human hordes.
Then came twenty years of foolishness, vulgarity,
isolation and desolation.
How to?

Standing up again. Lifting the head up. By choice or
by necessity. Whatever, really, now. Looking at each
other in the eyes and say "let's start again". May
everybody know it, as soon as possible.
We are starting again.
Done with passive resistance, inner exile, conflict by
shirking, survival. We are starting again. In twenty
years, we have had enough time to see. We have

understood. Democracy for all, "anti-terrorist"
struggle, state massacres, capitalist restructuring
and its Great Work of social purge,
by selection,
by casualization,
by normalization,
by "modernization".

We have seen, we have understood. The means and the
ends. The future that is reserved for us. The one we
are denied. The state of exception. The laws that put
the police, the administration, the judicial
authorities above the laws. The judiciarization, the
psychiatrization, the medicalization of everything
that sets out of the frame. Of everything that flees.
We have seen, we have understood. The means and the ends.

When power establishes in real time its own
legitimacy,
when its violence becomes preventive
and that its right is a "right to interfere",
then it is useless to be right. To be right against it.
One has to be stronger, or slier. That is also why
we are starting again.

To start again is never to start something again. Nor
to pick up things where they had been left off. What
you start again is always something else. Is always
unheard of. Because it is not the past that drives us
to it, but precisely what in it has not happened.
And because it is also ourselves, then, who are
starting again.

To start again means: to get out of suspension. To restore the contact between our
becomings.

Moving,
again,
from where we are,
now.

For instance there are tricks
that will not be put on us anymore.
The trick of "society". To be transformed. To be
destroyed. To be bettered.
The trick of the social pact. That some would break
while the others can pretend to "restore" it.
These tricks will not be put on us anymore.
One must be a militant element of the planetary
middle-class,
a citizen really,
not to see that it no longer exists,
society.

That it has imploded. That it is only a case for the
terror of those who claim to re/present it.
This society that withdrew.

All that is social has become foreign to us.
We consider ourselves as absolutely free of any
obligation, of any prerogative, of any affiliation
that is social.

"Society"

is the name that the Irreparable has often received
among those who also wanted to turn it into
the Unassumable.

He who refuses this delusion will have to take
a step to the side

to make

a slight displacement

from the common logic

of Empire and its protest

the logic of mobilization,

from their common temporality,

the one of emergency.

To start again means: to inhabit this displacement. To assume capitalist schizophrenia
in the sense of a growing capacity of desubjectivization.

To desert while keeping the weapons.

To flee, imperceptibly.

To start again means: to rally social secession,
opacity, to join

demobilization,

draining today from this or that imperial

production-consumption network the means to live and fight

in order to, at the right time,

scuttle it.

What we are talking about is a new war,
a new partisan war. Without front nor uniform, without
army nor decisive battle.

A guerilla whose fuocos unfold away from the
commercial flows although plugged on them.

We're talking about a war full of latency. That's got time.

A war of position.

Which is waged where we are.

In the name of no one.

In the name of our own existence,

which has no name.

Making this slight displacement.

No longer fearing our time.

"Not to fear one's time is a matter of space".

In a squat. In an orgy. In a riot. In an occupied

train or village. In search, among strangers, of a free party that is nowhere to be found. I make the experience of this slight displacement. The experience Of my own desubjectivization. I become a whatever singularity. My presence starts overflowing the whole apparatus of qualities that are usually associated to me.

In the eyes of someone who would like to consider me for what I am, I savor the disappointment, his or her disappointment to see me becoming so common, so perfectly accessible. In the gestures of someone else, it is an unexpected complicity.

Everything that isolates me as a subject, as a body provided with a public configuration of attributes, I feel it melting. The bodies fray at their limit. At their limit, become indistinct.

Block by block, the whatever ruins the equivalence.

And I reach a new nudity, an improper nudity, as if dressed with love.

Does one ever escape alone from the prison of the Self?

In a squat. In an orgy. In a riot. In an occupied train or village. We get together again.

We get together again as whatever singularities. That is to say not on the basis of a common affiliation, but of a common presence.

