

**IN VAIN**

**WE  
WILL  
DANCE**

**Humans, Gods,  
Poem, Economy,  
Participation,  
Seduction...**



“We have slipped from an individual and human perspective to a divine, supreme and perfect one”



# IN VAIN

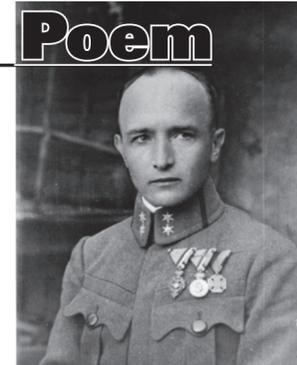
NAME.....  
ADDRESS.....  
CITY.....

IN VAIN - AMSTERDAM - 2015

## P4 Introduction



## P6 Humans, Gods and the Poem



## P14 Humans, Gods, Economy and Seduction

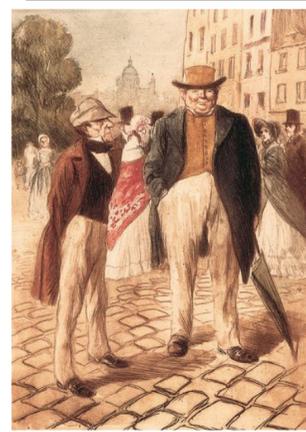


## P28 The grave digger sucessor

## P29 Forrest Gump, the Great Ignorant

## P29 Or

## P20 Human as an active and indispensable participant (in the era of undecidability)



## P30 Bibliography Filmography Table of illustrations



# INTRODUCTION

**There are**  
**just trials,**  
**that some-**  
**times**  
**become**  
**the truth,**  
**models**  
**and norms**  
**for ages,**  
**real belief,**  
**or some-**  
**times**  
**forgotten,**  
**or**  
**disappear**

When we are born, we show up a bit as hairs in a soup. A thousand year old soup. A thousand years of knowledge, experiences, progress, regression, events, stories accumulation. No matter what we do, no matter what we want, we will still bathe in this cultural bind. From the beginning to the end of our existence we deal with it. Our life and our survival as being of language, as being gifted with a conscience depends upon it. Nothing is preventing us to live like hermits, away from human society. Nothing is preventing us to find different and new usages for the elements constituting this soup, this huge and weird cultural machine. This powerful and sticky filter is difficult to see through.

Groouummmppfff, graaaaahhhhouuuuu, bappppppppppprrpppp, brrrrarahhhhh, crrraaaaaaaa  
 aaalkkkkkff, raaaaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh  
 hheeeemmmmm

What would be the sounds produced by a human who could not talk? A human who would never have been taught how to talk? A human who would never have been raised by a talking human? What kind of sounds would produce a "communicating" human before the language "came"? We will probably never know and will still contemplate and dream about humans before language. Because the real question is: despite our consciousness of being human, our ability to prosper and some tiny genetic differences with apes, what makes us human? There are only humans to call themselves human.

Nobody else, or...  
 As Lucien Malson would say: "human as human is only an eventuality, that is to say even less, than a hope".<sup>1</sup> A quite harsh but understandable thought as he published the writings of doctor Jean Itard who took in Victor de l'Aveyron, a young wild child, only taught by his life in the forest. After several years attempting to humanize him, teaching him the rules, codes, norms and the language of humans, Victor, who still couldn't talk, died. At this time (end of 18<sup>th</sup> century) when the Science of Man was beginning to be defined, the *facies* of human, these wild children (because they were numerous) "were the messengers of the inhumanity of the human, the witnesses of a fragile identity and of a lack of a proper *face*."<sup>2</sup> The human has often been defined in opposition to the animal or to what was inhuman. After the catastrophes<sup>3</sup> of the 20<sup>th</sup> century how do we consider ourselves now? More as animals? Human-animal? Animal-human? Why not hope for something else?

From this perspective we can say that a human is a being of confidence, belief and community (which are quite similar, in fact). A human needs to be part of something, whatever it is (I call it a community) but to do so, needs to have confidence, to believe. *Confidence* in the others and what they transmit, and *belief*, from the single fact that human believes in being a human. Also needs to believe (or not) in the community, the (whatever) system he lives in, he is governed by; if not, it is going to be difficult.

A human needs to trust in others from the early days to the last in order to live: and first to trust in parents (or a substitute). To trust in what they give, from language to food: constantly doubting is not possible, or dreading them (it happens). Then, going to school, studying he also needs to trust in what he is told, what he is taught, otherwise, he cannot be truly accepted in the community or even pass his exams. However, the more a human gains knowledge, the more untrustworthy what being told and taught becomes. But, what to trust in? What to select? How to know the truth? I hardly can come to the world and say: "well, all this knowledge, your language, your rules are bullshit". It works sometimes, if you have proof. Human is in this constant swinging between confidence and doubt in the surrounding *knowledge*. What if there was no longer doubt? Doubt is healthy but also wearisome. I consider humans as heirs, pursuers, successors, not only from their family and relatives, but from the whole of humanity, that is to say from all the knowledge, cultures, histories, etc. humanity has produced and keeps producing. Humans are rather dependent beings: without someone to raise or teach them, they die. Others are needed in order to be and go further, participating in humanity, not inventing something from nothing.

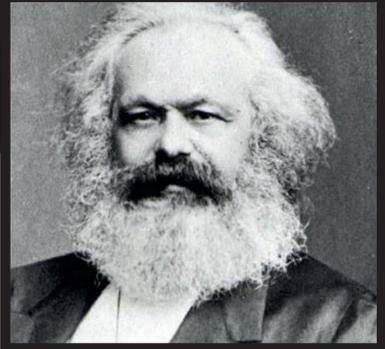
The very important and problematic thing is that there is no one *truth* or at least it changes all the time in parallel with historical context. What is given, what is transmitted to the new generation as succession, as culture is what ancestors believed and trusted in for ages. Sometimes the new generation realizes that what the ancestors believed in was wrong, not really working and they find something better, something more *true*. The successor does not choose what inherited is: what to believe in or not, to accept it, as far as practicable, reject it, go beyond.

With science and technological progress, the present, past and future are rapidly changing and transforming. What was true yesterday becomes quickly obsolete, wrong. What was strictly unthinkable like going on a far away planet is now possible. Because of new archaeological, biological, scientific discoveries, historical and cultural pillars considered as *true* during decades and centuries and thousand years appear like pure constructions. This is the same for many things, many *facts* that are little by little revealed as myths, fictions, constructions, made at the time because of a *lack of means* or, because it was probably a good way to govern and keep the government of humans in the right direction, or because of both. Whatever else, humans and each generation has to *make do* with what previously existed, pre-existent in order to participate in the community, in humanity. Because if humans inherit despite themselves, they are to be considered as total participants. Whatever is done, a position is taken, an act, even passively. This is the very point of the present thesis, to think about the possibilities of the successor to change what was wrong, what was (and is) unfair, to be critical

**THERE ARE ONLY HUMANS TO CALL THEMSELVES HUMAN.**



1. IN REPORT ABOUT VICTOR DE L'AVEYRON, JEAN ITARD, 1806  
 2. IN WITHOUT RANK IN THE OPEN, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2004, P.29  
 3. I MEAN THE TWO WORLD WARS AND THE SHOAH



about what has been inherited, and what he has not. He does not have to feel responsible for ancestors but he can attempt to fix what they did and do better, if necessary. He has the power to decide to step back from the filters of culture, of inheritance, to try to figure out what is fair to be believed or not, or what else could be believed in.

Through the point of view of the human as a successor, a believer, a participant and furthermore a being of celebration, I will explore the two biggest celebrative, belief and government of men systems such as Christianity and Capitalism. This last one, even it takes its roots from Christianity, does not offer any metaphysical issue (except, maybe, *growth* and *progress*), is much more powerful than the first, it leaves no time off, it is permanent. The idea is here to head into both systems through the frames of celebration, arts (and peomatic), economy and seduction, then I will explore what are (and were) the possible ways of profaning, parodying, making these systems impotent, even for a minute. The point will be to try to bring out alternative ways of *acting, being, behaving* and *believing*. Possibilities of participation and parallel belief into the present capitalist system, through reality and fiction, facts and tales, and also where both become one, because it is always about that: "If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences".<sup>4</sup> It's all about how we see things and how we believe in them, make use of them; it is about the representation and seduction of things. There are just *trials*, that sometimes become the truth, models and norms for ages, *real belief*, or sometimes forgotten, or disappear.

In the first part called *Humans, Gods and Poems*, I will begin to look into what is the fact of believing, what is it to believe. On the first hand, we believe in what is glorious, famous, and on the other what is glorious and famous about what people believe in. The true question is, how something becomes glorious, how is belief cultivated, according to what. I will therefore explore the ancient Greek, Latin and Hebrew etymologies as *celeber, kleos, doxa* and *kabod* going from profane to sacred spheres and *vice-versa*, towards Christianity. We will see the importance of the rumour as the main factor of notoriety. Then I will question the links

between arts and glory through the *hymnos, poematic, oeuvre, ars, and ritus*, how poematic, arts, *regimes of representation and repetition* are essential in the construction of glory and power, to make it perpetual, and especially concerning Christianity.

In the second part, *Humans, Gods, Economy and Seduction*, I will explore the first meanings of the ancient Greek word *oikonomia* that is the root of the modern word economy. I will show the deep links of the Christian *oikonomia* of God (the Trinitarian economy) to the modern *oikonomia* of Capitalism, and how the separation of the *being* and the *acting* that happened through the Christian *oikonomia* of God has been taken back and perpetuated by Capitalism. I will then head into this system through concepts of *apparatus, spectacle* and *seduction* (se-ducio) as a supreme form of power, of separation and attraction.

In the part *Human as a active and indispensable participant (in the era of undecidability)*, I will question the different and potential alternatives humans can find to participate and celebrate, *inside* and despite belief and government systems, without glorifying them through concepts of *participation, enkomion, parodia* and profanation (*pro-fanare*). I will mainly explore the possibility of humans to *play*, to be critic or not, what does it mean to be a participant, being part of a community, keeping in mind that pleasure and happiness are the main motivations.

Through a reading of *The Sixth Sense*<sup>5</sup> and its main character as a figure of worry, and then a reading of *Forrest Gump*<sup>6</sup> and its main character as a figure of insouciance, I will present two possible figures of alternative behaviours toward belief and community. Throughout my research pictorial illustrations and quotations of characters, events, real or fictitious, living or not living things that characterise this large spectrum of belief, disbelief, celebration, usage, profanation and seduction will be displayed as a connection between this ancient separation of the *being* from the *acting*, of humanity from animality, in between reason and myth.

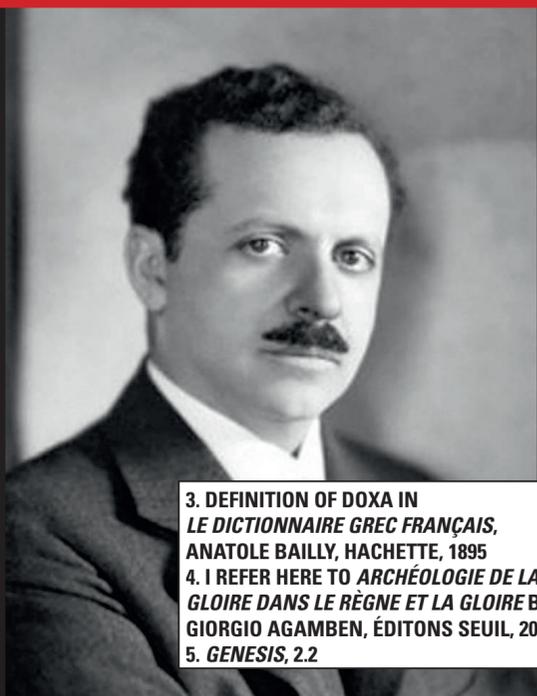
4. IN THE CHILD IN AMERICA: BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AND PROGRAMS, W.I. THOMAS AND D.S. THOMAS. NEW YORK: KNOPF, 1928  
 5. THE SIXTH SENSE, DIRECTED BY M. NIGHT SHYAMALAN, BUENA VISTA PICTURES, 1999  
 6. FORREST GUMP, DIRECTED BY ROBERT ZEMECKIS, PARAMOUNT PICTURES, 1994

# PART 1: HUMANS, GODS AND POEMS

First of all, the verb to *celebrate* logically calls upon an object, a subject, an occasion worthy of being celebrated. We celebrate not only that which we love, that in which we believe, but also that which is likely to make us gather with others around something. The verb to *celebrate* seems to appeal to a dimension of sharing, to a community, and can be applied to a variety of events like a birthday party, wedding, religious ceremony, a party with friends, a cover version of a famous song or a historical commemoration. There seems to be a multitude of ways to celebrate and just as many objects and subjects worthy of that celebration. But what is it that makes a thing or a person more deserving of celebration than others? How can we decide together to state and share the value of a thing, the value of its glory?

I will thus begin by looking closely at the origins of what celebration could be: the act of celebrating. The Latin etymology of the word *celebrated* (*celeber*<sup>1</sup>) signifies a crowd, a great number of people. The word's usage can be clarified in four points, in which we find the idea of numerousness. Firstly, we can speak of *celeber* for a highly frequented or strongly populated place. Secondly, *celeber* is used to describe a feast which is celebrated by a great crowd. Thirdly, the word is employed to speak of a very well-known name or thing with a widespread usage by a great number of people. In this instance *celeber* can also be used to describe the celebration of games or of another event to which the crowd converges. Finally, we speak of *celeber* for an illustrious, famous person often mentioned by the masses. One notices that *celeber* is used not only in the case of a great crowd, but also can be used to refer to a place, be it the strong frequentation of a particular place, the great reputation of a name or a thing, or of a person on the scale of a whole region or country.

## CELEBER KLEOS DOXA KABOD



3. DEFINITION OF DOXA IN  
LE DICTIONNAIRE GREC FRANÇAIS,  
ANATOLE BAILLY, HACHETTE, 1895  
4. I REFER HERE TO ARCHÉOLOGIE DE LA  
GLOIRE DANS LE RÈGNE ET LA GLOIRE BY  
GIORGIO AGAMBEN, ÉDITIONS SEUIL, 2008  
5. GENESIS, 2.2

More generally, the word indicates an object around which people gather, but can also indicate an object that is widely spoken of and upon whose reputation we agree on. Therefore, the celebrity of an object derives partly from the people who speak of it, who make use of it in a large space, within a territory. When one looks at the meaning of *celebrare*<sup>1</sup>, one remarks that it qualifies the act of spreading the glory of a person, a people or a thing far and wide with praise. It also indicates the act of publishing, of making known, of spreading in usage, the act of making something standard or common. The celebrity of an object is a result of rumor, a result of the way in which an object provokes conversation, or rather the way in which conversation was provoked about the object. Celebrity exists according to how the reputation of a thing/person/place is propagated. Another meaning for this word can shed light on this dimension of spreading or propagation and diffusion: *celebrare* also defines haste, mobilization around something or someone. It can therefore be supposed that the celebrity and glory of a thing go hand in hand with the speed at which its reputation is diffused, the haste and alacrity with which the crowd rallies to agree on a certain reputation and then participate in its spreading. In this way, the glory and celebrity of a thing does not only come from the reality of things (relative to a people, a person, a thing) but mainly results from rumor, and from the glorification of facts. In its Latin etymology, *celeber*, celebration, or celebrity do not apply to a divine power but on the contrary, to things; to facts or to human beings which or who then acquire a particular aura. It could concern an object, just as it could concern a custom, a person or a place. The etymology in ancient Greek of the word *celebrated* or *glorious* informs us greatly on this aspect of celebrity linking strongly to rumor and belief. The Greek *Kleos*<sup>2</sup> essentially applies to people having accomplished heroic acts, acts of bravery and of courage, sometimes leading to death.

1. DEFINITION OF CELEBRARE IN LE  
DICTIONNAIRE ABRÉGÉ LATIN FRANÇAIS,  
F.GAFFIOT, HACHETTE, 1936  
2. DEFINITION OF KLĒOS IN LE  
DICTIONNAIRE GREC FRANÇAIS,  
ANATOLE BAILLY, HACHETTE, 1895

This title is handed down invariably from father to son, the latter becoming responsible for his father's celebrity, his aura. The *kleos* not only defines glory and reputation but is also closely linked to the notion of rumour, to "hearing": that which others hear about me, but also what is said about me, what circulates and renders mythical the people holding the title. The *kleos* is an omnipresent theme in Homer's *Iliad* and his *Odyssey*; depending on the actions taken by the protagonists the *kleos* implies celebrity and immortality, but also supposes malediction and oblivion for those whose acts are odious. Medea slays her children to put an end to Jason's *kleos*. Even though we are dealing with mythology here, it is interesting to observe the role of the poet and poem in the perpetuation of legends or myths, both similar to rumour. The hearsay of real people's glorious feats stands alongside the legend of fictional characters. These two stories, the mythological and the historical, these two rumours of glory and celebrity of a person are almost indistinguishable. I will now study the Greek term of *doxa*<sup>3</sup> which proves to be of a great semantic bearing and is therefore an important lead to explore, having examined the *kleos*, which, as we have seen, expresses not only glory but also rumour.

