Love must be re-invented¹ State of the Art

Long after Rimbaud	Long	after	Rimba	aud
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"Love must be re-invented"

Even longer after Sade...

"You will not know anything if you did not know everything, if you are shy enough to stop when Nature stops, it shall escape you for ever"

Long after Raoul Vaneigem...

"Those who speak of revolution and class struggle without explicitely refering to daily life, without understanding what is subversive in love and positive in refusing constraints, those ones have a corpse in their mouths"

Raoul Vaneigem - Traité de savoir vivre à l'usage des jeunes générations NRF Gallimard.

Long after Guy Debord...

"Everywhere is the same pseudo-liberation to be found, encountering the same jib of pleasure: based on the same childish but dissimulated ignorance - the perpetual tragicomic interaction of male gullibility and female simulation, for instance - puts down roots and establishes as an institution".

Guy Debord, Gianfranco Sanguinetti - La véritable scission dans l'Internationale Paris 1972 P61]

"What we have to inherit from modern art in the current conditions, is a deeper level of communication and not a pretention to some sort of sub-aesthetic enjoyment"

Guy Debord, La véritable scission dans l'Internationale Paris 1972 Editions Champ Libre P124]

... how far is the State of the Art?

¹ Notes that were meant to be used as the chart of a collective web site in the years 1998-1999

Art

Art comes from a indo-european root *are- or *re- meaning "to adapt", "to ajust".

In Latin, the *ar- form of this indo-european root gave artus "limb, member", articulus "articulation, joint", and also ars, artis, "way, manner" which led to iners, inertis "without art", "awkward, clumsy".

In Greek, the same *ar- root led to arthron "articulation, joint", and a close by form led to arithmos "number", and yet another close by form led to harmonia "right relationship". The *re- form of this root may also be found in ritus "a religious word expressing the idea of correctness and precision when performing ceremonies".

During the Middle Ages, *art* simply means "profession, craft, technique" and an *artist* is initially "a student of the faculty of arts" or (a bit later on) simply a "craftsman".

As may be seen the etymological domain of Art is considerably wider that the current meaning of the word, which as a matter of fact only originates in the 18th century.

As the current period happens to be fond of reductionism, a risk to be taken from a methodological point of view is to stick to an opposite choice.

This means that the very best will be attempted here to give back to Art the entire flexibility and fluidity of its ancient definitions.

Art as Whole

Satisfaction of all human needs since the most ancient times has been achieved by means of art (craft, industry). This applies to almost all needs, original, natural needs, immediate or non immediate needs. Until quite recently, this situation had never been leading to any sort of surprise or distrust. It used to appear as clear among most peoples that adjustments made by men to what was provided by Nature were meant to multiply the pleasures of life. For instance the Dogon people in Africa used to consider that only an adorned woman could be beautiful and showed some contempt about naked women.

Similarly Sade describes with some disdain the pale pleasures of King Ferdinand who, quite surprised to hear a women (Juliette) discussing politics with some evidence of competence finally says: "Well, I do not understand much about all those things [...] I fuck, I eat macaronis and I have no cook, I build houses without any architect, I collect medals without any antiquary, I play billiards as a footman does, I have my young soldiers drill as a sergeant does, but I do not discuss about politics, nor religion, nor morals, nor government because I know nothing of all that".

And Sade's disdain certainly does not result of any sort of contempt he would have for Nature. On the contrary, Sade who does not really seem to care about providing justification about his actions to God or to men, always attempts to prove that Nature cannot take these actions as an offense. So King Ferdinand does not look ridiculous to him because he is close to Nature, but because he is satisfied with boorish and flat pleasures when, being a king, he could enjoy pleasures that would be more prickling and stronger, because they would be *civilised*.

Art in Pieces

So was it that until the beginning of the 19th century, almost nobody doubted that the major function of art was to provide men with richer and stronger pleasures than Nature could offer. And honestly, considering the incredible and growing piling-up of things, technology, traditions and knowledge that our senses have daily to face, is it not in some way obvious that men do not really have taste for simple pleasures? Actually, it is far worse, as men may be seen everywhere to vie and work hard and take risks and kill each other without a shadow of regret, just because they happened to foresee some hopes to enjoy pleasures that Nature never thought about. If the destinity of man was to be happy with what Nature offers, what would this dreadful accumulation of things stand for, out there?