This is our need for communism. The need for nocturnal spaces, where we can get together beyond our predicates.

Beyond the tyranny of recognition Which imposes the recognition as a final distance between the bodies. As an ineluctable separation.

Everything I am being granted — by my boyfriend, my family, my environment, my company, the state, the opinion — is just what I am being held through.

By constantly reminding me of what I am, of my qualities, they want to extract me from each situation. They want to extort from me, in every circumstance, a fidelity to myself which is but a fidelity to my predicates.

I am expected to behave as a man, as an employee, as an unemployed, as a mother, as a militant, as a philosopher.

They would like to contain within the bounds of an identity the unpredictable course of my becomings.

They want to convert me to the religion of a coherence that was chosen for me.

The more I am recognized, the more my gestures are hindered, internally hindered. Here I am, caught in the super-tight meshwork of the new power. In the impalpable net of the new police: THE IMPERIAL POLICE OF QUALITIES.

There is a whole network of devices in which I slip to "get integrated", and that incorporates these qualities in me.

A whole petty system of mutual filing, identification and surveillance.

A whole diffuse prescription of absence.

A whole machinery of comporte/mental control, which aims at panoptism, at transparential privatization, at atomization.

And in which I struggle.

I need to become anonymous. In order to be present.

The more anonymous I am, the more present I am.

I need zones of indistinction to reach the Common.

To no longer recognize myself in my name. To no longer hear in my name anything but the voice that calls it. To give substance to the how of the beings, not what they are but how they are what they are. Their life-form.

I need zones of opacity where the attributes,
even criminals, even brilliant,
no longer separate the bodies.

Becoming whatever. Becoming a whatever singularity, is not given.

Always possible, but never given.

There is politics of the whatever singularity.

Which consists in snatching from Empire
the conditions and the means,
even interstitial,

to experience yourself as such.

This is political, because it implies a capacity of confrontation,
and that a new human horde corresponds to it.

Politics of the whatever singularity: opening these spaces where no act is assignable to any given body. Where the bodies recover their ability to the gesture which the so clever distribution of metropolitan devices — computers, cars, schools, cameras, cell-phones, gyms, hospitals, televisions, cinemas, etc. — had stolen from them.

By recognizing them.

By immobilizing them.

By making them turn in a void.

By making the head exist separately from the body.

Politics of the whatever singularity.

Becoming whatever is more revolutionary than any whatever-being.

Freeing spaces frees us a hundred times more than any "freed space".

More than putting any power into action, I enjoy the circulation of my potentialities.

The politics of the whatever singularity lies in the offensive. In the circumstances, the moments and the places where we seize

the circumstances, the moments and the places
of such an anonymity,

of a momentary halt in a state of simplicity,

the opportunity to extract from all our forms the pure adequacy to the presence,

the opportunity, at last, to be

here.

II

HOW TO DO? Not what to do? How to? The question of the means.

Not of the goals, the objectives,
of what is to be done, strategically, in the absolute.

The question of what we can do, tactically, in situation,
and of the acquisition of this ability.

How to? How to desert? How does it work? How to
combine my wounds and communism? How to stay at war without losing tenderness?

The question is technical. Not a problem. Problems are profitable.

They feed experts.

A question.

Technical. Which reduplicates itself in the question of the techniques of transmission
of those techniques.

How to? The result always contradicts the goal.

Because setting a goal down still is a means.

another means.

What is to be done? Babeuf, Tchernychevski, Lenin.

Classical virility needs an analgesic,

a mirage, something. A means to ignore yourself a bit more. As a presence.

As a life-form. As a situated being, endowed with inclinations.

Determined inclinations.

What to do? Voluntarism as the ultimate nihilism. As the nihilism peculiar
to classical virility.

What to do? The answer is simple: submit once again to the logic of mobilization, to
the temporality of emergency. On the pretext of rebellion. Set down ends, words.

Tend towards their accomplishment. Towards the accomplishment of words. In the
meantime, postpone existence. Put yourself into brackets. Live in the exception of
yourself. Well away from time. That passes. That does not pass. That stops.