The word *doxa* originates from the word *dokēō* which signifies to *seem*, to *appear*, but also the act of *thinking* or of *judging* in a subjective, personal manner. The term evokes an idea of appearance, of the visible. Plato refuses this *doxa* and considers it the worst possible thing; he sees it as a barrier to the *aletheia*, to the truth *ibidem*. It is upon this rejection of a common opinion that our modern societies are founded. The *doxa* firstly qualifies an uncertain opinion, without any real basis, but also what is thought concerning us, about ourselves. It is a question of estimated value, of celebrity, of reputation and of honour, in the sense of a human and social glory. Thus, *doxa* means rumour, an opinion based on relative criterion, specific to an epoch. Looking to the Hebrew term of *kabod*<sup>4</sup>, initially of profane origin, signifies the honour or the esteem of a person within a community, founded on objective and tangible standards like material riches, social ranking and personal glory. *Kabod* literally means the *weight of being* of a person, his density within the community. The term is used in the Old Testament to qualify the density of God, his invisible presence, his majesty: *kabod yahve*<sup>5</sup> (the glory of God). When the Septuagint translated the bible from Hebrew to Greek, they chose to translate *kabod* by the term *doxa*. Thus, the Greek term that meant think or judge in a totally subjective manner, qualifying an opinion, is expressed in the New Testament as total objectivity, meaning (within this religious context) the reality of God himself, the splendor of his being and his indisputable glory. One must note that in this translation *doxa* expresses the idea of clarity and of luminescence.

It is this sense of clarity and of brightness that will endure through the Latin translations: *doxa* is to be translated by *claritas*, *majestas* and most importantly in the Vulgate by *gloria* and *glorificare*<sup>1</sup>. We can now see something in common between the Greek *kleos* and the term *doxa* translated by the Septuagint. Both words qualify glory in terms of sensitive perception: the first being linked to speech, to what one hears and the second being linked to vision, to a sort of bright, almost blinding apparition. Moreover, both combine the paradoxical meanings that are objective glory and opinion or rumour. We have seen that the term *doxa*, which initially signified a subjective opinion or rumour, was translated within a religious perspective into a term meaning glory, blinding clarity, absolute objectivity. We could almost say this definition is opposite to the original Greek understanding of the word. It might seem breathtaking to conclude that a term expressing a subjective judgement, a prejudice, should come to mean an absolute and objective judgement, infinite and flawless. We have slipped from an individual and human perspective to a divine, supreme and perfect one.

We can take this thought a little further and say that a subjective opinion or practice specific to the individual or the group was transformed into a law. That which for the individual was personal judgement and opinion and which perhaps seemed whimsical to others has been transformed into truth, into an objective judgement for all. Can an opinion be cried out as if by one lone voice recognizing the glory of a specific person, of a particular event? How can an event or a person acquire the approval of others and the status of celebrity, of glory? We can remind ourselves here that *kabod* represents the glory of God but represents also the glorification that man owes him. Here we can point out the ambiguity of this signification and the circularity of this *glory economy*; we glorify God as he is worthy of it, because he *is* glory; however, whether we glorify him or not, the glory of God remains intact. God is the creator of all things, the almighty creator. He is both His own glory and the glorification that man makes of Him. The freedom and the *raison d'être* of man resides therefore in the permanent praise of this glorious creator, but also in the procreation of new children of God which becomes the only way to increase the glory and glorification of God.

A very early meaning of the glory of God is nothing but his extremely eminent magnificence and nobility, and this is the glory of God in himself or close to himself, for which reason praise, glorification, and every form of worship are owed him. Another meaning of what is named the glory of God is that through which he is glorified, that is, honored, preached about, praised, and adored by the elect and by all men.<sup>2</sup>

*Kabod* has a profane origin, concerning the human community: the recognition and the esteem of those who possessed material riches or a high social rank, *kabod* was the glory of princes, of kings and of power. This practice of external glory which was linked to a profane space has been transposed to a sacred space of internal, invisible and almighty glory. Within the

frame of profane power, Man owed praise and glorification, just as he owed celebrative rituals and words in a parallel to sacred or divine power. These two domains of governing power and domination of man comprise similar forms of glorification, and the influence they have had on each other seems obvious.

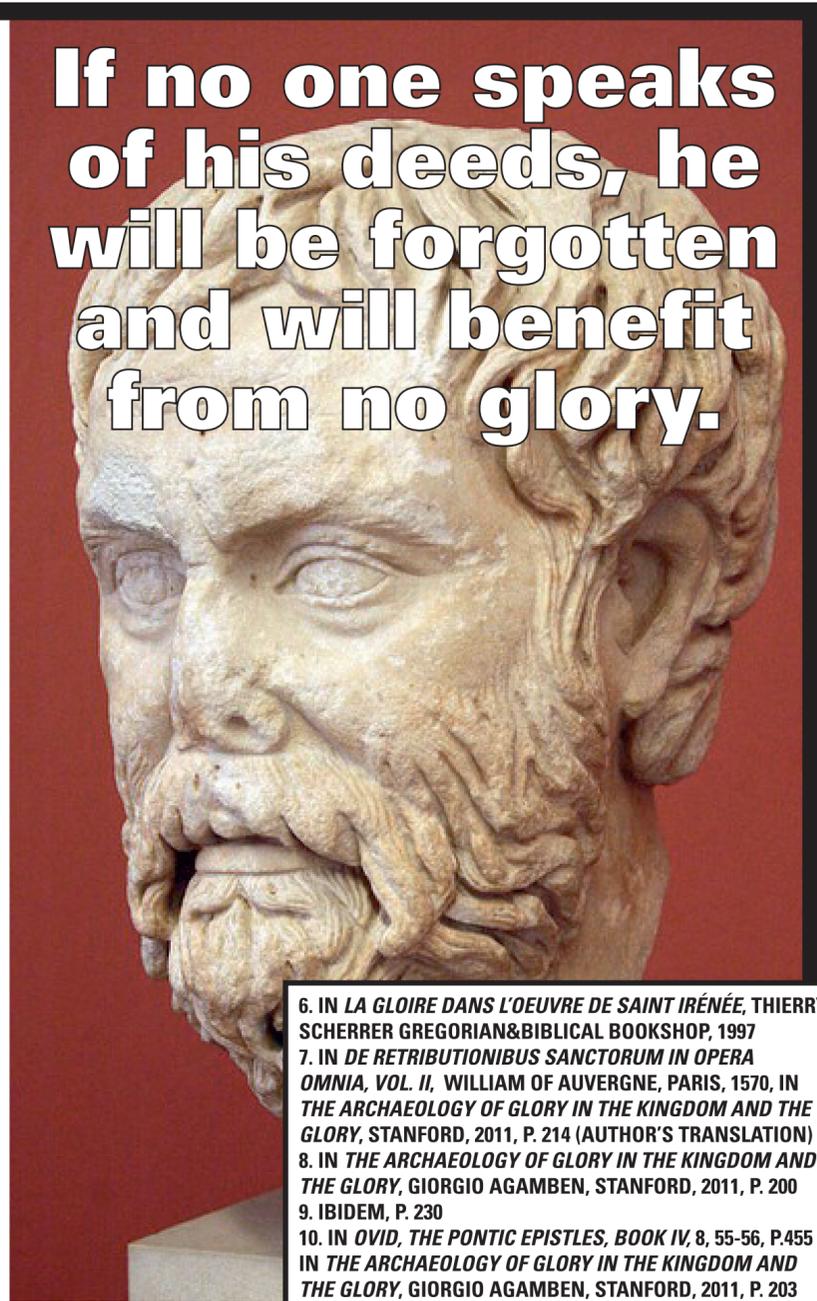
This *kabod*, which is expressed in acclamations and hymns of praise, is at times presented as the natural and joyous reply of men to the manifest glory of God. At other times it resembles the honor that is bestowed upon the profane powers and cannot easily be related to the *kabod*-being of God, as it was for Maimonides<sup>3</sup>

Concluding with an inverted movement, it is the glorification of God, the praise and the preaching that man offers up to God which establish His glory and bring about His reign and reputation for centuries and centuries. One might think that it is the perpetuation of rumour, of opinion and of His glorification which actually gave God this inexplicable, blinding, total glory, creating a perfect circularity. This ambiguity, this swaying between two spaces of power is explicit. But we must closely observe the outcome of the relationship between these two spaces which come together as one. Profane power and sacred power merge to form one organ of domination and of government.

Just as liturgical doxologies produce and strengthen God's glory, so the profane acclamations are not an ornament of political power but found and justify it. And just as the immanent trinity and economic trinity, theologia and oikonomia constitute, within the providential paradigm, a bipolar machine from whose distinction and correlation stems the government of the world, so Kingdom and Government constitute the two elements or faces of the same machine of power.<sup>4</sup>

We have gone from profane terms (the Greek *doxa*, signifying opinion, a subjective judgement or the profane Hebrew term *kabod* signifying esteem, recognition, the "weight of being" of a person) to conclude

If no one speaks of his deeds, he will be forgotten and will benefit from no glory.



6. IN LA GLOIRE DANS L'OEUVRE DE SAINT IRÉNÉE, THIERRY SCHERRER GREGORIAN&BIBLICAL BOOKSHOP, 1997  
7. IN DE RETRIBUTIONIBUS SANCTORUM IN OPERA OMNIA, VOL. II, WILLIAM OF AUVERGNE, PARIS, 1570, IN THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF GLORY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY, STANFORD, 2011, P. 214 (AUTHOR'S TRANSLATION)  
8. IN THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF GLORY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P. 200  
9. IBIDEM, P. 230  
10. IN OVID, THE PONTIC EPISTLES, BOOK IV, 8, 55-56, P.455 IN THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF GLORY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P. 203

with a totally new meaning within the religious domain. The translation of the biblical texts from Hebrew to Greek transformed a word whose meaning was the personal judgement of a thing or a person into an all-encompassing and objective judgement, in other words blinding glory, the Truth. Glory and opinion: two paradoxical meanings belonging to one word. As we have seen in other Latin terms like *celeber* and in Greek with *kleos*, each word comprises this double meaning of glory and rumour. We must also stress the importance of the frequency of speech, the frequency of the rumour surrounding something, and the quantity of people spreading such a rumour. It might seem obvious that rumour leads to glory and indeed in religious cases, the glorification of God engenders His glory. However, it is much more complicated to affirm that glory leads to rumour, or that the glory of God leads to His glorification. We can press this problem and ask ourselves if,

in an act of bravery, a man saves many lives, will his glory exist if his act is not spread by rumour, diffused and glorified? If no one speaks of his deeds, he will be forgotten and will benefit from no glory. Let us remember in the great works of the Greek and Latin poets, the verses tell stories of glory, of the *kleos* of man and of the Gods.

The Homeric world has therefore a figure of glory that is entirely the work of man, mere glorification. For this reason, many centuries later, a Roman poet was able to push this "glorifying" strain of poetry to the limit, writing that not just heroes, but "the gods too (if I may be allowed to say so) exist through poetry; even the majesty of one so great has need of the voice of someone to celebrate it"<sup>5</sup>

If we agree that it is thanks to ritual glorification and to human *logos* that the

glory of God exists, we must ask ourselves what this glorification, this praise and these acclamations are made up of: the liturgical doxology. What role does it play in human speech which will go on to construct the glorious foundations of the Gods over centuries? If an acclamation is originally authentic and spontaneous, as we can see in the profane domain, it is often transformed into a ritual acclamation in the religious domain. We pass from a spontaneous and true usage to an institutionalized and therefore purely formal usage.

Looking closely at the well-known figure of *amen* in the biblical texts, the word is used as a form of faithfulness, of approbation or in the Church or the synagogue as an acclamation, replying to a prayer or a benediction. Amen is always pronounced in response to something that has been said by someone, be it a priest or a rabbi. Amen bears witness to the fidelity to God and to he who has spoken and the necessity of its frequency implies a constant proof of this fidelity. When the Septuagint translated Amen into Greek by the term *genoito*, it means “so be it” – but it is also translated by *alethos*, meaning “truly”.

Here we can point out the paradox of such a transcription, as *alethos* originally means the truth in Greek (*aletheia*) or a non-withdrawal. The formula *amen* seems to only be the repetition of the affirmation of God’s glory, and of His truth. It becomes revealing to look at two different translations of this figure in the religious texts: In the Talmud, it signifies “*God, the faithful king*.” (*b Shab., 119b*) and in the Apocalypse, Christ is defined as the “*Amen, the faithful witness*.” (*Ap 3, 14*). This form of glorification, the acclamation of *amen* is here translated as glory itself, thus glorification and glory become one. He who pronounces this statement doubly pronounces his recognition and adhesion as well as the grandeur of God. The acclamation reminds us somewhat of a legal contract, a purely institutional formality. Giorgio Agamben notes that the forms of religious acclamations such as *amen* were often left in their original language, therefore implying a non-understanding of the meaning of these liturgical phrases. It is precisely from this absence of meaning and from the repetition of the phrase that emerges its importance and its effect: the formula becomes only sonority, pure form and gesture. We can make a link here to the phrase *bravo*, used in the domain of public discourse; of performing arts and of politics. These are spheres where one expresses himself before an audience of varying size. Using *bravo* as an intermediary, the audience gives its approbation, its congratulations, its adhesion to what has been said, shown, offered, presented. Bravo can be expressed by the audience’s voice but also by the gesture of applause, of clapping, which implies a direct and physical involvement of the spectator. This acclamation is used as a reward for the person who has taken to the stage and is thus similar to the purely formal *amen*: I say *bravo* after the other has spoken. With



the example of these two forms of acclamation we can see that the effect they produce is more important than an inherent meaning. The semantic aspect of language is deactivated and appears for a moment as an empty rotation: it is only at this moment that the acclamation finds its efficiency. Using repetition, *de-semanticization* and therefore an “empty turning”, as well as a reduction to a pure sonority and formality, language produces glory. We can suppose that there are other forms of language that have succumbed to this process of *de-semanticization*, to an “empty turning”. However we are going to concentrate on the phenomena of a passing from language to a pure sonority, a rhyme, a producer of glory and of speech as celebration. After studying language rendered as acclamation as pure sound form, as a rhyme we will look closely at the figures of the hymn and the poem.

# HYMNOS POEMATIC OEUVRE ARS RITUS

We must now make a distinction between a hymn, which firstly indicates a religious, essentially Catholic chant and a hymn which secondly indicates all forms of song celebrating the glory of a person, an abstract thing or the glory of the Gods. We will successively analyse these two types of hymns. The word hymn comes from the Greek *hymnos* and primarily indicates any song in the honour of the Gods, we can cite Homeric hymns. The Alexandrian sophist *Aelius Théon* (1st century AD) describes three possible forms of hymns in his *Proginnasmata* (rhetorical exercises): the *humnos* which consists of the praise of an absent person or thing be it abstract or real. The second form is the *epitaphios*, praise to the dead, and the last form is named *encomion*, praise to a living person. A hymn is therefore a form of celebration, of glorification of thing via language, spoken, sung or written. A hymn is also associated to a ritual. If a hymn seems directed towards the other, the *alter*, it is also centered on language, or rather on language’s *de-semanticization*, centered on a shift towards something else, towards a song. We have seen that the repetition of words such as *amen* or *bravo* become purely sonorous notes, inviting the audience to participate and rendering a certain performativity of a prayer, a show or a political speech. An acclamation or a Catholic

hymn contains a real dimension of contact with the present, what is said, what has been said, despite their repetition in praise of a thing, like a rhapsody. Though the form and content remain the same, glorifying and creating glory, a hymn is the inscription of the singing in the present, in the *now*: although the meaning does not remain and only musicality persists, the song

finally constitutes a pure gesture, celebrating the present moment. However, beyond these forms of either profane or liturgical acclamations (wherein language becomes rhyme, repetition, aesthetics), we must suppose that other expressions of the hymn exist, other ways to *desemantize* language. If the hymn’s specificity consists in the creation of glorification and adhesion by way of rhyme or repetition, we can perhaps also grant it some more complex purposes such as the hymnal overturning of language against itself, the exposing of its annihilation and the *empty turning* of the language that it entails. Firstly, for what reason do words migrate from the field of language to the field of pure sound or musicality within the form of the hymn? We must closely observe two organizational modes of the antique hymn, or more precisely we must observe the liaisons between the words that compose said hymn. The *harmonia austere* (from the Greek *austérós*: bitter,

dry), a harsh articulation making each word isolated in its semantic context, producing a series of words almost independent from one another, almost autonomous. On the other hand, the *harmonia glaphyra* (from the Greek *glaphyros*: grotto, incision) is a softer, more elegant articulation which links words together while subordinating images and syntactical context. “The hard articulation does all it can to emphasize the word itself imparting it to the listener and tearing it, as much as possible, from the associative context of the images

1. IN *ARCHAEOLOGY OF GLORY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY*, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P. 232
2. IN *ARCHAEOLOGY OF GLORY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY*, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P. 238
3. IN *ARCHAEOLOGY OF GLORY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY*, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P. 237
4. IN *ANTHOLOGIE DES TROUBADOURS*, JACQUES ROUBAUD, IN *NÉGLIGENCE, SPHÈRE ESTHÉTIQUE DE LA NÉGLIGENCE, IN NU ET BEURRÉ*, P.52 (TRANSLATED BY AILSA CAVERS)

and feelings to which it belonged”<sup>2</sup> produces a text which breaks in rhythm and in thought, where each word is more a sound than meaning. On the contrary, the soft articulation favors the meaning and its comprehension. We can link this element of thought to the *amen* and other religious doxologies. By isolating words or names and therefore favouring their sonority, the hymn transforms each noun into a divine proper noun, into glory. As this noun says nothing, or rather it just repeats a chant; it must unceasingly be renewed and retained in the present. This hymnal isolation, this digging into the language finds its climax with Mallarmé and his *Coup de Dés (Throw of the Dice)*. It is as if he were to push the *harmonia austere* to its extreme, splintering the words and meaning across the page, bringing all logical readings to failure. Only distinct, autonomous words stand out. Like an *amen*, or a *bravo*, this poem offers up a profane liturgy, a celebration not of Gods or of people, but of language itself and its *a-semanticization*. The poetical language asserts itself as pure celebration; the words take on their status of “*nomina sacra*” and thus seem absurd, senseless. The role and the effect of the hymn are pushed to their limits, as the metric and syntactical processes transform language into rhyme, creating the adhesion of the participants, lit up by a desire to gain a foothold in the *now* using language and speech in a permanent manner.