But with Romantism, art, which was previously considered as a quest for pleasure and knowledge (and the french word for knowledge "savoir" as the same origine as "savour") began to appear as a sort of ambiguous activity, considered as sublime by some and as more or less unhealthy by most of the others. And at about the same moment a sort of uneasiness began to spread through civilization, dulling with a shadow of doubt or distrust, everything which was previously considered as good and enjoyable per definition, since resulting from art. Actually, what was called art after the 18th century was not exactly the same thing as during the Middle Ages. The scope of art, as mentioned in the etymological notes above, had shrinked considerably down to the specialised semantics of Fine Arts. Simultaneously, a huge part of what previously used to be called art, was now covered under terms like industry², science and later on technique³.

And Romantism can surely not be held as responsible for this transformation as the basic spirit of Romantism was to be a reaction. As a matter of fact the explosion of art into the various fragments we now have to deal with starts about the 12th/13th century, becomes visible during the Renaissance, and is frozen as we know it in the 18th century.

Simply, under the dominion of the bourgeoisie, men learned to become furiously fond of "materialism". By which it is usually meant that, by some sort of abuse of auto-suggestion, they slowly came to be persuaded that money is grand, although money has not much to do with matter, being a rather abstract sort of thing.

But business is based on the evidence, which *must* be accepted by both sides, that there is no trick and that no one cheats. And this is the very core of the bourgeois order since it defines a domain outside of which only theft and violence are ruling. But both would mean a radically different universe. Trust, credit⁴, are the core belief that allows existence of the bourgeois order. As long as this core belief is not established, money may play a role, but not a central one. As soon as trust stumbles, the entire bourgeois order stumbles. This is what is plainly and very simply written in the

The etymology of the word "industry" confirms the above mentioned co-evolution with "art". Industry comes from the latin struere, structus "to pile up things, to build" just as other words like "structure", "construct", "instruct", "destroy", "instrument", "obstruction". The semantic evolution of the word industry itself in French, is the following: 12th century "activity" -> 14th century: "skill" -> 15th century: "trade/profession" ->18th century: modern semantics

³ Technique: (sav.) *18th century*: adjective then noun from the greek *tekhnikos*, fem. *tekhnikê* derived from *tekhnê* "art, trade profession"

⁴ Credit still carries some traces of its original meaning of "belief", both in English and in French (See French "créance, croyance" = belief)

very middle of the US dollar. Jump back to 1929 if you happen to doubt. But trust is never better established than on *evidence*. And if you consider is well, it might well be that *matter*, as it is commonly meant, is not much more after all than *this core evidence of the bargain*. And a symptom that this could be the case, is that in the more accurate descriptions of Physics - that is, in the most seriously founded opinions - matter has none of this evidence, and looks much more like a strange interaction of void with itself than like this solid and opaque thing we rely on so naively.

But on the whole, the net result of the merchantile and industrial development was that, since per definition, nothing is more obvious than matter, every pleasure which did not appear obvious *that way*, happened to be touched by the fuzzy hands of doubt and distrust. And a consequence was that the play grounds of pleasure shrinked quite considerably.

Sensitivity defeated

And also, it must be considered that a lot has been done in the same period to blunt sensitivity. This was a very necessary thing, since a too developed sensitivity produces capricious and even unpleasant customers. Customers who are not really able to understand the subtle difference between a defect and the specific sort of modification you have to introduce into products when you want to make them for lower cost. And well, quantity is the basis of cash, and as there is no better business than the one which is based on numbers, it appeared soon that it was quite interesting to sell also to those who had not less sensitivity than others, but did not had it sounding good enough to feel authorized to open their mouths about quality.

So was it that everyone found quite acceptable to restrict a bit the field of sensitivity. It was pretexted that the ability to suffer could be reduced thereby and everyone shut up loudly enough as regards how deeply the ability for pleasure was tainted in the same process. As lots of authors have noticed, pains are considerably easier to produce than pleasures. As regards providing pains, some absence of skills is enough. But creating pleasures requires time, luck, delicacy, skills. In other terms, art.