Until

Until the next. Goal.

What to do? In other words: needless to live.

Everything you have not lived, History will give it back to you.

What to do? It is the ignorance of oneself cast onto the world.

As ignorance of the world.

How to? The question of how. Not of what a being, a gesture, a thing is but of how it
is what it is. The question of how its predicates relate to it.

And it to them.

Let be. Let be the gap between the subject and its predicates. The abyss of the
presence.

A man is not "a man". "White horse" is not "horse".

The question of how. The attention to the how. The attention to the way "a woman"
is, and is not a woman — it takes many devices to turn a female being
into "a woman",

or a black-skinned man into "a Black".

The attention to the ethical difference. To the ethical element. To the irreducibilities
that run through it.

What goes on between the bodies in an occupation is more interesting than the
occupation itself.

How to? means that the military confrontation with Empire has to be subordinated to the intensification of the relationships inside our Party. It means that politics are just a certain degree of intensity within the ethical element. That revolutionary war must not be confused with its representation: the raw fact of the fight.

The question of how? To pay attention to the happening of things, of beings. To their event. To the tenacious and silent saliency of their own temporality under the planetary crushing of all temporalities by the one of emergency.
The What to do? as the programmatic denial of this. As the inaugural formula of a busy lack of love.

The What to do? is coming back. It has been coming back for a few years. Since the mid nineties more than since Seattle. A revival of the critique pretends to challenge Empire.

With the slogans, the tricks of the sixties. Except that this time, it is faked. Innocence, indignation, good conscience and the need for society are faked. The whole range of old social-democratic affects are put back into circulation. Of Christian affects.

And again, here come the demonstrations. The desire-killing demonstrations. Where nothing happens.

And which no longer demonstrate anything but a collective absence.
Now and forever.

For those who feel nostalgic about Woodstock, ganja, May 68 and militancy, there are the counter-summits.

The setting has been set again, minus the possible.

Here is what the What to do? orders today: to travel to the other side of the world in order to contest

global commodity,

And then come back, after a big bath of unanimity and mediatized separation, to submit yourself to local commodity.

Back home, you've got your picture in the newspaper

All alone together!... Once upon a time
Good old
youth!

Too bad for the few living bodies lost there, looking in vain for some room for their desires.

They will return a bit more bored. A bit more tired.

Weakened.

From counter-summit to counter-summit, they will eventually understand. Or not.

You do not contest Empire on its management. You do not critique Empire.

You oppose its forces.

From where you are.

To give your opinion about such or such alternative, to go where you are called, makes no sense. There is no global alternative project to the global project of Empire. Because there's no global project of Empire.

There is an imperial management. Any management is bad. Those who demand another society should better start to realize that there is none left. And maybe they would then stop being wannabe-managers. Citizens.
Indignant citizens.

The global order cannot be taken as enemy. Directly. Because the global order does not take place. On the contrary. It is rather the order of the non-places. Its perfection is not to be global, but to be globally local. The global order is the conjuration of any event because it is the utmost, authoritarian occupation of the local. The global order can only be opposed locally. Through the extension of opaque zones over Empire's maps. Through their growing contiguity. Underground.

The coming politics. Politics of local insurrection against global management. Of presence regained over the absence to oneself. Over the citizen, the imperial estrangedness.

Regained through theft, fraud, crime, friendship, enmity, conspiracy.

Through the elaboration of ways of living that are also ways of fighting.

Politics of the event.

Empire is everywhere nothing is happening. It administers absence by waving the palpable threat of police intervention in any place.

Who regards Empire as an opponent to confront will find preventive annihilation.

To be perceived, now, means to be defeated.

Learning how to become imperceptible. To merge. To regain the taste

for anonymity

for promiscuity.

To renounce distinction,

To elude the clampdown:

setting the most favorable conditions for confrontation.

Becoming sly. Becoming merciless. And for that purpose becoming whatever.