[...] the turning in the void of language as the supreme form of glorification. The hymn is the radical deactivation of signifying language, the word rendered completely inoperative and, nevertheless, retained as such in the form of liturgy.<sup>3</sup>

We must now consider the inchoate aspect of the hymn and more largely that of the poem; the only way to sustain the hymn is in its renewal, the extension of its experience. If the end of the poem is qualified by its exit from the semantic field, its abandon from language and its simultaneous celebration, the exercise of its writing, then its composition must be incessantly renewed. We can cite the strange project of Albertet of Sisteron (18<sup>th</sup> Century AD) who aimed to write poetry

of “pure nothing”, or rather a poetry of poematics, about the emptiness which the latter implies.

I will write a verse of pure nothingness it will neither be mine nor someone else’s it will be of neither love nor youth or anything else other than having been made sleeping on a horse (...) I made a verse of I don’t know what and I will pass it on to someone who will give it to another until Poitiers for him to send me in his sheath the voussoir.<sup>4</sup>

A poem whose purpose is the poem itself makes a sort of parody. The author specifies that his poem is to have no subject, not even love and that no one can be the author of such a poem, not even the author himself. He underlines that this poem was written while sleeping upon horseback: the author seems to relinquish all responsibility, all signature of his poem which moreover does not deal with traditional poetic themes. This poem therefore has an effect of emptying out language, of *empty turning*. We can remark upon the indecision of the poet: he has written a poem that will not be a poem. We can see an acceptance and recognition of the emptiness of the hymn and of the poem in his project. Although the poem generally uses similar themes, although it consists of a more or less variable organization, nothing is to stop the poem from turning against itself, to review its form, to deepen itself and to assert its power.

If we produce this indecision by accepting the emptiness of the poematic, it is because we are capable of accepting and of producing the hollow figure of the hymn in advance, as the figure of emptiness and as the most radical figure of the poetic.<sup>5</sup>

The hymn and therefore the poematic are therefore a transformation of language towards the poetic, from *logos* to *muthos*. If we are aware that the poematic can be characterized by the fact that it runs empty, that it is the emptying out of language, we can then consider it as a space where anything is possible, where all movements and turnarounds are possible: on the one hand in the celebration of an exterior thing, in the proclamation of divine names, of nature, of all things and on the other hand within the celebration of the poem itself, as an object *outside* of language but existing *through* language. It is precisely this emptiness of the poematic, to wit, the impossibility to say something significant (the departure from language), which implies that the poet must renew his exercise. If the poematic is founded upon the living, and therefore upon the *un-same* then we must therefore perpetually start over with the writing of the poem, try over and over again to express what we wish to say. The poematic is the repetition of the *un-same*: even if the form or the content is repeated, the poem will never be identical. We must now look closely at the meaning of the word *inchoative*, which precisely characterizes the poematic. The Latin verb *inchoare* in its first acceptance means to set about doing something, to begin, to undertake a task or to take something up once more that one had left aside. In its second acceptance, this verb means to begin, to remain incomplete, unfinished, and imperfect. The first meaning speaks of a direct hold on a thing or an object, of the act of beginning or recommencing an action. This may signify a commitment to a task without compensation or possibly perseverance, a sense of persistence if

we are to return to a task that remained unfinished. The second meaning of *inchoare* sheds light on the unfinished, incomplete character of an object. We can apply this definition to the poematic as an object that is never really finished, complete. Never managing to say exactly what it wanted due to its departure from language and at the same time being paradoxically derived from the latter. Furthermore, if we are to suppose that life is at the core of and constitutes the motivation of the poematic, just as W. Benjamin thinks<sup>6</sup>, the inchoate aspect of the poematic can only be reinforced. The poem is therefore an object to which we become attached, that we take up again, that we must constantly begin over and over. The poematic is a double celebration: a celebration of that which surrounds us, that which we live as well as a celebration of the form of the poem and of its use. As we saw at the beginning of this reflection, the hymn and the poematic are motivated by the celebration of the gods, of their glorification. With the modernity in the western world, the purpose of the poematic seems to have moved from the celebration of gods towards the celebration of profane themes or even towards the celebration of the poem. Just as if the gods had taken leave, the poematic turns towards life itself, towards language. Thus,



## A SUSPENSION OF TIME AND OF THE LIVING IS EXECUTED THROUGH LANGUAGE AND ITS RITUALIZATION.

all modern or contemporary poetry finds its origin in the celebration of the gods, or in their disappearance. The hymn takes on the form of a rhyme repeating the divine glory as a sound, whilst with the gods on leave modern poetry comes face to face with a stripped back poematic, it is freed from the task of religious glorification and therefore liberated from power. Here we can draw a parallel between this aspect of the poematic and the work of art in a broader sense. Since the most distant ages until the modern era not only chants and hymns but also paintings and sculptures were often the objects and representations dedicated to the gods. This or they served a decorative purpose<sup>7</sup>, destined to ornament the houses of those in power. With modernity and the progressive “Death of God”, the work of art, just as the poematic, becomes face to face with itself, faced with the emptiness it contains. If poems, paintings and sculptures are no longer designed to serve a religious or functional purpose, what is

their destiny? In the same manner as the poem, the work of art is confronted with itself, confronted with its sheer potential of power and yet confronted with its emptiness. We can suppose once again that just as with the poematic, it is life which forms and motivates the process of *artisticization*<sup>8</sup> and of art. The oeuvre, the work would then also be required to renew itself incessantly, to be repeated in the *un-same*, mirroring life, as a perpetually new experience. I would like to specify here that I do not aim to confound or level out poem with work of art, which are the result of different elements. However, if we are to agree that both are motivated by the experience of life, and that both operate after a departure from language, then we can place them as parallel. However we must also remain cautious concerning the supposition that the poem and the work of art should celebrate life, being liberated from their primary purpose of glorifying God and power. If the work of art and the poem of the western world no longer essentially celebrate the gods associated with power and the governing of man, we must then suppose that they celebrate different profane political systems, such as democracy. And if the hymn which was originally an organ of religious rituals has since modernity freed itself from the

this question a little later. Let us suppose that the work of art is really liberated from its function of divine glorifier, to become an independent organ. I would now like to raise the issue of another important element with regards to the links between poem, work of art and religion. If western art seems to have departed from its purpose of glorification of the gods to face only itself and political life, it would seem that art has conserved some aspects of its previous religious purpose. If the work of art and the poem were part and parcel of religious rituals, like tools maintaining God’s glory, what exactly happened when God took “leave”? These different artistic formats were no longer only religious pomp, so how did this transformation come about? If the work of art and the poem are now supposed to celebrate profane political life, is it not still in a ritual manner just as they celebrated a divine, religious power? Just as we have observed with the liturgical hymnal forms (*amen*), we were dealing with profane, spontaneous forms which had been diverted towards a religious and ritual use: the words are repeated, rendering the performance of the prayer and suspending life. With the religious upholding of the glory of God, life and the *un-same* are suspended, on hold *above* and *beside*. Only a form of life remains, and language is suspended. The manifestations of human life are transformed into rituals and conserved for centuries in repetition and in hymn, in the poematic and the work of art. A suspension of time and of the living is executed through language and its ritualization.

We have noted that the poem, even if it exists by means of language, is actually a departure from language or at least an attempt to transpose feelings and ideas into a particular format. It is not spoken language, nor is it prose. Depending on this format, this method of expression, the poematic performs a suspension of words and of living language. Furthermore we can consider the poematic gesture to be the fixing of an instant of thought, of feelings, of the *now* via language, a suspension of time. We can apply this quality of the poematic to all things more globally artistic, as a process of suspension of

5. IN *THÉORIE DE LA FÊTE*, FABIEN VALLOS, 2010, P.229 (TRANSLATED BY AILSA CAVERS)
6. IN *TWO POEMS BY FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, IN EARLY WRITINGS, 1910-1917*, WALTER BENJAMIN, HARVARD 2011, CHAPTER 30, P.171 TO 196
7. THE WORD DECORATE COMES FROM THE LATIN DECORARE WHICH SHARES A ROOT WITH DECUS MEANING DIGNITY, GLORY, MERIT. THEREFORE ONE DECORATES THAT WHICH HAS MERIT AND NOT NECESSARILY THAT WHICH DESERVES.
8. AN UNFORMAL AND CHANGING PROCESS OF TURNING SOMETHING (LIVING OR NOT) INTO ART

sole purpose of glorifying God, we must suppose that the ritual of glorification has migrated from one sphere of power to another.

We can imagine that the work of art will always celebrate some form of power, and that it is not the celebration of just life, but the celebration of political life, to wit, the context and conditions of the existence of such life. But we shall come back to

themselves. These ritual forms belong to a wider ritual of celebration and of upholding. One can suppose that when the poematic object is released from the sacred domain to orientate itself towards the profane, it conserves its ritual nature. A ritual celebration of political life. But does this ritual celebration necessarily imply praise or glorification? Even if the field of modern and contemporary art appears to be ritualistic, we ought not to

confound art and ritual. We can examine the Latin etymology of each word: *ritus* and *ars*. *Ritus* signifies custom, habit, a fixed function. *Ars* primarily signifies composition and assembly but also describes technical knowledge, skill and instructions. *Ars* also tells of the way to complete a task and thus gave the words adroit (*sollers*) and maladroit (*iners*). We will closely study this last meaning. If *ars* signifies technical knowledge or even a sort of rule, it also means the manner in which we follow such a rule. To put it differently, *ars* could indicate the way put things and rules to use. *Ars* therefore, does not necessarily define a compliance to the rule or the rite. We can thus link *ars* to the word *neg-lectio*, the non-lecture, negligence. *Neg-lectio* finds its root in the verb *neg-legere*, which literally means *non-lecture, non-read*, or not following to the letter. *Ritus* then would be *re-lectio, re-lecture*, the following of the rule, coming from the Latin *re-legere*: the root of the word religion. Religion is therefore the respect of the text in its permanently repeated re-reading and the artistic ambivalence relating to this text, not following it to the letter, choosing to observe or to neglect the text.

We have seen how the work of art, when celebrating divine power, forms little more than an organ of ritual, and even becomes a ritual in itself. With the fading of religious power in the western world, the artistic and the poetic seem not only liberated of their task of glorifying gods and power but also freed from a certain decorative function. Of course, historical context can change, but the artistic domain still exists according to this context. We must then conclude that the work of art or the poem are forever to celebrate a political regime, political life. They cannot be totally independent. Circling back to the etymological difference between *ritus* and *ars* we can posit that the nature of art essentially depends on historical and political context: Art's nature depends on its purpose and that which it celebrates. Art always exists in tandem with power, be it religious or profane. Art will either oppose itself to or glorify this power, if the choice is possible.

We have examined the relationship that exists between the arts and a ritual purpose. According to the function of the work of art, its nature hangs in balance between a respect of the rules, re-lecture (*re-lectio*) and a negligence of the rules (*neg-lectio*). We can imagine art and rite hand-in-hand, in turns coming together and drifting apart.

We can also remark here that the field of the arts contains a multitude of rituals in itself. From the simple format of a painting to the opening of an exhibition, from the idea of "style" to the teaching of art in art schools, we can pick up on elements which act as rituals. Entry requirements after all exist for the art student just as they exist for the Sunday painter.

However, we must not necessarily consider the existence of these rituals to be restrictive. It is in fact this multitude of rites and rules which form the conditions of creation, depending on the way in which we employ them. It is due to the existence of such rules or rather, rites that we must take a stand; we must produce our own views concerning them. Using this or that format, we enter into a kind of celebration of the artistic ritual, but it is also here that we encounter a reason to express criticism, to state one's position when faced with these rituals and rules. The artistic ritual is two-edged: on one side it seems to restrict, to frame or even to alienate production whereas on the

## The poem is a celebration of the *muthos*, of the fate of things.



1. IN *LE NOMBRE ET LA SIRÈNE, UN DÉCHIFFRAGE DU COUP DE DÉS DE MALLARMÉ*, FAYARD, 2011
2. *IBIDEM*
3. IN *ARCHAEOLOGY OF GLORY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY*, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P. 239
4. IN *TWO POEMS BY FRIEDRICH HÖLDERLIN, IN EARLY WRITINGS, 1910-1917*, WALTER BENJAMIN, HARVARD 2011, CHAPTER 30, P.171 TO 196

other hand, without the existence of such rituals, artistic production would have no reason to be. If these norms, these markers did not exist, there would be no possible function for artistic practice. We can suppose that the existence of the rule and the ritual triggers the possibility of a function. The varying rituals comprise

a sort of double availability. They could be considered not as barriers but as elements available to be used and to be surpassed. The act of attending art school, of learning art history, of painting on a canvas, to sum up, the act of taking part in the rituals, to celebrate the rituals, does not necessarily imply their glorification but more an opportunity to mistreat and misuse the ritual. Art could then take on the form of a non-religious religion. Art history, art school, art formats... we could be tempted to think of all these rituals as belonging to an atheist cult. Understandably, Quentin Meillassoux in *The Number and the Siren* understands Mallarmé's gesture of the

*Coup de Dés* as the intention to create a poem which would have the same effect as a religious hymn. Creating a *communio* with chance and with the emptiness of language, rather than with God. Just as the religious hymn creates a hold on the present, allowing a performativity in language, Mallarmé attempts to surpass

language alone.

Mallarmé nous aurait appris que la modernité avait en effet produit un prophète, mais effacé ; un messie, mais par hypothèse ; un Christ, mais constellatoire. Il aurait architecturé un fabuleux cristal d'inconsistance

**THERE EXISTS A PERMANENT TENSION OF THE LIVING BETWEEN REASON AND MYTH, BOTH FORMING THE CONDITIONS OF ITS EXISTENCE.**

this religious poetic to create a profane hymn. We must note that the 707<sup>th</sup> and almost last word of the poem is *sacre* (consecration), just as if it were there to render the poem performative. This word produces a sort of benediction upon what has been previously said, just like the *amen*. In this instance, we are not dealing with the benediction of the glory of God but with the acknowledgement of the absence of God, the benediction of

contenant en son coeur, visible par transparence, le geste de sirène, impossible et vif, qui l'avait engendré, et l'engendre toujours. Et le poète aurait ainsi diffusé le « sacre » de sa propre Fiction auprès de chaque lecteur acceptant de se nourrir de l'hostie mentale de ses Pages fragmentées. Le tout sous un athéisme exact, pour lequel le divin n'est rien au-delà du Soi s'articulant

au Hasard même. Le Coup de dés comme cristallisation christique du Hasard. Comme Christal de Néant.<sup>2</sup>

The prayer, the hymn to the glory of God becomes here the glorification of the contingency of language, of man. The Eucharist of man with God via the poetic is overturned: Through the poem, each man takes communion with chance. Each time we read this poem, this hymn, an experience of the present moment, of the *now* is renewed. The work of art in the western world is therefore perhaps not totally detached from its old links to all things religious, and will perhaps never be. By virtue of the rituals that compose it, as well as its celebrative and community value, the work of art seems to remain attached to the celebrative aspect of the religious hymn. Rather than celebrating the divine order, the work of art could be considered as celebration of the chance of use, of the contingency of all things.

We can now underline this idea linking the religious Eucharist and Mallarmé's intention in the *Coup de Dés*: the work of art seems only able to exist in a co-existence, in a sort of communion, with the participation of other people, the *other*. It is only in the participation of the other that the work of art or the poem can occur. To take this interpretation of Mallarmé's gesture a little further, we can look back to *The Kingdom and The Glory* by Giorgio Agamben. For Agamben, the *Coup de Dés* is not only a hymn, an *a-theological* liturgy but something *theological*<sup>3</sup>. Rather than an atheist religion whose faith would be founded upon a non-existent God, we would be dealing more with an atheist religion based on the postulate of the fundamental "allogism" of *theos*, of its

irrationalism. As we have previously noted, Mallarmé's poem is presented as a hymn, a liturgy that could not be recited, resisting a meaningful discourse, a sort of religious hymn pushed into a most extreme form. This would mean that Mallarmé has not necessarily composed a poem, a hymn celebrating the fact that God does not exist, but is saying that the simple idea of a God is irrational, founded on *muthos*. The poem is therefore a celebration of the *muthos*, of the fate of things.

We have seen that despite the links and similarities between the work of art with religion and ritual, *ars* (respect of the text) is actually the function we give to the rituals, the use we make of the text. *Ritus* is therefore an essential element in the occurrence of the work of art; inasmuch as the artistic field produces rituals and these rituals are the conditions of creation and of use. While the work of art and the poem appear to no longer be dedicated to the celebration of God, we can posit that a form of atheist religion remains. As we have seen, the field of art celebrates political life regardless of the era. Today, we can look upon ancient times or Christianity with hindsight but this is not the case with our contemporary era. Rather than stating that the work of art simply no longer celebrated religion and divine power, we have specified that it continues a certain celebration of political life. We then explained that the work of art celebrates chance, the contingency of political life and the use which is made of it.