This situation essentially results from the fact that Life is based on capturing and setting to work improbabilities, which whenever they access replicability may ultimately become quite frequent. Frequent to such a point that they finally organise into reliable mechanisms - which unfortunately is not always enough to erase all traces of their originally high improbability.

And well, sensitivity does not really help increasing the sales either. The more the pleasures it opens to us are new and deep, the more they tend to stay in the neighbourhood of the inexpressible, from which they only part when a technical systematisation allows making them frequent. This gives sensitivity a somewhat elitist outline, which is not compatible with mass production.

A fascinating movement of masochism has hence driven men towards more and more boorish and more and more immediate pleasures. That is to say at the same time, towards actions from which, more and more, pleasure tended to retire. This happened in the name of realism... But realism has never been anything else yet than the straw man of reductionism. As makes logically obvious the helpful irony of Nietzsche: "the realist painter says he paints reality. But of reality, he only ever paints the part he *knows* how to paint".

However, if there is one thing that does not fit very well with reductionism, then pleasure is that thing: "Every man wants to be a despot when he gets a hard on" said Sade.

A remarkable consequence of this sort of logic, is that, drifting from themselves according to the glittering movement of objects - which (quite logically if not naturally) came to include the objects of desire and the sexual objects - men, becoming mad with materialism, also became raving crazy with frustration. And *this*, is a sort of thing made of shame made of silence and clumsiness, since now deeply burried in the inexpressible, although it is spread onto everything. Because, quite slyly, the progressive weakening of their sensitivity prevented them to identify and to *name* the pleasures from which they were slowly and imperceptibly moving away. Some of the excesses of the previous centuries had led some people to display a sensitivity which was just as exagerated as it could be simulated. But in this century, the simulation of pleasure has gone far below the limits of awareness.

As a result, the conditions in which violence is now exerted have been made quite new. The manners of species have never been characterized by their sweetness. It may quite exactly be said that men have always demonstrated indubitable skills as regards finding rationale to murder. As if it ever had been required to provide rationale for it... Well, the list of all pretexts which have ever been given to justify the various sorts of slaughter would be rather long to establish, since it would contain things as futile as insults, or sentences randomly extracted out of the pages of books the quality of the authors of which ranges from the very best to the very worse. And it is all the honor of Sade to have investigated, with some reasonable sort of intellectual honesty, a domain that everyone did his very best not to see, with this specific sort of assurance in hypocrisy which a so specific from *panic*.

But well, until not long ago, anyone felt confusely required to explain what had led him to kill his brother - or more delightfully maybe - his sister, so that in general, every one succeeded in this sort of mandatory exercise.

What is probably quite new in this sort of matters, it the significant proportion of people who are no longer able to provide any rationale to their crime. "I don't know what happened to me". Based on this feature, it is easy to verify that they have a basically sane mind and that they are people of good will. And as there are no effects without a cause, even as regards madness, it must be admitted that their unvolontary silence *says* something. And that the root of this agressivity that suddenly fell upon them, and of which they happened to be the firsts surprised, is diffuse and dull enough not to be identified by an isolated man.

And truly, it seems to be uttered from such a dull misery that killing *the first one at hand* may appears as promissing the hope of a relief. To this it is fair to add the quite frequent circumstances in which *the first one at hand* happens to be - but immédiateté oblige - the same person as the murderer. When weakening too much your sensitivity you may be exposed to lose a bit of accuracy as regards what you kill.

Because this movement deprived men of enjoying their lifes, made them ashamed of their attempts to approach and refine and fully reach their pleasures, that is to say to increase and deepen and multiply them. This movement has made appear as vain and empty any desire that a merchant could not satisfy.

In other terms this movement has dispossessed men of their own *time*, for this futile reason that time runs away and cannot hence be pinned on any stall.

Embrace and Distance

"There is no sexual relationship" used to say Lacan who always liked being a joker. Which means that you might well see a sex, without being granted you see a relationship. Geography is misleading, and physical proximity is no sure sign that any distances have been abolished.