How to? is the question of the lost children. Those who were not told. Those with the clumsy gestures. To whom nothing was given. Whose creaturality, whose wandering always betrays itself.

The coming revolt is the revolt of the lost children.

The thread of historical transmission has been broken.

Even the revolutionary tradition

leaves us as orphans. Especially the workers?

movement. The workers' movement that's turned into a tool for higher integration to the Process. To the new, cybernetic Process of social valorization.

In 1978, it was in the name of the workers' movement that the Italian Communist Party, the so-called "party with the clean hands" launched its witch-hunt against Autonomy.

In the name of its classist conception of the proletariat, of its mystique of society, of respect for work, utility and decency.

In the name of "democracy" and legality.

The workers' movement which will have outlived through "operaismo".
The only existing critique of capitalism from the point of view of Total Mobilization.
Scathing and paradoxical doctrine,
that will have saved Marxist objectivism by only talking about subjectivity.
That will have brought the denial of the how to an unprecedented sophistication.
That achieved the ultimate reduction of the gesture to its result.
The urticaria of the future anterior.
Of what each thing will have been.

Critique has become vain. Critique has become vain because it amounts to an absence. As for the ruling order, everyone knows where it stands. We no longer need critical theory. We no longer need teachers. Henceforth, critique runs for domination. Even the critique of domination.
It reproduces absence. It speaks to us from where we are not. It propels us elsewhere. It consumes us. It is craven. And stays cautiously sheltered when it sends us to the slaughter.
Secretly in love with its object, it continually lies to us.
Hence the short romances between proletarians and engagé intellectuals.
Those rational marriages in which one does not have neither the same idea of pleasure nor of freedom.
Rather than new critiques, it is new cartographies that we need.
Not cartographies of Empire, but of the lines of flight out of it.
How to? We need maps. Not maps of what is off the map. But navigating maps.
Maritime maps. Orientation tools. That do not try to explain or represent what lies inside of the different archipelagos of desertion, but indicate how to join them.
Portulans.

III

THIS IS Tuesday, September the 17th 1996, just before dawn. The ROS (Special Operational Group) coordinates in the whole peninsula the arrest of some 70 Italian anarchists.

The goal is to put an end to fifteen years of fruitless investigations on the insurrectionalist anarchists.

The technique is well-known: fabricate a "turncoat", make him denounce the existence of a wide subversive hierarchical organization.

Then accuse on the basis of this chimerical creation all those to be neutralized of being part of it.

Once again, "drain the sea to catch the fish".

Even though it is only a tiny pond.

And a few roaches.

An "informative service note" leaked out from the ROS on this case.

It explains its strategy.

Based on the principles of General Dalla Chiesa, the ROS is the classic example of imperial

counter-insurrection service.

It works on the population.

Where an intensity has occurred, where something happened, it is the French doctor of the situation.

The one that sets,

under cover of prophylaxis,
the quarantine lines aiming at isolating the contagion.
What it fears, it tells it. In this document, it writes it. What it fears is "the swamp of political anonymity".
Empire is afraid.
Empire is afraid that we might become whatever.
A delimited circle, an armed organization. It does not fear them. But an expansionary constellation of squats, self-manages farms, collective homes, fine a se stesso meetings, radios, skills and ideas. The whole linked by an intense circulation of the bodies, and of the affects between the bodies. That is quite another matter.

The conspiracy of the bodies. Not of the critical minds, but of the critical corporeities.
This is what Empire fears. This is what is slowly rising,
with the increase of the flows
of social defection.

There is an opacity inherent to the contact of the bodies. That is not compatible with the imperial reign of a light that shines on things only to disintegrate them.

Offensive Opacity Zones are not to be created.

They are already there, in all the relations in which happens a true communication between the bodies.

All we have to do is to assume that we are part of this opacity. And provide ourselves with the means to extend it,
to defend it.

Wherever we manage to thwart the imperial devices, to ruin the whole daily work of the Biopower and the Spectacle to extricate from the population a fraction of citizens. To isolate new untorelli. In this recovered indistinction an autonomous ethical fabric will form spontaneously a plan of secessionist consistency.