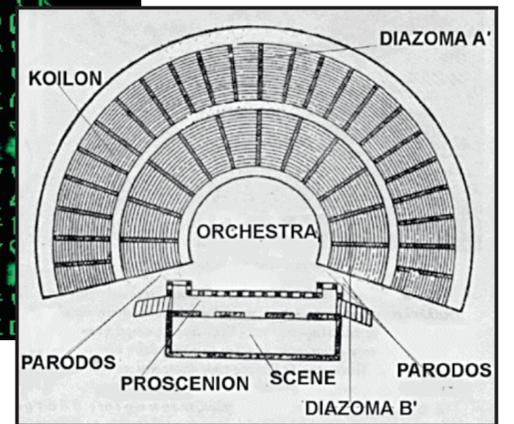
We have thus examined one aspect of celebration by looking closely at the etymological origins of words. We have concluded that celebration and glory are of a shared movement, but that to celebrate does not always

mean to glorify. We then asked ourselves what glory is formed of or what creates adhesion. We noticed that the practices linked to glorification of both the religious and the profane could swap places, almost being combined. A practice, a celebratory ritual of a profane power could find itself used in the glorification of a sacred power and vice-versa. We have seen that a shared mode of adhesion, of celebration of power resulted (be it divine or profane). This mode of adhesion takes on the form of a hymn, a doxology or the poetic, the work of art. These forms are exterior to language, yet exist only by language. They are forms of celebration of political life, a context in which works of art appear. The artistic field, the poetic are not more wholly liberated now than they were at a time when religious power reigned. To put it differently, contemporary works of art are not substantially separated from their ancient religious use.

We must not mistake the function we give to the work of art with that which the work of art celebrates. Their nature lies in the use we make of them and the use they make of ritual. If we are to agree that the work of art almost always celebrates political life, the use of the work of art can only depend on the ideological usage which is made of them. The artistic field and the poetic then seem to perpetually hesitate between *logos* and *muthos*, between ritual and spontaneity, between rule and chance. Both need ritual and format to exist. Walter Benjamin states that life is the poetic of the poem<sup>4</sup>; that life is at the core of the poem and of the work of art. There exists a permanent tension of the living between reason and myth, both forming the conditions of its existence.



**THE WORK OF ART WILL ALWAYS CELEBRATE SOME FORM OF POWER, AND THAT IT IS NOT THE CELEBRATION OF JUST LIFE, BUT THE CELEBRATION OF POLITICAL LIFE, TO WIT, THE CONTEXT AND CONDITIONS OF THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH LIFE.**



PART 2

# HUMANS, GOD, ECONOMY & SEDUCTION



## An unpredictable force that twist the direction of things

### OIKONOMIA APPARATUS SPECTACLE SE-DUCO

One can behold in capitalism a religion, that is to say, capitalism essentially serves to satisfy the same worries, anguish, and disquiet formerly answered by so-called religion. The proof of capitalism's religious structure – as not only a religiously conditioned construction, as Weber thought, but as an essentially religious phenomenon – still today misleads one to a boundless, universal polemic. We cannot draw close the net in which we stand. [...] Capitalism is a purely cultic religion (...). Capitalism itself developed parasitically on Christianity in the West - this must be shown not just in the case of Calvinism, but in the

other orthodox Christian churches - in such a way that, in the end, its history is essentially the history of its parasites, of capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

In the text *Humans, Gods and the Poem* concerning origins of celebration and glory, I ended up speaking about the close relation between arts and power, arts and rituals, religious rituals. The first question was, since god is dead, now that arts are not only there to serve god or a power of divine right what are arts, what is now culture here for. I concluded by saying that artistic regimes were entirely depending on any form of power and furthermore of a political context. That is not to say that arts favour power but have to *make do* with it.

An other conclusion was that despite the separation of arts from religious rituals, they hadn't completely leave their ritual and decorative functions. We have to remind here that the Latin word *decorare* has the same root as the word *decus* which means dignity, glory, worth. If artistic regimes were designed for representatives of power (place of worship, buildings, palaces) we can no longer say that today. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, arts and culture got generalized simultaneously with industrial revolution and the advent of Capitalism.

If arts depend upon a political context it also means that arts depend on a economic one. If arts are no longer the privilege of the representatives of power it seems fair wondering how artistic fields can now live and survive. Who pays? This won't be the question here.

It is interesting to notice that systems of men's governance got separated little by little from their divine vocation and origin to put it aside, and this concurrently to the progressive transformation of arts function toward power, its popularization. From a divine and providential government of men, combining political, economic, social and religious functions (and aesthetic regimes coming with it) we have passed to a separation of these powers toward a so-called secular and democratic model (reserving itself all former functions except the religious one put back to the private sphere). But, since *God is dead*, since Providential government of men no longer rules and was replaced by our modern secular government what could men believe in? What and where was the transcendental and salvific function of this new capitalist government (formerly fulfilled by religion)? What were the spiritual basis of this new model? What do men, freshly liberated from the oppression of divine right government, believed in when they "choose" and slowly set this new system in the name of reason? It's a nice and interesting habit that human has to deeply believe that he can apply the *tabula rasa*, building something new from nothing, the strong certitude that he can completely change something, a system, a norm, an habit that he had, or that his predecessors had. Of course things change, but it is hard, very hard to believe that we can entirely disdain, disregard what we informally inherited from the past, to

make as if we were *demiourgos*, creating the world from nothing (which is, in a way, not incorrect). It seems that we cannot do new without keeping *signatures*, traces, signs more or less resistant from the old model.

We will now think about our modern government model in comparison with the former Christian and providential model of government of souls and so because despite our modern government (and furthermore Capitalism) little by little split with God and religion it kept many similarities with it, as Walter Benjamin duly said in 1921 according to a lecture of Max Weber.<sup>2</sup>

I will first head into the definition of the Greek word *oikonomia*<sup>3</sup> (the origin of the word economy) that means administration or management of the *oikos* (the house). The *oikos* is not to consider as the modern single-family house but as a complex organism with different relations that Aristotle divides into three groups: the "despotic" one which is the relation between masters and slaves, the "paternal" which is the relation between parents and children and then the "gamic" which is the relation between husband and wife. These "economic relations" have no rules, it is depending on each case, on every specific house, despite this there is a real administrative dimension in the activity of the *oikonomia*, which "is presented (...) as a functional organization, an administrative activity that is bound only to the rules of the ordered functioning of the house (...)."<sup>4</sup>

So the first profane meaning of the word signified a domestic and practical activity of facing up to a problem, a situation in the house first, but it could also be on a ship, in a company. From this first acceptance the term acquired a rhetorical acceptance. To speak about "the ordered arrangement of the material for an oration or a treatise", and yet the generic meaning was an "activity ordered for a purpose", a very mysterious and vague sense.

According to an Aristotelian lecture, the *tekné oikonomiké* (economic technique) was as different from politics than the *oikos* was different from the *polis*. First, the politician

and the king belong to the sphere of the *polis*, secondly, the *despotés* (the master of the house) or the *oikonomos* belongs to the *oikos*, the private sphere of the house, the family. But, the term got contaminated and progressively displaced:

Starting already with the Hellenistic age and then more explicitly in the Imperial age, the political and economic vocabularies enter a relation of mutual contamination, which tends to render the Aristotelian opposition between *oikos* and *polis* obsolete. The anonymous author of the second book of the pseudo-Aristotelian treatise on Economy is thus able to put economy in the strict sense (defined as *idiotike*, private) alongside an *oikonomia basilike* and even an *oikonomia politike* (a real nonsense from Aristotle's perspective).<sup>5</sup>

On the first hand it was meaning that the house (*oikos*) was a contracted version of the city (*polis*) and furthermore that the *oikonomia* was a contracted version of the politics and on the second hand it was meaning that the city was like a large house and that the politics were a common and enlarged economy (*oikonomia*). A reciprocal exchange, and displacement of the activities from the private and public spheres. A very decisive change whose aftermath is still efficient in our present politic systems, it is not rare to see the metaphor of the political community as a "house".

The very point is that it is in this meaning of *oikonomia* and *oikos* that the first Christians used the terms to speak about "the house of God" (*oikos théou*) and to define the community of God. When in the II century the Fathers of Church decided to institute a (controversial) Trinitarian articulation of the divine life, (and of the Christian figure) that is to say the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, they chose the word *oikonomia*, that already had this pragmatic and administrative meaning:

This economy the blessed John, too, passes

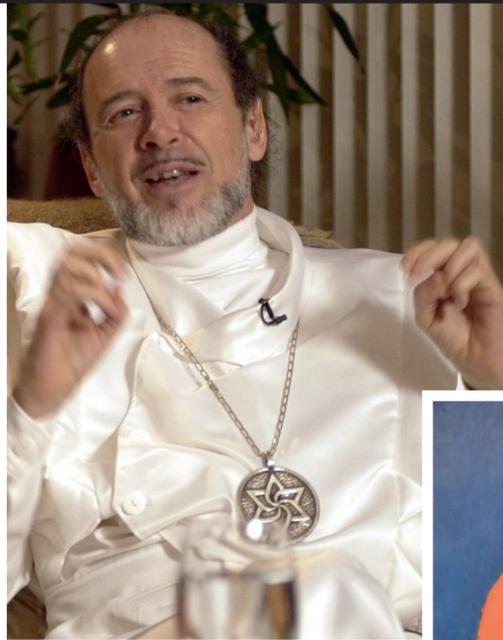
onto us through the witness of his Gospel, and he maintains that this Word is God, with the words: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). But then if the Word, who is God, is with God, someone might well say: "What about this statement that there are two gods?" While I will not say that there are two gods-but rather one-I will say there are two persons; and thirdly the economy, the grace of the Holy Spirit. For though the Father is one, there are two persons,-because there is the Son as well: and the third, too, - the Holy Spirit. The Father gives orders, the logos performs the work, and is revealed as Son, through whom belief is accorded to the Father. By a harmonious economy [*oikonomia* symphonias] the result is a single God.<sup>6</sup>

This was a crucial and very important change for Christianity. If God is one perfect entity, the way he organises His house and the world He created (his *oikonomia*) is Triune. God is the Father, the unity and the power but he gives His son, Jesus, the administration and the government of men. From that moment the term *oikonomia* specialized in signifying mainly the Incarnation of the Son but also the economy of



1. IN *CAPITALISM AS RELIGION* (1921) IN *SELECTED WRITINGS VOL.1*, WALTER BENJAMIN, HARVARD PRESS, 1996, P.288-290
2. THE PROTESTANT ETHIC AND THE SPIRIT 3. IN *WHAT IS AN APPARATUS ?* GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2009, P.7
4. IN *THE MYSTERY OF THE ECONOMY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY*, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P.18
5. *IBIDEM*, P.24
6. IN *CONTRA NOETUM*, HIPPLYTUS, P. 74 IN *THE MYSTERY OF THE ECONOMY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY*, GIORGIO AGAMBEN,

redemption and salvation. The *oikonomia* was the new apparatus bringing the idea of a divine and providential government of the world, its salvation. What had been done to explain the *reason* of Jesus and the permanent unity of God despite this Trinity finally brought a new paradigm, the being was separated from the action and the will, the praxis and nature from the ontology. There is a undeniable groundlessness of a praxis without ontology, and furthermore a groundlessness of an economy being just a praxis, because there is no foundation of acting (politics, economy) in being. What was also signifying this change in the Christian theology was that the will appeared without any basis from the being, like a gratuitous act, because of this fracture of action and ontology :



Centuries later, in the heyday of Scholasticism, Thomas Aquinas clearly restates Contra Gentiles the impossibility of founding creation in being: "God acts, not per necessitatem naturae, but per arbitrium voluntatis"<sup>1</sup>

This was reinforcing the fact that first the divine message of God was the *mysterious* revealing itself through the Holy Spirit, and secondly that His economy was furthermore a mystery. It was a double mystery: the mystery of the economy of God, whose will would gather the being form of the *praxis*. It was truly an *unfounded* economy, in the sense that there was no necessary foundation of the action, but a simple activity of administration of the souls, an economy (based on the very first domestic meaning of the word *oikonomia*). A schizophrenic doctrine that "the theological doctrine of *oikonomia* left as its legacy to Western culture."<sup>2</sup> But also a doctrine that was subtly taken back, pursued, despite the so-called secularization of Western culture. What remained from the Christianity seemed to be just this "economic" relation, this unruléd and *unrooted* way of ordering, managing, running a house, people, objects, etc., under the simple and lonely criterion of the will, adapting to a situation. The uncertainty and randomness of such a global system seem quite unbelievable. But, it is not as simple as the fast presentation I did here. It was a matter of centuries, of discordance concerning the translation from Hebraic to Greek, from Hebraic to Latin, and also concerning the translation of God's word, *Logos*.

From a providential and salvific Christian government of the world based on God's *oikonomia*, we progressively went to a secularized providential and salvific government of the world based on a kind of religious *god is dead oikonomia*. The two different systems, the two machines finally have the same original eschatological vocation of Providence, this mysterious providence : "this machine, which, in a sort of colossal parody of theological *oikonomia*, has assumed the legacy of the providential governance of the world"<sup>3</sup> From the perspective of this legacy, the activity of governing is not so much about politics but more appears more as a pure activity of

## A peaceful and happy humanity, freed from God, bathing in the science and logos, bathing in its own juice

economy, of administration and management, and it is true on the other way around, the economy as a pure activity of government, looking for nothing else than its own replication. Our modern system could be seen in that way as a pure mythological machine, paradoxically producing a spectral and mystical belief, where fundamentally action and being are separated. A system whose supremacy of the *oikonomia* implies that the politic is secondary.

However, the thesis according to which the economy could be a secularized theological paradigm acts retroactively on theology itself, since it implies that from the beginning theology conceives divine life and the history of humanity as an *oikonomia*, that is, that theology is itself "economic" and did not simply become so at a later time through secularization. From this perspective, the fact that the living being who was created in the image of God in the end reveals himself to be capable only of economy, not politics, or, in other words, that history is ultimately not a political but an "administrative" and "governmental" problem, is nothing but a logical consequence of economic theology.<sup>4</sup>

In the text *Humans, Gods and Poems* we have seen different apparatuses which made the propagation and the longevity of (the apparatus of) Christianity, the importance of rumour, repetition, hymn, myth, different ways of involving other men (and not in spite of themselves) in a community, and a possibility of participation in this community (even if it is just in celebrating it). What makes the strength of any system is its ability (and necessity) to produce their subject, they need to imply a process of subjectification, an "economy of subjectification" (otherwise they are a pure exertion of violence).

When the Latin Fathers translated the word *oikonomia* in Latin, they chose the word *dispositio*<sup>5</sup> (one of the five figure of speech), which means organization and arrangement, and that gave the word *dispositif* in French or *apparatus* in English. Therefore we can consider the meaning of the economy, the *oikonomia*, the government of men as an apparatus, and the

apparatus as an economy. We can now look at the definition of apparatus that G. Agamben proposes after Michel Foucault :

I shall call an apparatus literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviours, opinions, or discourses of living beings. Not only, therefore, prisons, mad houses, the panopticon, schools, confession, factories, disciplines, juridical measures, and so forth (whose connection with power is in a certain sense evident), but also the pen, writing, literature, philosophy, agriculture, cigarettes,



navigation, computers, cellular telephones and why not-language itself, which is perhaps the most ancient of apparatuses-one in which thousands and thousands of years ago a primate inadvertently let himself be captured, probably without realizing the consequences that he was about to face.<sup>6</sup>

Apparatuses are everything. In the legacy of *oikonomia*, they are all the things which whatever positively or negatively govern humans. All the things human produce and which also produce human. Every apparatus has a process of subjectification (and desubjectification) leading to the constitution of a new subject. In the case of the confession and through the (ancient) apparatus of penance, "a new I is constituted through the negation and, at the same time, the assumption of the old I. The split of the subject performed by the apparatus of penance resulted, therefore, in the production of a new subject, which found its real truth in the non-truth of the already repudiated sinning I."

The theory of numerous philosophers, is that today, in the present phase of Capitalism, the incommensurable production of new apparatuses makes that there is not any difference between the process of subjectification and desubjectification, they are continually going aside. There is no re-composition of a proper new subject, but an *undecidable* one, a larval one. No real subjectification can answer these huge processes of desubjectification produced by apparatuses. The very point about these modern apparatuses is the matter of their *use*, and also the way they are *given, exhibited*, but I will come back later to this question.

I am going to look again at Walter Benjamin's text "Capitalism as Religion" to have a new perspective concerning the apparatuses in the context of our present capitalist model. According to him, Capitalism as the religion of modernity has three different and main characteristics. First it is a purely cultic religion: "Within it everything only has meaning in direct relation to the cult: it knows no special dogma, no theology."<sup>7</sup> Secondly, this cult is permanent, it is the celebration of a cult "sans trêve et sans merci"<sup>8</sup>, there is no difference between work and holidays, it is rather a permanent holiday in which

work coincides with the celebration of the same cult. And finally, this cult engenders blame, guiltiness. It is not directed toward atonement or redemption for guilt but toward guilt itself. An enormous sense of guilt knowing no redemption becomes the cult, not in order to repent for his guilt but to make it universal, and *at once and for all*, to include God himself in this guilt.