Material Dissatisfaction

The truth is that *the idea of material satisfaction is a nonsense*, and that there has never been anything satisfying that would not primarily be rooted in dream. All these things we build are only masks for the mind, a sort of material punctuation providing the support required once in a while for dreaming further . All these things we build are *signs*. Signs that operate on reality indubitabily, but *before and above all*, signs operating *humanly as well as "inhumanly" in the imagination*.

Freedom

But of what help may ever be any inventory of the little and great miseries. Weeping and lamenting are not the way out. Don't we all know in a sort of dull manner where we are? And also, would it ever seem wise to try building a sharper awareness of the evil, the first attempt would demonstrate that we only know the real extent of the evil, once we happened to step out of it; that the only way we have to identify an evil, is in the light of a *better* that we - by chance or by method - discovered and which draws for us the accurate outline of the evil.

So rooted in a methodical disdain of the problem, the meaning here is to wander for solutions. The proposal is nothing less than a renewal of the sensitivity in love. The idea is to re-passionate the loving debate, to clear the field of the old mines once and for all. Shortly said, to go further, to open our loves on the unknown, to feed our loves with the unknown. Be the spider in the web, spinning the thread between boredom and things yet to be heard of.

The idea here is to hunt for catalysts, to identify, discover catalysts of love, catalysts of man, hence, a *chemical species* if ever there was one. And we know that there is no catalyst more immediately and radically efficient than *freedom*. Because we know that it is not that much the restriction imposed on the freedom of one, but more effectively the sudden increase of the freedom of the other, taht is the actual source of the erotic effect in bondage. And also, it is clear that exaltation of the self is by no way the root of pleasure in sadism. Since it is required that the self is lost so that the pleasure may find itself. We may leave dreams about grandeur of the self to the disabled of exclusivity. - the eunuch and his property - since we know that there is no even an atom of pleasure to lose there. There has never been any freedom in being one self, there is only freedom in being all. And even if one self could ever be all, it would still be limited to be one self. This we know from the surest of sources, since we know it from Sade, who used to say that there was some sort irrealism to ask you to keep a cold head when your sperm runs away.

It is also possible to find an additional evidence of the function of freedom as a catalyst of love in observing the sort of immediate erotic trouble in which we are cast by the most simple *trip*. And

further is the same quality of delightful trouble quite easy to detect in almost all possible sorts of feasts, including revolutions.

Moreover, it is fair to remember that *idleness* is the root of all vices. *Idleness* and not boredom. The difference is of some importance as one may be occupied of some quite boring things without ever seing any sort of desire emerge out of it (except the one to stop...). But idleness is something entirely different from boredom. It is the sudden feeling and awareness of all open possibilities. So is boredom not the reason why the fingers of this young woman come to wander around her sex, but loneliness, quite plainly. This beautiful loneliness that gives us back to our freedoms. And it is this mirror of all freedoms which sends her back to desire. (Note that it works for the young men just as well, although painters spent much less time on it)

Finally, we came to be aware that it is by no way the passage of time which is the enemy of love, but actually the *absence* of time, the absence of events, this slow shrinking of all the possibles that only stupid people may be stubborn enough to call a habit, since they were not able to make a habit of freedom.

People who are fond of the beauties of chains may well object that the desire had always been there. And that the effect of freedom only consists into giving desire the means of expressing itself. But this conforting conclusion does not match with what Sade says of it, and no better with common experience, since it is ordinarily enough to provide the lovers with some perspective of new freedoms - no matter how dripping of satiety they may be - to see the phenix of desire be born again from its ashes.

This graduation in the progressive opening of the possibles is incidentally one of the major mechanisms of erotic litterature (and the trick is not addressed to the reader's intellectual curiosity, but quite effectively to his senses). And if we take a closer look, we shall see that this is also the function of was is used to be called the preliminaries in love, to give us back this movement of accelerated freedom. One of our friends, who considered these sorts of things as pure hypocrisy and only swore by the most expeditious, had this custom to approach women in the streets and to ask them to strip bare on the spot the required parts of their bodies. And well, all things went right for his beliefs as long as he did not happen to fall upon one who was brave or cunning enough to provide him we the answer he was so explicitly longing for. But it is also fair to say how he was caught off his guard on the day he was given a cold but quite actual and effective reply.