Bodies aggregate. Breathe again. Conspire. That such zones be doomed to military crushing really does not matter. What matters is, each time, to preserve a sure escape route.

And then re-aggregate
Elsewhere.

Later.

What was underlying the problem of What to do? was the myth of the general strike.

What answers the question How to? is the practice of the HUMAN STRIKE.

The general strike meant that exploitation was limited in time and space, that alienation was partial, due to a recognizable enemy, and thus beatable.

Human strike replies to an age in which the limits between work and life are fading away.

In which consuming and surviving, producing "subversive texts" and dealing with the most toxic effects of industrial civilization, doing sports, making love, being a parent or under Prozac.

Everything is work.

Because Empire manages and digests, absorbs and reintegrates all that lives.

Even "what I am", the subjectivization that I do not deny hic et nunc,

everything is productive.
Empire has put everything down to work.
Ideally, my professional profile will coincide with my own face.
Even if it does not smile.
The grimaces of the rebel sell well, after all.

Empire is when the means of production have become means of control at the very same time when opposite turned out to be true.
Empire means that in all things the political moment dominates the economic one.
And against this, general strike is helpless.
What must be opposed to Empire is human strike.
That never attacks relations of production without attacking at the same time the affective knots that sustain them.
That undermines its shameful libidinal economy,
That restore the ethical element — the how — repressed in every contact between neutralized bodies.
Human strike is the strike that, where one would expect such or such predictable reaction,
such or such contrite or indignant tone,
PREFERS NOT TO.
That slips away from the device. That saturates it or blows it up.
Pulls itself together, preferring something else.
Something else that does not belong to the authorized possibilities of the device.
At the counter of such or such social services office,
at the check out of such or such supermarket, in a polite conversation, during a cop raid,
according to the balance of power,
human strike gives consistency to the space between the bodies,
pulverizes the double bind in which they are caught,
force them into presence.
There is a whole Luddism to be invented, a Luddism of the human machinery that feeds Capital.

In Italy, radical feminism was an embryonic form of human strike.
"No more mothers, women and girls, let's destroy the families!" was an invitation to the gesture of breaking the expected chains of events, to release the compressed potentialities.
It was a blow to the fucked up love affairs, to ordinary prostitution.
It was a call at overcoming the couple as elementary unit in the management of alienation.
A call for complicity, then.
Such a practice required circulation, contagion.
Women strike implicitly called for men and children's strikes, summoned them to run from factories, schools,

offices and prisons,
to reinvent for each situation another way to be,
another how.

Italy in the seventies was a gigantic zone of human strike.

"Self-reductions", hold-ups, squatted neighborhoods, armed demonstrations, pirate radios, countless cases of "Stockholm syndrome", even the famous letters from Moro detained, in the end, were practices of human strike.

The Stalinists, back then, used to talk of "diffuse irrationality", you can imagine.

There are writers too
That are doing nothing else but
human strike.

Kafka, Walser, Miller
or Michaux,
for instance.

To collectively acquire this ability to shake
familiarities.

This art of dealing, within oneself,
with the most disturbing of all guests.

In the present war,
where the emergency reformism of Capital has to dress
up as a revolutionary to be heard,
where the most democratic fights, those of the
counter-summits,
practices direct action,
a role is prepared for us.

The role of martyrs of the democratic order,
that preventively hits every body that could hit.

I should let myself be immobilized in front of a computer while nuclear plants
explode, while one plays with my hormones or poisons me.

I should start singing the victim's rhetoric. As it is
well-known,

everyone is a victim, even the oppressors.

And savor that a discreet circulation of masochism
re-enchants the situation.

Human strike, today, means
refusing to play the role of the victim.

Attacking it.

Taking back violence.

Imposing impunity.

Making the paralyzed citizens understand
that if they do not join the war they are at it anyway.

That when we are told it is this or dying, it is
always

in reality

this and dying.

Thus,
human strike
after human strike, to reach
the insurrection,
where there is nothing but,
where we all are
whatever
singularities.

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