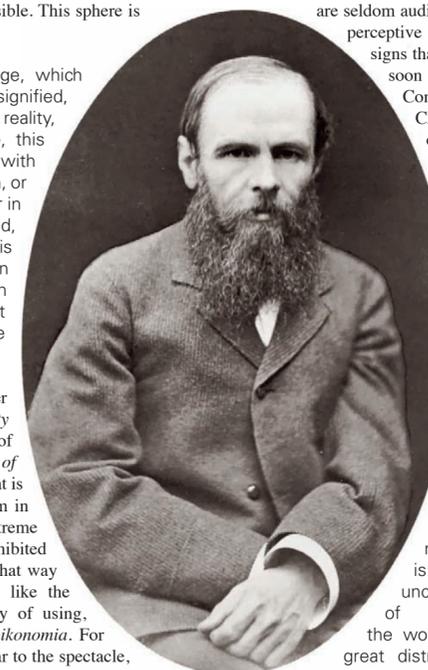
Following the footsteps of Christian religion, Capitalism pushed to an extreme the structure of separation: dividing every thing, object, human, place, activity from itself. A process of division different from the one separating profane from sacred, humans from God. To such an extent that there is finally, nothing left to divide. Profanation and consecration go now hand-in-hand, without any difference. The very separation inherent to the modern objects is their division into use-value and

destroys the things (food, object, clothes) is nothing but the impossibility and the nullification of any use (which presuppose that the substance of the thing remains intact). The Museum, as the very product of Capitalism underlines this fact : it occupies the role of the temple where things were sacrificed, passing from profane to sacred sphere. Everything that passes through the museum becomes out of use, whatever it is art, rituals, philosophy, traditions, etc. when they pass through they lose any use-value or exchange-value to get an exhibition-value, a quite abstract one.

The spectacular character of modern industrial society has nothing fortuitous or superficial about it ; on the contrary, this society is based on the spectacle in the most fundamental way. For the spectacle, as the perfect image of the ruling economic order, ends are nothing and development is all although the only thing into which the spectacle plans to develop is itself.<sup>12</sup>

Our modern economic system of government of men has this particularity of self-celebrating permanently, or we can also think that it creates all the tools and *possibilities* to be celebrated. As there is no God anymore, the only thing to be celebrated is a kind of spectral *us*, a peaceful and happy humanity, freed from God, bathing in the science and *logos*, bathing in its own juice. We are in fact celebrating this secularized providential machine of government.

"As the indispensable packaging for things produced as they are now produced, as a general gloss on the rationality of the system, and as the advanced economic sector directly responsible for the manufacture of an ever-growing mass of image-objects, the spectacle is the chief product of present-day society".<sup>13</sup> The machine turns on itself, in a self reciprocity (in the legacy of Christianity). According to Adorno and Horkheimer, the society of spectacle and the cultural industry (as an organ of our *oikonomia*) is completely uniform. From radio, to cinema, and from press every sector is standardized with one another. Even political oppositions, in their aesthetic exhibition are unanimous to celebrate the praise of this system. On the other hand, despite the criterion of the new in the areas of spectacle and consumption, there is a paradoxical search for things which are already well-known but in a new version, a spectacular repetition of the same in a *new way*. And even, "anyone who resists can only survive by fitting in. Once his particular brand of deviation from the norm has been noted by the industry, he belongs to it as does the land-reformer to Capitalism. Realistic dissidence is the trademark of anyone who has a new idea in business. In the public voice of modern society accusations are seldom audible; if they are, the perceptive can already detect signs that the dissident will soon be reconciled."<sup>14</sup>



the exchange-value, producing kinds of *fantasmagorias*, ungraspable fetishes. It is also true for "everything that is done, produced or experienced - even the human body, even sexuality, even language. They are now divided from themselves and placed in a separate sphere that no longer defines any substantial division and where all use becomes and remains impossible. This sphere is consumption."<sup>9</sup>

But certainly for the present age, which prefers the sign to the thing signified, the copy to the original, fancy to reality, the appearance to the essence, this change, inasmuch as it does away with illusion, is an absolute annihilation, or at least a reckless profanation; for in these days illusion only is sacred, truth profane. Nay, sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness.<sup>10</sup>

And so begins the first chapter "Separation perfected" of the *Society of the Spectacle*, with this quotation of Feuerbach's Preface for the *Essence of Christianity*. An already old story that is the one of spectacle, that Capitalism in its current phase, developed to an extreme point, where things are constantly exhibited and separated from themselves. In that way consumption and spectacle appear like the two sides of a single impossibility of using, the two main organs of the same *oikonomia*. For Debord too, the separation is peculiar to the spectacle, it is the language of spectacle that "unites what is separate, but it unites it only in its separateness."<sup>11</sup> The modern spectacle shows what society can do. But the expression *permitted* does not signify *possible*. It seems that capitalist model managed to built something unprofitable. Through consumption which necessarily

10. IN PREFACE FOR THE SECOND EDITION, 1843 IN ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY, LUDWIG FEUERBACH, FEUERBACH INTERNET ARCHIVE IN SEPARATION PERFECTED IN SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE, GUY DEBORD, BLACK AND RED, 1977

11. IN SEPARATION PERFECTED IN SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE, GUY DEBORD, ZONE BOOKS, 1994, N. 29

12. IBIDEM, N. 13

13. IBIDEM, N.15

14. IN THE CULTURE INDUSTRY: ENLIGHTENMENT AS MASS DECEPTION IN THE DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT, THEODOR ADORNO & MAX HORKHEIMER, 1947, MARXISTS.ORG (CONSULTED IN AUGUST 2014)

15. IN THE NEW PROPAGANDA IN PROPAGANDA, EDWARD BERNAYS, IG PUBLISHING, 2005, P.47

16. IN ARCHAEOLOGY OF GLORY IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P. 237

17. IN THE SECRET AND THE CHALLENGE IN SUPERFICIAL ABYSSES IN SEDUCTION, JEAN BAUDRILLARD, CTHEORY BOOKS, 2001, P.83-84

But we can also think that this indubitable repetition of the same content (that cannot be too different, or different in the same direction) will maybe be in such a turning-in-the-void that it will disappear. Finally what remains is just the technique, that keeps progressing. I truly think people don't look, sometimes, too much into contents of films, series, etc., but rather in the technical and rhetorical development, the way same stories and schemes are newly and nicely built, told. The total *materialist abstraction* of such a machine, both separating and standardizing, consecrating and profaning without any difference, seems to be a parody, or rather a rhapsody. Maybe toward this infinite meaningless repetitions, this model will get out of breath. In retrospect, we can think about the liturgical form proper to Christianity, when people where chanting hymns, repeating after the priest the same words, the same *Amen* without understanding the true meaning, and also making language as a *pure abstract formal thing*, a sound : "the turning in the void of language as the supreme form of glorification. The hymn is the radical deactivation of signifying language the word rendered completely inoperative and, nevertheless, retained as such in the form of liturgy."<sup>16</sup>

We can consider that our present system is the very celebration of this form of deactivation, of the use, of the meaning, the celebration of the separation of things from themselves, of the being and the acting. Behind this ancient act of participating, of chanting, celebrating with others, there is this too-human need and desire of being *part of*, of being *here now*, which is a souvenir, a deeply stored primitive instinct, inherited from our old almost-humans-ancestors. This feeling of being taken, of being out of any meaning, where being and acting are not divided anymore.

It is interesting to notice that the words separation and seduction have the same Latin origin from the word *se-duco*, which means literally *pull apart*. The two words had this similar original meaning of something separated from itself, or something dividing something else. The word seduction had the meaning of *temptation* (with its sexual content) only later in the Christian Latin, in between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. According to Baudrillard, seduction is a possible figure of our liberty, an hypnotic apparatus crystallising all attention out of any effect of sense. To him a dead man isn't the man that cannot produce anymore, but the one who does not want to be seduced or to seduce anymore.

Everything is seduction and nothing but seduction. They wanted us to believe that everything was production. The theme song of world transformation: the play of productive forces is what regulates the course of things. Seduction is merely an immoral, frivolous, superficial, and superfluous process, limited to the realm of signs and appearances, devoted to pleasure and the usufruct of useless bodies. But what if everything, contrary to appearances - in fact, in accord with a secret rule of appearances - operates by seduction?<sup>17</sup>

Seduction is about appearances, about void, about bodies.

1. IN CONTRA GENTILES, BOOK 2, CHAPTER 23 IN BEING AND ACTING IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P.56
2. IN WHAT IS AN APPARATUS ?, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2009, P.10
3. IBIDEM, P.23
4. IN TWO PARADIGMS IN THE KINGDOM AND THE GLORY, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2011, P.3
5. IN WHAT IS AN APPARATUS ?, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2009, P.11
6. IN WHAT IS AN APPARATUS ?, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2009, P.14
7. IN CAPITALISM AS RELIGION (1921) IN SELECTED WRITINGS VOL.1, WALTER BENJAMIN, HARVARD PRESS, 1996, P.259
8. IBIDEM, (ORIGINALLY IN FRENCH)
9. IN IN PRAISE OF PROFANATION IN PROFANATIONS, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, ZONE BOOKS, 2007, P.81

- 1. IN DEATH IN SAMARKAND IN SUPERFICIAL ABYSSES IN SEDUCTION, JEAN BAUDRILLARD, CTHEORY BOOKS, 2001, P.75
- 2. IN THE EFFIGY OF THE SEDUCTRESS IN SUPERFICIAL ABYSSES IN SEDUCTION, JEAN BAUDRILLARD, CTHEORY BOOKS, 2001, P.89
- 3. IN DEATH IN SAMARKAND IN SUPERFICIAL ABYSSES IN SEDUCTION, JEAN BAUDRILLARD, CTHEORY BOOKS, 2001, P.75
- 4. IN THE EFFIGY OF THE SEDUCTRESS IN SUPERFICIAL ABYSSES IN SEDUCTION, JEAN BAUDRILLARD, CTHEORY BOOKS, 2001, P.96

Every system running in a total complicity, such as signs don't have meanings anymore and produce a huge power of fascination; the systems are fascinating because of their esotericism, preserving themselves from external logics. The attraction due to emptiness is the basis of seduction, and not the accumulation of signs but their absorption. Only signs, without referents, empty, senseless, absurd and elliptical signs, absorb us in a kind of irrational and magical way; it is the power of the insignificant signifier, the power of a meaningless signifier.

Elsewhere words and gestures are emptied of their meaning by unflagging repetition and scansion. To wear meaning out, to tire it out in order to liberate the pure seduction of the null signifier or empty term - such is the strength of ritual magic and incantation.<sup>1</sup>

We think again about the part *Human, Gods and Poems* where had seen the process *de-sementization* of language through acclamation, hymn, discourse, etc. According to Baudrillard, seduction is the very deactivator of any sense, of *truth*. It is an unpredictable force that twist the direction of things. It not the meaning of the discourse that is seducing, but its very appearance, its nuances, its inflexions and the circulation of signs at its surface. *All meaningful discourse seeks to end appearance*: this is its attraction, its imposture. Seduction is always where we don't expect it, that is what makes it power. We can think seduction is linked with an old primitive instinct. Seduction seems to be an inherent thing to human but also animal sphere, which happens in a very different way. Seduction parade is recorded in their instinct in a perfect ritual. It is what makes animal as the less natural living being on the planet as he uses artifices, ornaments but in a very naive way:

Even in their dances and bodily ornamentation, their

animal grace is a product of a series of observances, rules and analogies, which makes it the opposite of natural chance. All the prestigious attributes associated with animals are ritual traits. The "natural" finery of animals is similar to the artificial finery of humans, who, one might add, have always sought to incorporate the former into their rites. If there is a preference for animal masks, it is because animals immediately appear as ritual masks, as a play of signs and a strategy of finery - as is the case with human rituals. The very morphology of primitive rituals, their furs and feathers, gestures and dances are a prototype of ritual efficacy. That is, they never form a functional system (reproduction, sexuality, ecology, mimicry - the postulates of an extremely impoverished ethology reworked and corrected by functionalism), but an ostentatious ceremony for mastering signs, and a cycle for seducing meaning, where the signs gravitate irresistibly around each other so as to reproduce themselves as if by magnetic recurrence, resulting in dizziness, a loss of meaning, and the sealing of an indestructible pact amongst the participants.<sup>2</sup>

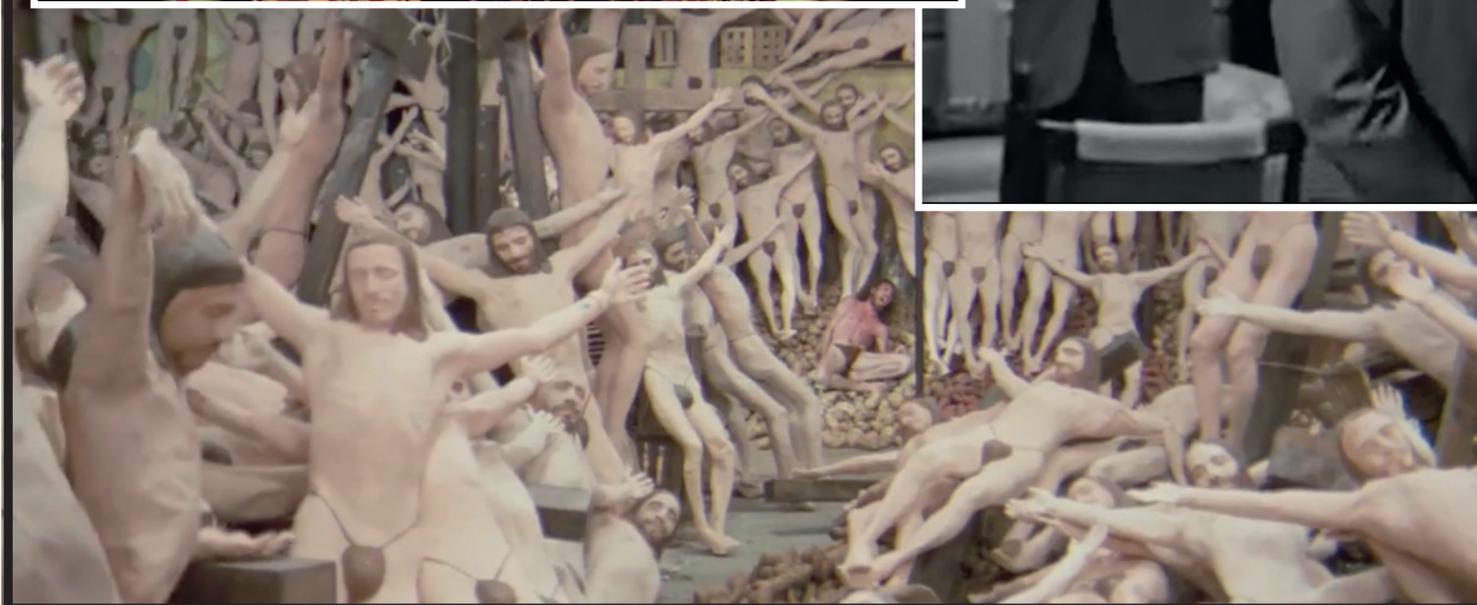
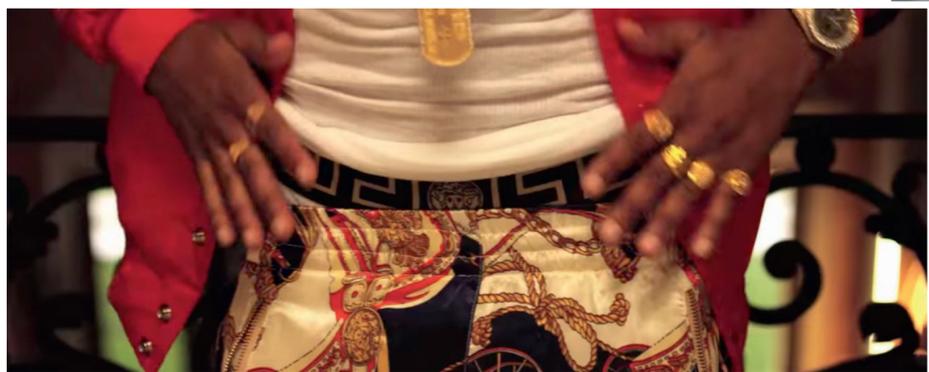
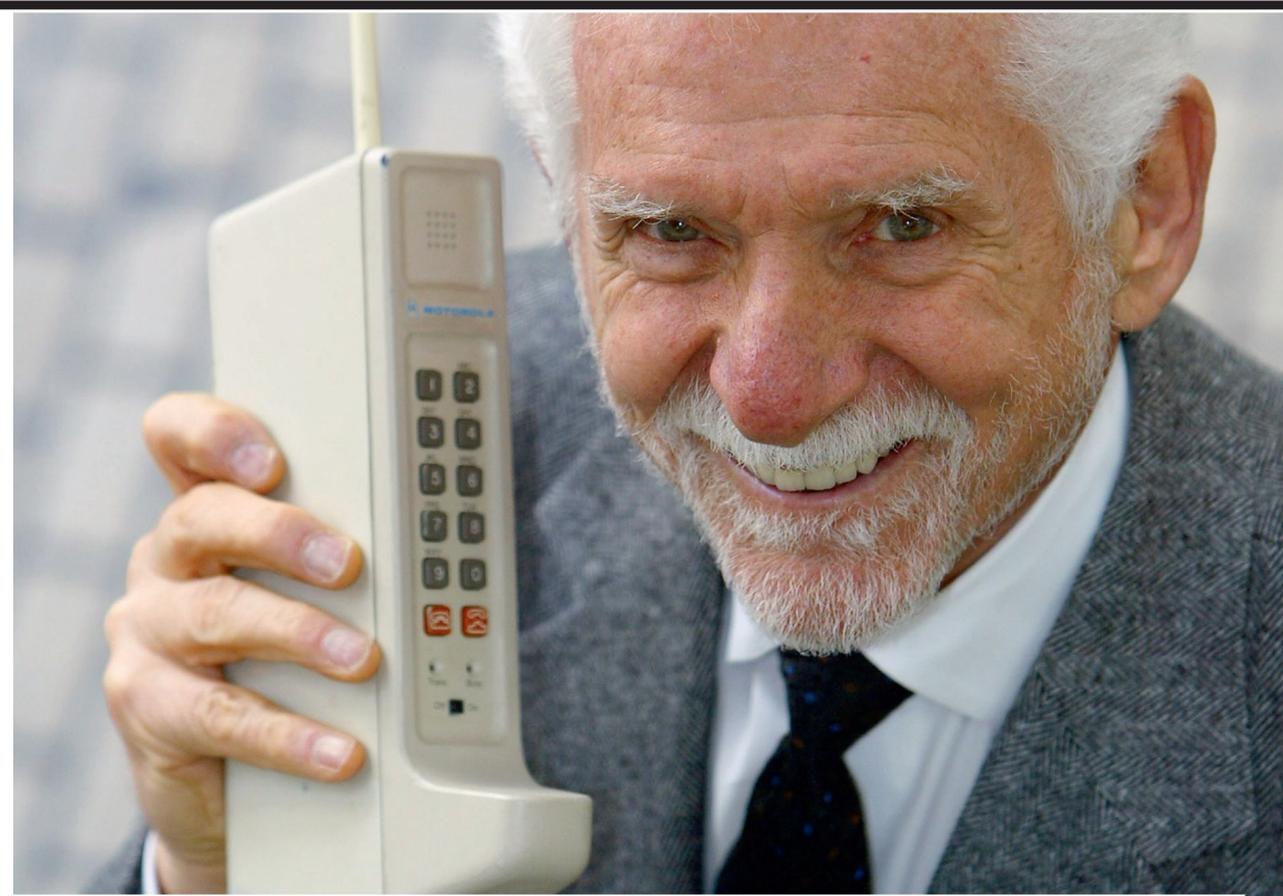
If animals are seducing us it is because of their high degrees of ritualized behaviors. Rituality is a much larger system encompassing the living and the dead, humans and animals, as well as a nature whose periodic movements, catastrophes serve as ritual signs. On the other way, human sociality is much more poor, it can only bring together one species under the sign of Law while rituality succeeds it through the rules and its infinite play of analogies "a form of cyclical order, universal exchange". Rituality is in that way the reign of appearance, ornamentation but not decoration. Seduction through rituality is a dividing process but a also a gathering one, or rather it is a process in which things *cannot* be divided but in a constant relationship, in a constant movement of seduction. Outside animal sphere, we can also consider seduction as the very unpredictable, ungraspable and powerful tool of *detournement*. Seduction has a lot in common with *magic*. The power of words, that is to say their symbolic efficiency