Now, since we appear not to be so sensitive to freedom itself than to its acceleration, to the speed at which it increases. A question that may comes to the mind could be why? And if we could be forgiven a biological sideway, one may have the idea that Nature could be subtle enough to have provided us with that sort of sensitivity. Because after all, it is not that much when the possibilities are already there and stable, but rather when they suddenly open, that Life like a conqueror foreseing new lands must speed up the pace.

Placed back in this troubling picture, the fact that the breaking of all chains usually leads quite effectively to desire is not a thing to be denied or disdained, but simply, instead of being this obscure and absolute root that some people happened to see in it, it is nothing more than a specific case, the efficiency of which lies into the fact that the *differential* of the possibilities in these contexts is particularly steep.

And from there, it is not very difficult to see that the same acceleration of freedom is the active cause in masochism, in which passivity opens on the freedom of being all. All, including one thing. All including everything. And this is what is central in masochism, this absolute openeness to all possibles. And this is also the reason why it is often considered as a deeper and greater form of sensuality. Why care about the little pleasure of being an almighty human when you can enjoy the pleasure of being everything else and much more. The entire universe even if needed. Lots of people have also said that the games of the masochists were not so deep because theyalways (try to) keep in control underneath. But this is only a sign that their instinct for survival is hopefully still present, and not that this could ever be a possible mode by which their desire finds its way.

On the whole, it is easy to see why imagination is necessary a critical ingredient in erotism. Since then the effectively possible acceleration of freedom is increased of all the virtualities produced by the imagination.

Accuracy

But if the alchemy of desire hence owes a lot to the steepness of the slopes of freedom, might the same true of the alchemy of pleasure? By no means. Desire may well take its flight on the wings of promises, but the important point as far as pleasure is concerned is that all promises are *accurately held*, in other terms, *held beyond all hopes*.

And are we not aware too, that imagination is not a gift, but more like *the ever running victory of a permanent fight*, and that freedom is not the sort abstraction you may ask for, nor it is of the sort that you may take, but more radically - and more humbly also - it is *this strange flesh of the possibles that we build*.

And surely sensuality in love may not be considered as indemn from the wreck of the sensibility we identified above. We all know what sort of disarray it is to miss one's words. Not only the flexible and swift movement of thought is suddenly frozen, but actions too. Most ferquently, we tend to consider that the harm is small and to proceed further. And it is true that as far as the path our thoughts were following had previously been opened by long past previous explorations, there is no harm at hand. The precious missing words shall ultimately come back to our mind. We are under the dominion of habit, and habit shall bring us victoriously back to this exact place from where we temporarily have to retreat.

But when the same thing occurs at this kind of bifurcation of thinking that makes the new ideas, then this reflex which forces the thought stops, is a sort of carefulness that wisdom would command to respect. Then, missing the accuracy of the instant, is quite litterally a taking the risk to lose your time. The mind feeling the maze may possibly attempt - in a movement of weariness or laziness - to get out of trouble by the trick of an approximation. And if this happens, the flow of thought will then follow this false but easy old path, and miss - for a few months a few years or forever - an entire universe of possibilities the entry point of which was just timidly emerging out of the unknown. The sprout of newness is precisely what might spring out this split and distance between repeating an inadequate past, and fighting your way to the accuracy of present.

And besides, the gimmick does not really draw the mind out of this sudden paralysis caused by the

initially unconscious detection of newness. It only soothes it, hides it. And as the mind slowly comes back to the - now false - easiness of its previous paths, it does not realize that it shall forever wear the score of its defeat, and that it shall forever have to limp due to this apparently innocent missed step. And this evil of the retreat, which originally was as clear and distinct as a good willing transition from unconsciousness to consciousness can possibly be, shall soon grow dull and dull and slowly be burried in the sweet ashes of self forgetfulness. The deaf and dumb snow that softly falls over the discomfort of awareness.

One may guess that desire, which partake of the flashes of freedom, may grow stupid in these sorts of half told tone where thought gets blind, as imperceptibly loses in the process its constitutive ability to detect new flashes. But as regards pleasure, the situation is worse, since deprived of any compass it is not able anymore to sense the furthers, the beyonds that desire was promising and that must be held beyond all promises.

Sade - as is quite known - attempted to identify the words of desire in "*Les Cent-ving journées de Sodome*". He did it in his own way, on the basis of his own sensibility and of his own assumptions. And it spite of the good will he put in the adventure, it is wise to admit that his catalog is quite incomplete. This even becomes both easy and mandatory when considering that a similar attempt made by Charles Fourier in "*Le Nouveau Monde Amoureux*" a few years later, led to an inventory which almost does not overlap with the one established by Sade. And there are more these inventories which were written much earlier although from female pesrpective, and these are called in French "Les Cartes du Tendre".

But in spite of all the good things that we may think of such explorations, it is quite easy, to feel where their limits are. What they dramatically miss is *dynamics*. Although Fourier or Sade are experts in picturing refined erotic graduations, their art summoning hence the ghosts of freedom acceleration, we cannot prevent ourselves to feel that - whatever efforts they may do - there will never be there more than syntactical variations on basis of a finite vocabulary. It is true of these improbable assemblies of bodies in Sade, just as well as of the passional and physical montages in Fourier's work.

State of the Art

The game with Internet is among the rare human activities left which is yet not totally under the dominion of some sort of intellectual or less intellectual kind of police. This sort of situations is not so frequent in the human history, and we should enjoy it while it lasts.

And as it is a quite concrete fact that everything that will not join these pages will easily find its way to public expression anywhere else, we shall have no hesitations about rejecting everything which shall not be in line with our purpose, nor shall we hesitate to link anything we might find to be in accordance with it.

So will it be that only art and thinking - and of the best - will be accepted here, as nothing might ever be wonderful enough for our loves, and nothing might ever be beautiful enough for our pleasures.

But we shall not take art for its own sake nor mistake thinking for a shadow. They are not interesting here as such, but only as far as they will prove to act as catalysts upon us. We shall only

care for what will look like a possible thread towards a higher level of sensitivity and awareness. We shall only drop our usual laziness for what will be able to drive us towards a certain state of trouble or emotion.

We would like to open this space to texts and images that would lead us towards a certain state of bewilderment.

This means that we shall have the highest level of requirements as regards the erotic effectivity, the specific affective and emotional moving power of anything that we shall accept to link or temporarily store here.

We have in our heads and between our thighs accurate enough evaluation instruments.

And we do have the right and the duty to do so, since we are proposing the best possible use that may be done of art and ideas, since it is beyond doubt that the best merchantile or intellectual speculations do not weight much when compared to the verticality of one loving instant, or compared to the golden waves of orgasms.

Beyond a certain threshold - which has been reached - the root of poverty appears for what it is: an absolute lack, a qualitative lack and not a relative, quantitative lack as the people who earn their living on quantities would tend to say. Although this is now quite obvious in mosts contexts, it is even easier to verify as regards love, since lovers are usually aware that quality rules over quantity and not the reverse.

And well, as the goal here is to let bloom some of the flowers of the unspeakable, it seems a good method to put the stress on what is not from the speech, or to what was not fairly given its turn of speech.

So would it be nice to give higher priority to visual arts.

And as the chances of history were not quite fair to female expression, it might be wise if it could find here room enough to be slightly over-represented.

And even, if it proved to be that ladies have access to some kinds of vaguely monstrous motherly pleasures, pleasures that gentlemen could only rather indirectly approximate, why not welcome the corresponding art?

And also there will not be here any parts or shares. For instance, there will be no part for mystery, nor for modesty. All sneaky business shall have to be done elsewhere. We prefer to owe our turgescences to wonder only. Truth does not acquire erotic properties because it is bare, it is erotic because it is truth. So the intent is to provide room for some sort of courage, so that may cease "the laziness that lies between the morning and love" ["La paresse qui est entre le matin et l'amour"]

As regards nuisances and flies of all sorts, their pleasures are so ephemeral that such an introduction should be enough for keeping some distances. They shall quite quicky sense that we could do far worse

As regards female and male simulation addicts, there is no need to send them to hell, since that's were they are.

And as regards some others, we are quite assured that they shall find they pleasure, simply because they are looking for it.

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