is greater when uttered in the void. When they have neither context no referent, they can take on the power of a self-fulfilling prophecy (or a self-defeating one): "Thus, against all logic, it is the improbable prophecies that come true; all that is required is that they not make too much sense. Otherwise they would not be prophecies. Such is the bewitchment of magical speech, such is the sorcery of seduction."<sup>3</sup> Then would be governments, systems, sacred or profane kinds of prophecies fulfilling themselves? Would they be regimes of seduction whose meaning core would constantly disappear under their appearance? However what Baudrillard tell us is that seduction and magic do not concern belief or make-belief, their logic is not mediation but immediacy whatever the sign is. Would it mean that we are rather seduced by our systems rather than we believe in them? Can we at least say that our systems are seducing?

[...] if once, historically, there were throngs hot with adoration, religious passion, sacrifice and insurrection, now there are masses cold with seduction and fascination. Their effigy is cinematographic and implies a different sacrifice.<sup>4</sup>

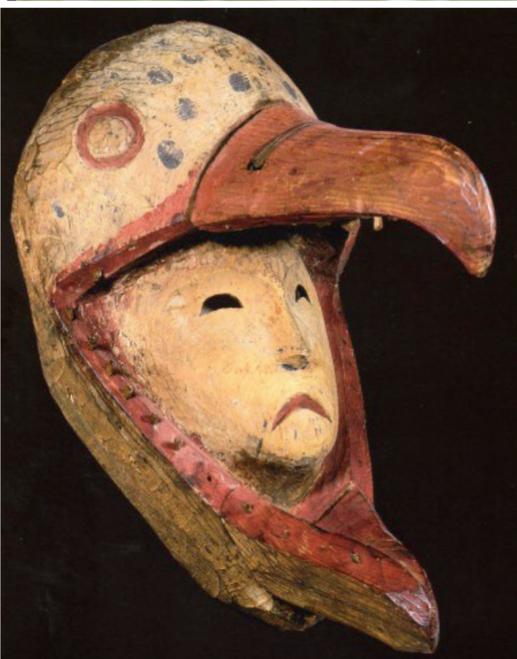
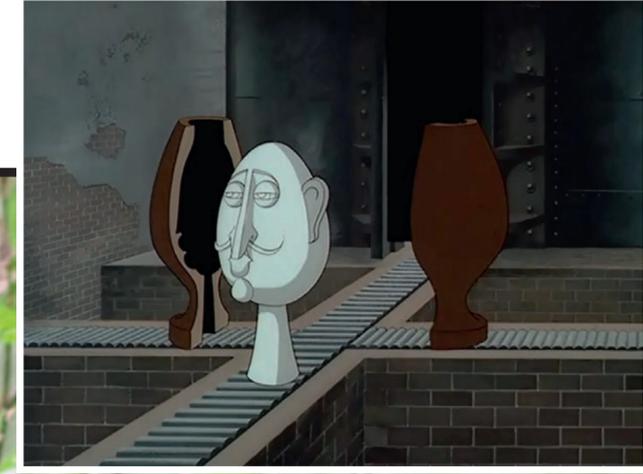
Are we finally more reactive to processes of non-sense, abstraction, pure appearance and immanence than we thought we were? Are we more *animal* than we thought? Or maybe it never left us.

Or we are animals who decided that they were human. Anyway, whatever the system of government is, every human is a crucial and undeniable participant. Despite he can be alienated, controlled by any sorcery, despite he can be alienated by its own nature, he is always motivated by its desire of happiness, of being *here now*, its desire of seducing and being seduced. What is to think now is what are its possibilities through participation and usage to be *more and less* than a human. What are my possibilities and how can I handle my present (and all its apparatuses) my culture, how and in which level can I participate and celebrate? What are my tools? What can I trust? Can I believe?

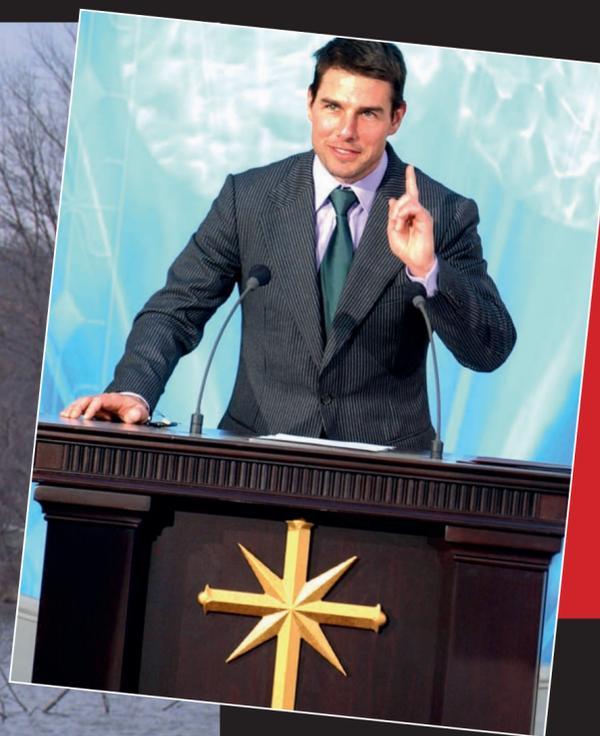
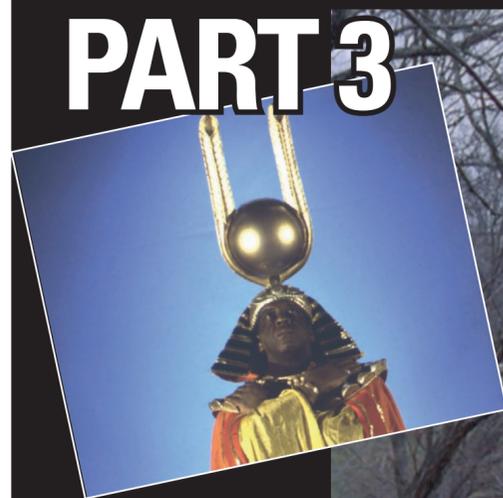


**Behind this ancient act of participating, of chanting, celebrating with others, there is this too-human need and desire of being part of, of being here now.**

**There is a undeniable groundlessness of a praxis without ontology, and furthermore a groundlessness of an economy being just a praxis, because there is no foundation of acting (politics, economy) in being**



## PART 3



**IS THE BEST  
CRITICISM NOT ONE  
OF NEGLIGENCE,  
OF INATTENTION  
TOWARDS THAT  
WHICH WE CONSIDER  
ILLEGITIMATE,  
WORTHLESS?**

# HUMAN AS AN ACTIVE AND INDISPENSABLE

# PARTICIPANT

**(in the era of undecidability)**

## **PARTICIPATION ENKOMION PAR-ODIA PRO-FANARE**

We will now consider a different aspect of celebration, relating to notions of use and of participation. Having first observed the characteristics of celebration in a religious context - a context of *re-lecture*, of celebration as glorification - we were able to conclude that to celebrate does not simply mean to praise. We noted that celebration relates more to the idea of a function, the way in which we read a "text" (echoing the idea of *re-lectio*). The purpose of celebration lies in how we read this "text", how we "translate" and interpret it. This sole idea of celebration and use directly

implies a notion of participation. By choosing such and such artistic format, by selecting a material, by photographing this or that object I am participating in their re-presentation, their use. We have previously concluded that the use of rituals and therefore of formats was an invariable necessity to the creative act. We must now look further afield and take into account not only formats and rituals but everything we make use of, including the things outside of the artistic field, however porous such a border may seem. We will explore other forms of celebration, whose function lies neither in a dimension of re-lecture nor in the work of art as glorification but *a contrario*, a form of celebration as a possible misappropriation or renewal of a thing with a critical aim. Herein lays a major question: does the act of using something in order to criticize it give a sort of value to that thing in simple re-representation? Is the best criticism not one of negligence, of inattention towards that which we consider illegitimate, worthless?

Perhaps, just as with the example of the *Coup de Dés*, we should re-present or take on the form of the thing we wish to criticize? We must explore and question different modes of participation and of use that we make of things. But firstly, in parallel with the reflection lead around Mallarmé, we will

consider notions of participation and of communion: to wit, the necessity of participants in the becoming of a work of art. When one produces a sculpture, a video or a painting, a first gesture of celebration is made, but these objects can only really come into existence when they are addressed to another person beside oneself, when the *other* encounters the object. A work of art sits therefore in a position of double celebration: it forms the use of things but can only come into existence when in *common*, when "offered" to others. In other terms, the production of an object participates in suspension of the common, yet can only exist within the common. We will question the participative dimension and the idea of a common as a founding element to all artistic gestures. We must understand the notion of *common* not as "everyone" but as what a certain number of persons can share. As we had observed in *Humans, Gods and Poems*, the *celeber* comprised a meaning of "numerous around something" yet not always in the perspective of celebrating glory and power. *Celeber* can also be attributed to an object or a road amongst other things. We can therefore invoke here the Latin term *communis* (*com-munis*)<sup>1</sup>, which signifies levelling work carried out by a group of people for the communities sake. We are dealing with a task, with manual work performed by a group and intended for the use of others. We can therefore consider the *communis*, the

common, to be the act of working together on an edifice or a space, which will then be celebrated, used, frequented by others. The coexistence and sharing of the community takes shape within this space, which becomes a place of double participation: there are those who construct and those who experience the edifice. We can then put forward the idea that participation in the common and experiencing community is an essential human need, whatever the size of the community. Whether or not this participation is thought out, conscious, we always look to find other people with whom to share something. It would therefore seem that it is more the experience of community rather than the object around which we unite that motivates our participation. This assumption seems to institute a negative within our consideration: regardless of the object or subject of participation, all we are searching for is the simple measure of the common, of the group. In a critical letter to d'Alembert concerning his theories on theatre, Rousseau puts claims "Plant a stake crowned with flowers in the middle of a square; gather the people together there, and you will have a festival. Do better yet; let the spectators become an entertainment to themselves; make them actors themselves..."<sup>2</sup> But can we believe such a theory? It is true that objects, events and celebrated things depend on historical information and political context: that which was celebrated in one civilization will not be celebrated in another. However, certain celebratory objects can be found across different civilizations and societies. Certain celebrated objects can disappear for centuries, only to reappear later and in different societies. We will conserve the idea of need or rather of desire of participation in the common, a desire of taking part in a community, be it a big or small one. We must now briefly examine the different complex concepts, which define participation.

1. IN *COMMUNIS* IN *DICTIONNAIRE ABRÉGÉ LATIN FRANÇAIS*, F.GAFFIOT, HACHETTE, 1936
2. IN *POLITICS AND THE ARTS, LETTER TO D'ALEMBERT ON THE THEATRE* (1758), AGORA EDITIONS, 1968
3. IN *KOINÔNEIN* IN *DICTIONNAIRE GREC FRANÇAIS* ANATOLE BAILLY, HACHETTE, 1895
4. IN *MÉTOUSIA* IN *DICTIONNAIRE GREC FRANÇAIS* ANATOLE BAILLY, HACHETTE, 1895
5. IN *KOINÈ AESTHESIS* IN *DICTIONNAIRE GREC FRANÇAIS* ANATOLE BAILLY, HACHETTE, 1895

Firstly we shall cite the Greek term *koinônein*<sup>3</sup> which signifies the simple participation in or a complicity with the *koinè* as a common tongue. It defines manner in which we take part in the collective, and therefore signifies a consideration of the common, of a work of art for example, and a measure of communication. This measure, this appreciation of the common, this *koinônein* is therefore entirely defined by the participation of members of a community and by the grade of communication and interaction between participants. We must now examine the word *métousia*<sup>4</sup> whose first meaning is *to participate in*, but also means the measure of participation in something, and that in a more material perspective. We can understand the idea of participation as coexisting with something in the same space. It is the way in which I expose myself to a speech, a thing, a work of art. We can now evoke *koinè aesthesis*<sup>5</sup>, not as a common language, but as a perceptive language, meaning the perception that we have of things of this world. It is a "common" language in that each one of us perceives via

senses, however here we are dealing with a more subjective and personal dimension. Thus each time we read the *Coup de Dés*, but also perhaps each time we confront ourselves with a work of art, we create our own images, we create our own links between words, between objects: we con-figure. If words, forms and objects do not change, it is our collision with them that brings them into operation. These material things only occur when we frequent and activate them. This means that that it is our participation and reading of works that allows them to exist. Can we then presume that each work of art is produced in this perspective of addressing the reader, the spectator, the participant? Or should we believe in the work of art's own destination? As if they were granted a destiny, a given purpose? We can clarify these ideas by evoking the process of *historicising* which, while attempting to organize and classify things, events and manifestations of human activity, stops and freezes them as if they were "done", passed. We are reminded of the majority of theories present in Art history. The concept of destiny calls upon a religious, divine and irrational dimensions which determines things irrevocably in advance.

The same cannot be said concerning the idea of an address. The address is not simply the idea of addressing someone or something, but introduces an experience of temporality via the reading, the lecture that one makes. This lecture, this translation of the work of art could also be a possibility of destruction or an interpretation. We can come back to Benjamin's idea concerning the task of the translator as a task of reconstitution, a tentative to repair different fragments.<sup>1</sup> We can now suppose that the work of art is always addressed (yet remains available to a destiny) in three ways. Firstly, in a reference, citation or epigraph, next in a dedication, the act of dedicating and lastly in collaboration, the necessity of another person in the creation of a work of art. These three possibilities show us that artization or the poetic are always a word, a speech addressed to someone, to the other, to a thing. The work of art would then be a potential space for praise but also for all dialogue, all possibilities: the unforeseeable.

According to *Ælius Théon*<sup>2</sup>, the ultimate space of participation and of attention towards others is that of *kômos*<sup>3</sup> which in ancient Greece referred to ritual, festive processions honouring Dionysus also personified by *kômos* (figure of a drunk adolescent who orchestrated the party and feasts). Most often, the feasts were a joyous cortège of drinkers accompanied by musicians roaming the streets searching for a place to indulge. It was an expression of sociability, celebrating a community event – one not limited to essentially religious practices. It is therefore this experience of community which renders the con-figuration of glory and the glorification of others possible. *Ælius Théon* sees the *enkômion* as glorification founded upon *ergon*, upon actions: in configuration with the other, in speech, in confrontation lies the possibility of homage, of praise or even conflict. Use and reading are open and non determined. If the destination of the work of art fixed something in a context, the address would constitute the temporality, a present without compensation and would therefore imply a certain form of danger in the reading of and participation in the work of art. The latter's content would not itself be fixed, enclosed in a space – it would remain open to con-figuration. We can therefore conclude that the celebratory space of the *kômos* is not only the space of praise and glorification but is also the site of an endangerment: It means being in a relation of presence necessary to all praise or criticism of the other and also of what is done and has been done. It is a space of use as an unpredictable thing. As we have seen, to celebrate does not essentially mean to glorify; it is the manner which we use, the relation we maintain with others. *Kômos* is then the ultimate space of all possibilities. We can now link this form of address, of *kômos* to the site of Greek antique theatre. It was customary that the chorus announce the beginning of the play to the spectators, inviting them to be ready to listen and to pay attention.

This "entrance" or song is called the *parodos*<sup>4</sup>. It forms an address to the spectator; warning that they are about to find themselves in the position of participant, witness to the play which is addressed to them. It is interesting to remark that later in the history of Greek theatre *parodos* no longer defines this announcement and invitation to listening but signifies a theatrical genre in itself: *parôidia*<sup>5</sup>, *counter-song*. A *parôidia* revisits tragic plays but in a new way. The actors play tragedies whilst belching and farting, giving a different colour to the original aim of such songs. In its first acceptance the *parodos* designated an announcement beside the song – here it becomes a sideline of the theatrical genre itself. Parodia uses and celebrates the tragic genre by imitating it, making a farcical representation. We can see here the image of a confrontation between two people, where one imitates the other to better mock him. Using this figure of ancient Greek theatre, we must now question the doubly celebrative and critical power that a parody contains, to be understood more as a sideline of something rather than a simple and comical cover. A parody is firstly an imitation, a *detournement* of a given figure in order to overthrow it, to render it in-

operational for a moment. Another reading of the figure in question is offered up: the parodied figure is no longer unequivocal, sacred. Different aspects and possibilities of the previously respected and conserved figure are unveiled. We can remark that in a way, a parody can only exist in the re-appropriation of pre-existing figures, overthrowing them again and again yet granting

them their primary characteristics. Thus, in its modes of appearance, in this sideline-reading, we can compare the parody to *neg-lectio*, producing a hybrid form. We can suppose that the parody appears when we can no longer believe in a certain figure or when it's too real:

In truth, parody not only does not coincide with fiction, but constitutes its polar opposite. This is because, unlike fiction, parody does not call into question the reality of its object; indeed, this object is so intolerably real for parody that it becomes necessary to keep it at a distance. To fiction's "as if," parody opposes its drastic "this is too much" (or "as if not"). Thus, if fiction defines the essence of literature, parody holds itself, so to speak, on the threshold of literature, stubbornly suspended between reality and fiction, between word and thing.<sup>6</sup>

When a regime of belief, the foundation and also the glory of a figure

**CAPITALISM CAN BE CONSIDERED AS A BIG APPARATUS CAPTURING AND DIGESTING PURE MEANS: PROFANATORY BEHAVIOURS**

are unsteady, parody works towards a questioning by disfiguration and suspension. On the one hand it would seem that the overturning process of parody can be applied to any figure accepted and respected by a community, be it an object, an idea or a person. On the other hand, one might think that parody only concerns figures which unite the group and that gain unanimous support either because they are insignificant and unworthy of interest or because they are over-valued. Because tragedies were a one of the most widespread, well known and "serious" chants, they became a choice target for an inversion. We previously wondered what the value of a criticism, which uses that which it intends to criticize would be. So what exactly is the content of this celebration, of this revision of a figure in order to divert it? Indeed, whilst misappropriating, a parody also contributes to the glory of the primary figure. In re-interpreting and re-presenting, the parody offers the figure a new occasion to make an appearance, therefore admitting to its power. However, we can suppose that a parody performs an addition to the original figure, an essentially destructive addition. The re-presentation of the original figure is therefore necessary in order to operate a critique. It is then a question of celebration, participation in a common figure to better underline its illegitimacy, to make a ridiculous praise or to show a possibility: if a tragedy is to be like this, look at how it can also be: the objects, the things, the people do not only have one or two aspects.

A parody is also an attempt to raise interrogations about something, to question a finished aspect or a mono-semantic dimension. The signification of things is opened up with this mode of *detournement*, as if after many years we were to discover new facet of a flint stone of whose two sides we only knew one. A parody is an un-framing of things, a production of a hybrid form - not essentially to criticize virulently but to ask questions. With parody we de-capitalize and de-hierarchize objects, people, works of art. We must nevertheless not understand this method as an authoritarian and definitive judgement. In our contemporary and liberal societies, we must ask ourselves if this form is not to be absorbed in the workings of the machine: to wit, parody would become a tamed organ, included in and necessary to the system – a ritual. We can reply that nothing can be fundamentally permanent or foreseeable, established or even directed towards "progress", even if things seem to be so (or are shown to us to be so), they are not. As Mallarmé could have said to us with the *Coup de Dés*, nothing can abolish chance, not even the permanent appearance of political systems, both profane and sacred, which all tend to parody and/or to ruin themselves.

That being said, I would like to look again into the term of apparatus, we saw earlier in *Humans, Gods and Economy*. As Foucault, then Agamben would say, apparatuses are all the things produced by humanity, from cigarettes to Christianity, from a swimming-pool to language. Earlier we saw that our modern economy, our modern capitalist government of men produces a incommensurable number of apparatus from which it is more and more hard to deal with and without because of this indifferent process in between subjectification and desubjectification, producing no real subject but a spectrum of a subject. The apparatuses are the separation of being from acting, a division from the living being from itself and from its immediate relationship with its environment:

**THE PLAY AS AN ORGAN OF PROFANATION IS IN DECLINE**

The fact is that according to all indications, apparatuses are nor a mere accident in which humans are caught by chance, but rather are rooted in the very process of "humanization" that made "humans" out of the animals we classify under the rubric Homo sapiens.<sup>7</sup> When the relation of a living being

with its environment is separated, when the circle of receptors-disinhibitors is stopped, this same living being can know both boredom and the Open, he is not anymore in a direct relation toward its dishinibitors, he has the possibility to experience the being as such and construct a world.<sup>8</sup> But therefore, this is also the possibility for apparatuses to exist, to fulfil the Open, and toward them, human tries to nullify the animalistic behaviours that are separated from him, to enjoy the Open and the being as such.

A split similar to the one of the Christian *oikonomia*. A very human thing. Behind every apparatus is a human desire of happiness, a need to be part of, to believe in, to celebrate something, and sometimes it is a bit out of any reasonable reason. The strength of the apparatus is the capture and the subjectification (into a separate sphere) of this desire of happiness. But knowing that, should we just be these captured living beings into the *oikonomia* of apparatuses? Should we just be victims of ourselves? If what make a human a human are the possibility of being separated of its immediate relation to nature and its desinhibitors, we could hope for more distance, more control toward these powerful cultural tools of government, that are apparatuses. Or are we not really humans anymore? Knowing that our modern system produces an unbelievable quantity of new apparatus (both useful and alienating) we have to think about our relation to it, the way we participate in it, the way we believe in it.

For Agamben, the specifics of religion is to separate things (as we saw concerning the Christian *oikonomia*) living or not in between the sacred and profane spheres, the fact of removing something from the common use. What is sacred belongs to the gods and is no longer reachable by men, and so, through the apparatus of sacrifice. Through this process of consecration, human things were transposed to a separate sphere, the lawlessness zone of gods and religion. On the other hand, the profanation was the fact of putting back these formerly-sacred things to human sphere through an other ritual. It was then the possibility to re-use them, to eat them, etc., as a profane contagion, a disenchanting touch.

As we had seen in the second part of *Humans, Gods and Poems* concerning the relation between arts and ritual through the etymology of the word religion as *re-legere* (re-read), *ars* was the possibility of neglecting, of



*neg-legere* (non-read) the text, the Word, of being distracted toward what is sacred, what had been consecrated. We have to consider further this *distracted* aspect (that we had not looked too much at) of negligence. We saw that *ars* is the possibility (or not) to *mis-read* and *non-read* the Text, but also as the possibility of observing or neglecting the rite. There was not this important dimension of the play, the *re-creation*. The fact of profaning, *pro-fanare*<sup>9</sup> means the possibility of a special form of negligence, that ignores, in a way, separation and division, and which is *per se* playful. It is important to notice that most of modern games are rooted in sacred ceremonies and rituals, games and rites are fundamentally connected. According to E. Benveniste, the sacred act rise its efficiency when happens the conjunction of "the myth (that tells the story) and the rite (that reproduces and stages it)."<sup>10</sup> The play, the game breaks up the conjunction, dropping out the myth but conserving the rite; this would be the physical play (*ludus*) or dropping out the rite and preserving the myth; as a wordplay (*iocus*). The play can be therefore considered as doing half of the sacred ritual: only translation the myth into words, or only the rite into actions. The profanation existing in the play is very special because it is not a radical abolition of the sacred sphere. Through this profanation the thing taken back from the sacred sphere isn't re-used in a *normal* utilitarian consumption. And finally the process of the play is not only concerned by the religious sphere. For instance when a child plays he can turn every kind of object and things into a toy, whatever these things belong to the domestic, economics, etc. activities, that are, in a way sacred too. The proper profanation of the game is a passage of the *relegere* toward the *vera relegere* (as a true re-reading), which is quite different from the fact of neglecting a thing.

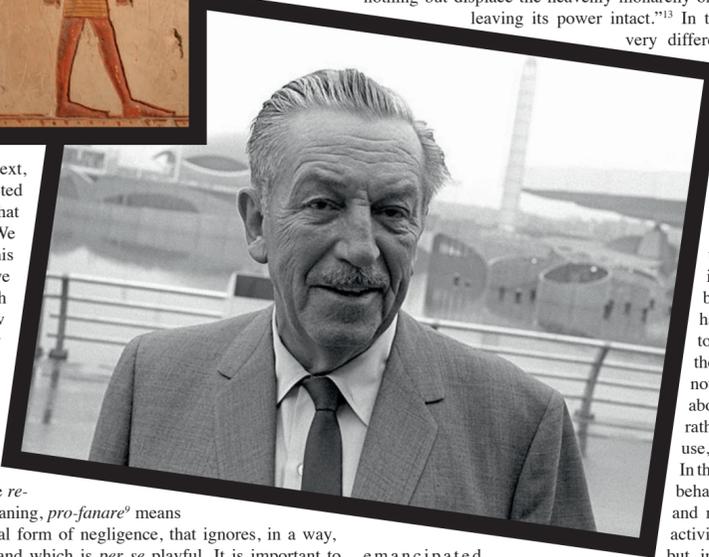


It is the sort of use that Benjamin must have had in mind when he wrote of Kafka's The New Attorney that the law that is no longer applied but only studied is the gate to justice.<sup>11</sup> Just as the religio that is played with but no longer observed opens the gate to use, so the powers [potenzeJ of economics, law, and politics, deactivated in play, can become the gateways to a new happiness.<sup>11</sup>

But is this way of profaning is only reserved to children? Or did we lose this ability through the progressive oblivion of our former religious rituals, rites? Did we leave it through the progressive secularization of our societies? Regarding our contemporary appetite for every kind of games and parties, it seems paradoxical. But the play as an organ of profanation is in decline; despite the profusion of games men proved they don't know how to play anymore.

Indeed, at parties, in dances, and at play, he desperately and stubbornly seeks exactly the opposite of what he could find there: the possibility of re-entering the lost feast, returning to the sacred and its rites, even in the form of the inane ceremonies of the new spectacular religion or a tango lesson in a provincial dance hall. In this sense, televised game shows are part of a new liturgy; they secularize an unconsciously religious intention. To return to play its purely profane vocation is a political task.<sup>12</sup>

As we had seen in the text *Humans, Gods and Economy*, the theological *oikonomia* had been re-used through a slow process of secularization in our modern systems of government. We were no longer under the authority of God and the Trinity, but we still had the ancient *oikonomia* model. In the case of religion, "the political secularization of theological concepts does nothing but displace the heavenly monarchy onto an earthly monarchy, leaving its power intact."<sup>13</sup> In that sense profanation is



very different from secularization, in the manner that the last one leaves intact the apparatus, dealing with it, just displacing it to another space. Secularization does not neutralize, get rid of what it wants to exceed, it conserves it in a twisted way. Profanation is not only the fact of bringing something that had been separated back to the sphere of usage, the sphere of men. It is not limited to the fact of abolishing separations but rather to learn to find new use, to play with them.

In the case of a play, "the freed behaviour still reproduces and mimics the forms of the activity from which it has been but, in emptying them of their to an end, it opens them and makes them available for a new use."<sup>14</sup> It becomes only a means liberated from its end. It has forgotten its goal for a moment, a means without an end. The act of profanation consists in learning how to deactivate old and common uses toward its inoperability to create a new use. It is the fact of liberating a thing from its proper use, making it free for a moment, opening it to a new use for a long or short time. A thing that children and collectors especially do but for different reasons. It is interesting to look at the word recreation. The word means mostly a break, a leisure activity, but looking at its Latin etymology *recreare*<sup>15</sup>, it means in a first acceptance the fact of reviving, refreshing, invigorating and on a second acceptance it means the fact of creating again, restoring. In that way we can consider the game as a disinterested attempt to revive things stuck, dying into a use, an attempt to restore what had been separated. Finally, as the word suggests it, this *recreatio* is in a certain perspective the re-play of God creating the world, assigning names to things, assigning His logos and His *oikonomia* to humans, separating things from themselves. This is not a proper (re-) creation, but the realisation that there is no more determinism or destiny for living beings or things than the one with gave them. This

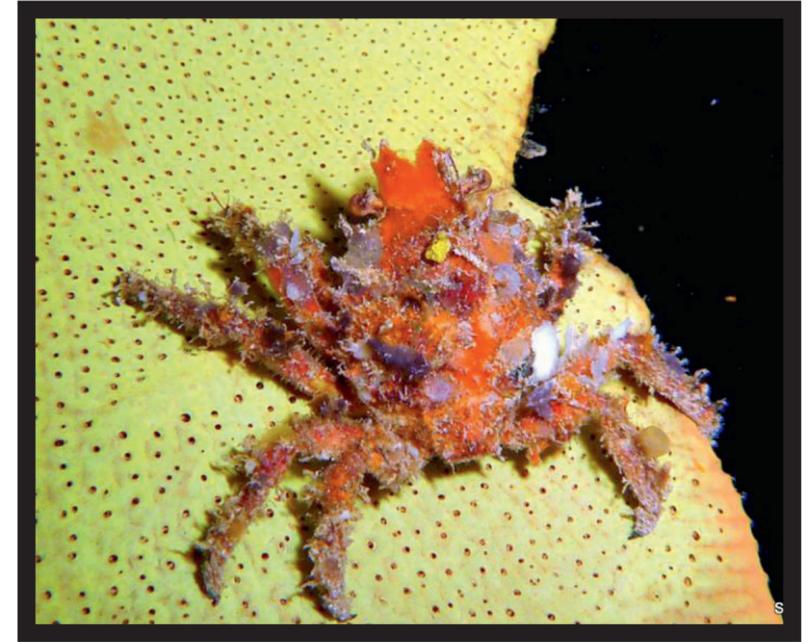
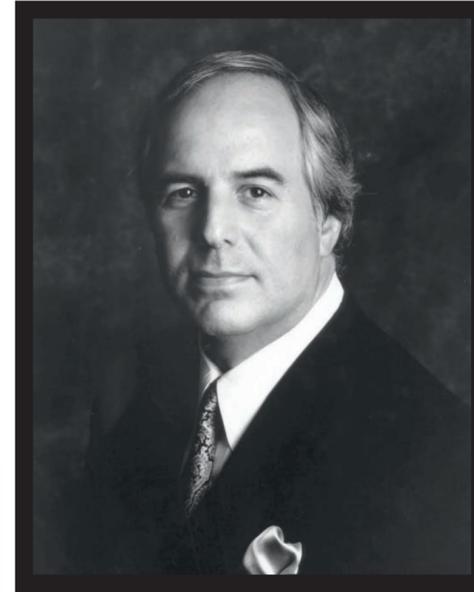
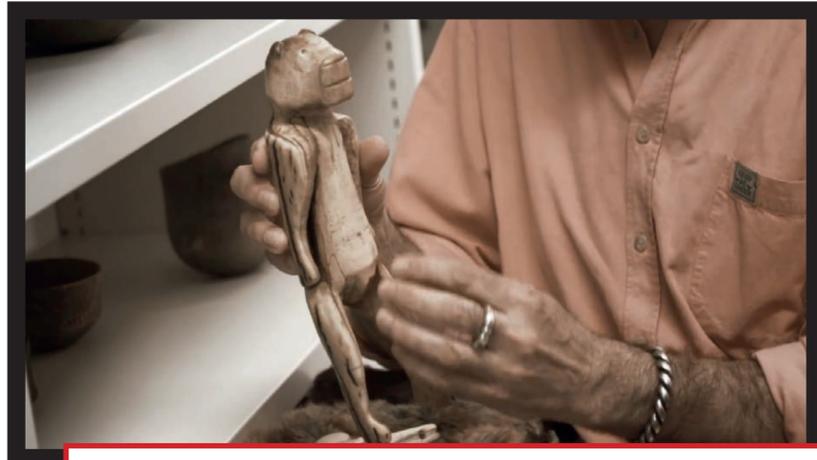
*recreation* in the meaning of a leisure activity seems by the way a quite parodic figure of the rest of God on the seventh day after the Creation. But for the child every game has an end, every play finishes, and it is the sad and the terrifying part: when things have to return to their common use, when things turn back into what they are. After recreation comes production, work, labour. On the aftermath of the party everything comes back to its flat continuity and normality. The sphere of pure means out of any consumption sphere seems very fragile because what makes the strength of the modern apparatuses is that they do not only act on primary behaviours, but also on pure means, on behaviours that are detached from any relationship to an end, it is to say that Capitalism can be considered as a big apparatus capturing and digesting pure means: profanatory behaviours. A good example would be a famous publicity campaign Edward Bernays did in 1929. At this time, women were not smoking due to social norms, a problem for the tobacco industry that was losing an enormous potential market. Therefore they asked Bernays to do something for that. On the annual Easter Parade in New-York City, Bernays paid a group of young girls to smoke in the streets, calling their cigarettes "torches of freedom"<sup>16</sup>. An example among thousands. A *detournement* of (potential) profanatory behaviours toward an end, it is the suspension and the exhibition of the pure means rendered as a void form, as if no new use was possible. Capitalism maybe managed its dream of "producing an unprofanable" (what Christianity did not managed to do). This is what makes every act of profanation, parody, *detournement*, critic, etc. complicated

"Everything that is unprofanable - is founded on the arrest and diversion of an authentically profanatory intention. For this reason, we must always 'wrest from the apparatuses - from all apparatuses – the possibility of use that they have captured. The profanation of

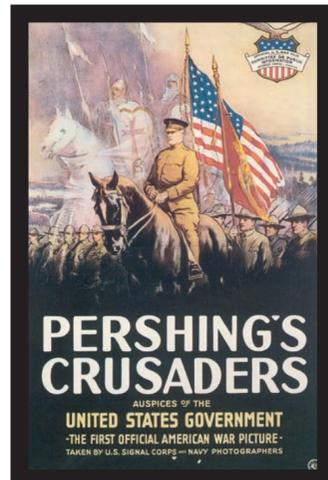
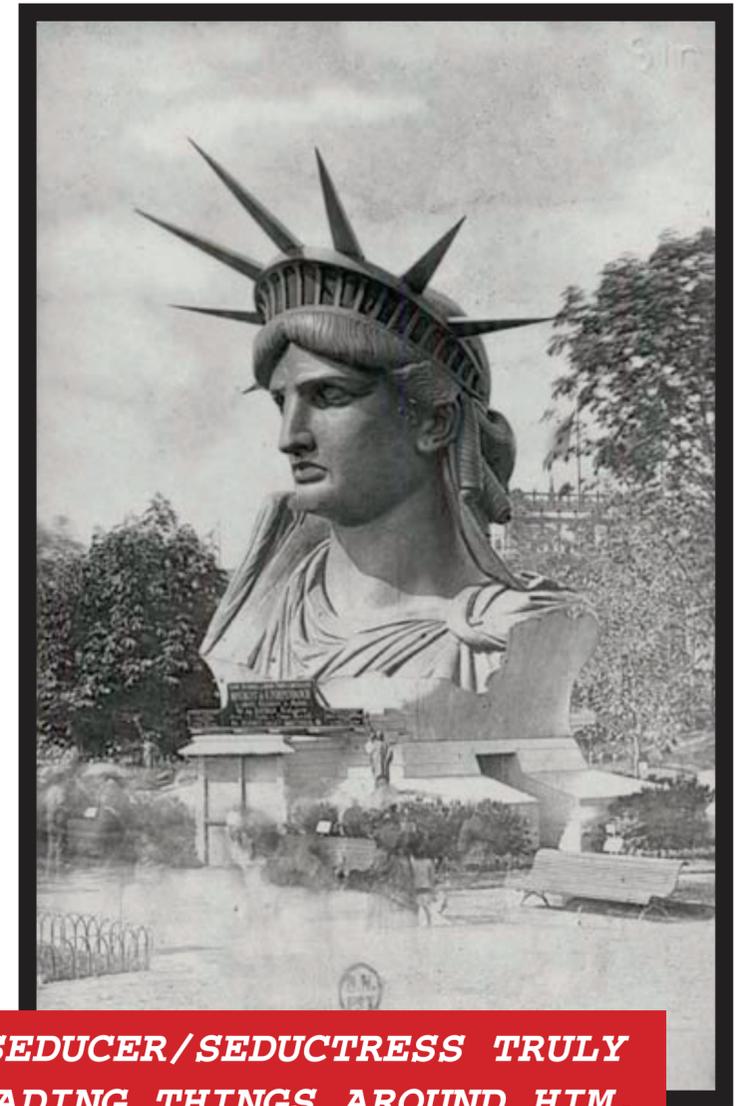
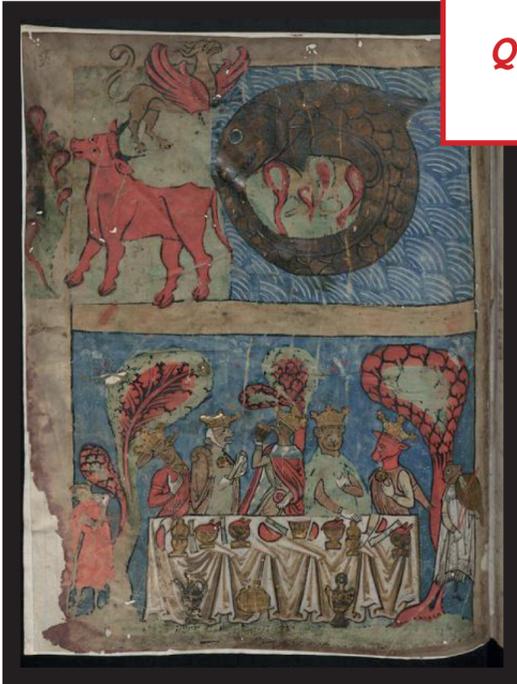
the unprofanable is the political task of the coming generation"<sup>17</sup> And what would Baudrillard say? That maybe seduction overpasses all that? Seduction as the process that pull apart and gather at the same time what is divided. Seduction as an *a-separation* in the way it means the manner by which things seduce themselves constantly. From a peculiar point of view, with seduction there is no more real separation if it signifies how things and signs are all the time charming, seducing, twisting, diverting themselves in a form of cyclical order, universal exchange. It would mean that (as in the animal reign) under the process of the ritual, living beings and things would be permanently in a movement of seduction.

A solution would be to produce ungraspable fetishes and ungraspable means. Or, to produce means from which no end would be possible. Is it possible? Maybe the best would be to produce esoteric, magical systems, self-fulfilling prophecies, to be a figure of the seducer/seductress *truly re-reading* things around him, being able to act out of the necessity of an end, of a result, of a destiny. Even best, to be this figure of the "great ignorance", this being whose animality and humanity are not separated, without belief or even disbelief, without separation of the being and the acting.

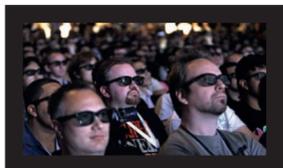
1. **IN THE TASK OF THE TRANSLATOR IN SELECTED WRITINGS VOL. 1 1913-1926, HARVARD, 2002, P.253-263**
2. **I REFER TO THE INTRODUCTION OF CONVIVIO, FABIEN VALLOS, ÉDITON MIX, CNEAI, CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE L'ONDE, 2011**
3. **IBIDEM, P.23-24**
4. **IN THEATRE AND PLAYHOUSE: AN ILLUSTRATED SURVEY OF THEATRE BUILDING FROM ANCIENT GREECE TO THE PRESENT DAY, HELEN LEACROFT, METHUEN, 1988, P.6**
5. **IN PARODY IN PROFANATIONS, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, ZONE BOOKS, 2007, P.37-51**
6. **IBIDEM, P.84**
7. **IN WHAT IS AN APPARATUS ?, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2009, P.16**
8. **IN THE OPEN, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, STANFORD, 2004, CHAP. 10**
9. **THE INFINITIVE PRO-FANARE MEANS LITERALLY, BEFORE (THE) TEMPLE**
10. **IN IN PRAISE OF PROFANATION IN PROFANATIONS, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, ZONE BOOKS, 2007, P.75**
11. **IBIDEM, P.76**
12. **IBIDEM, P.76-77**
13. **IBIDEM, P.77**
14. **IBIDEM P.85-86**
15. **IN RECREARE IN DICTIONNAIRE LATIN FÉLIX GAFFIOT, 1934 (TRANSLATED BY AILSA CAVERS)**
16. **IN WOMEN ACTIVITIES AND PROPAGANDA IN PROPAGANDA, EDWARD BERNAYS, IG PUBLISHING, 2005, P.129**
17. **IN IN PRAISE OF PROFANATION IN PROFANATIONS, GIORGIO AGAMBEN, ZONE BOOKS, 2007, P.92**



**PARODY WORKS TOWARDS A QUESTIONING BY DISFIGURATION AND SUSPENSION**



**THE SEDUCER/SEDUCTRESS TRULY RE-READING THINGS AROUND HIM, BEING ABLE TO ACT OUT OF THE NECESSITY OF AN END**



# THE GRAVE DIGGER SUCCESSOR

## Comments about *The Sixth Sense*

by M. Night Shyamalan

Even though we can be mainly interested in the shivers provoked by horror films it can be mind blowing to consider this cinematographic genre as carrying specific comments about history and the relation to past and present. In the vast majority of these ghost and spirit films, the past makes its terrific incursion in the peaceful present, turning upside down the lives of its victims. Dead people come back among us. History books re-open themselves and when the past comes back it is quite often an angry and upset past.

If I now focus on the *Sixth Sense* directed by Night Shyamalan, it won't be to talk about horror, fear or even cinema but in order to consider the character of Cole Sear (performed by Haley Joel Osment, who was ten years old at the time) as the figure of a singular historical perspective. Going beyond the morbid and frightening aspects of this film, it is possible to express a comment on the being in history, on the being overwhelmed despite itself by a past that he never knew, about a singular figure of the successor.

A number of times and in various places, the young Cole sees ghosts "who don't know that they are dead". In the elementary school where he is goes, he sees hanged people from the American Civil War; in the house where he lives with his mother, he meets children killed by their father; in the middle of the street, he watches a cyclist who died earlier run over by a car. These ghosts, these dead people appearing to Cole, are beings whose souls cannot rest in peace because the truth was not revealed, no justice



was received. They remain beings separated from present time, continuing to wander in the places and times of their death. Only the angst and the irrepressible need for justice rise beyond until they become visible to Cole's eyes.

We can therefore consider this young boy like a being living in a space and a time both situated in between past and present – neither entirely in the past nor really in the present –.

It is a shifted time-space where present events appear suddenly mixed up with past events. According to the places where he is: school, street, his house, he becomes the victim of the ghosts haunting them. He is the only one able to see them but he cannot find the proper words which would allow him to testify an experience that he is continually having.

Therefore, when the teacher asks the students what their school was used for "a century ago", Cole timidly rise his hand to answer that it was used to hang people. He therefore has to face disturbed responses from his classmates and teacher, because of his misplaced knowledge, a knowledge not suitable for the child he should be. Then he could be considered as a form of omniscient historian, a total witness of the past

in the space and time of the present. He is a being who reconnects with a forgotten, unpleasant, violent past, and so despite himself because he never asked for this embarrassing sixth sense. In this way, he can be considered as the witness of the real witnesses, of those who could not testify in their space and time, those whose speech was deprived by speaking in their stead.

Cole Sear could be considered as the unfortunate successor of the history of the vanquished, of the history of the oppressed, those we forgot in books and who scarily come back to him to testify, to finally tell their truth. A successor who cannot serenely live in the present, because the relation to the past (from the closest to the furthest) of his contemporaries is not really clear, and then it is difficult to assume current consequences.

Would this character be a prophetic figure of the successor in our contemporary times? He would certainly be a being pushed, crushed by the weight of history, forced in between the relation he has within the time-space he can access because of his sixth sense and the contemporary time-space in which everybody and himself live. This constraint of the being constitutes the impossibility for Cole Sear to have a calm life, ideally absolved from what has been, as the picture of the past and of history constructed by his contemporaries is far from the truth of histories and furthermore constantly perverted.

This finally underlines the impossibility for the character to turn his eyes toward what is to come whose perspective would be the construction of a future role or rather his future position when he has to answer for his close relation to historical events to which he knows the truth, trying to reduce the distortion being undertaken by contemporaneity walking toward history.

Cole Sear appears as the successor digging a grave, sorting out the rubble left behind by his ancestors. Despite himself, his sixth sense obliges him to see what is the basis of the present, and instead of going ahead closing his eyes (this would be a solution for him) he dispenses justice. Rather than constructing on the ruins and the corpses passed on by his ancestors, he makes himself grave digger of the vanquished, of neglected histories so that they might rest in peace.

**A FORM OF  
OMNISCIENT  
HISTORIAN, A TOTAL  
WITNESS OF THE  
PAST IN THE SPACE  
AND TIME OF THE  
PRESENT**

# FORREST GUMP, OR THE GREAT IGNORANCE

## Comments about *Forrest Gump*, by Robert Zemeckis

*"When I was a baby mama named me after the great civil war hero general Nathan Bedford Forrest. She said we was related to him in some way. What he did was he started up this club called the Ku Klux Klan. They'd dress up in their robes and their bed sheets and act like a bunch of ghosts or spooks or something. They'd even put bed sheets on their horses and ride around. And anyway that's how I got my name, Forrest Gump. Mama said, the Forrest part was to remind me that sometimes we all do things that, well, just don't make no sense."*

So begin the story that Forrest Gump tells about his own life, from childhood to adulthood to the different people sitting beside him at the bus stop where he waits. This section gives the general tone of the film, but also presents Forrest's way of being in the world.

Beneath his simple-minded way of being, through these first sentences he unveils some characteristics making him a surprising character- a trait which he does not seem to be fully aware of.

Through this text and the reading of this film, I will try to raise different characteristics that make Forrest Gump (the film and the character taken together) an original and paradoxical figure of the relationship to history but also a peculiar figure of the "great ignorance".

On the first hand we can easily see in the section quoted above a paradoxical and purely subjective reading of history (and this is done in a non-conscious way by Forrest), the figure of the descendent inheriting without wishing it and despite himself of a painful and unenviable past. However, and that is what is interesting me, Forrest does not know a great deal about this past, he makes himself a quite blurred and childish idea of it, he seems to be over history, he is not confused by the weight that his name carries because he does not know. Therefore he is included in history but without knowing the truth of it, and most of all he never asked anything. The choice of a Ku Klux Klan leader's name reinforces even more this parodic idea of the non-choice of the descendent. Despite him, he carries like a brand a hateful episode of North-American history, but once again he does not realize

**HE IS A KIND OF  
SUPREME MAN  
WITHOUT QUALITIES.**

it. Anyone who saw the film Forrest Gump thinks about this line "Run Forrest Run!!!" shouted by his friend Jenny, suggesting him to flee the threats of young guys. A paradoxical and almost ironical injunction because the young Gump is then seriously disabled, wearing leg prosthesis. He begins to run, not without difficulties, but little by little his amatures fall and he runs, maintaining a good distance from his pursuers.

This scene (in the first minutes of the film) somehow characterises what Forrest will do throughout his life (and the film): a kind of running, a crossing through the most diverse activities but also the most notorious events from North-American history of the second half of 20th century. From his table tennis player career, through the (unintentional) heroism he showed during the Vietnam War, to the creation and the management of the most famous shrimp fishing company, he crosses over time and space, getting used to different situations and activities in which he always excels. He is a kind of supreme man without qualities, but from that he is also the man with all possible adaptation qualities, and so, for every situation. He is an incompetent that is able to do (almost) anything. He is somehow a parodic figure of destiny, the triumph of randomness. All the activities, persons and things he meets up with, it is according to the randomness of his running. His life (as the Coup de Dés) is a succession of work, of specific tasks interrupted by running, empty moments, an active desoeuvrement. He is a parody of the historical contingency, but also of the capitalist model, of the self-made-man. He crosses over this history but he also makes it. He not only appears many times alongside key figures of the time



but he is also behind numerous noteworthy facts. He provides inspiration to Elvis Presley (unknown at the time) for his famous footwork, he denounces despite himself the Watergate affair by calling the housekeeper of his hostel because "the light from the building in front" prevents him from sleeping. He also provides inspiration to John Lennon for his song Imagine. Forrest Gump is therefore deeply included in history, making history but each time despite himself. He is the unknown and forgotten origin of history. But that does not make him a victim, on the contrary, he seems to be simply beyond and below the history he is passing through and making, he is as inside it rather than

outside history. The idea of patriotism, of duty and of a historical task doesn't have a proper place with him. He knows he has to act, but it is more to respond to the need

of the here-and-now, of the present moment that he takes action. He never steps back to look at things and events he is acting in, he just does it. He does not seem to feel and perceive the historical gravity (because there maybe is no such thing anymore) but only the earth's attraction. Forrest Gump is a being of captivity, as an animal fleeing something, he spends his time running, going from one point to another, and so without truly choosing by himself, but according to the historical context and his capacity. When he runs during three years across United-States, it is without any particular reason, and when he stops, it is simply because he is tired. Forrest Gump's figure seems to be emblematic of means without end, acting in a form of gratuity, even if it is done involuntary. To each of his acts corresponds a detachment, a too distant as too close interaction with his object, his trigger. It is actually this thing that serves as a means of differentiation between humans and animals. From an original break of the circle of receptors-desinhibitors which produces humans - that is to say that produces in living beings both boredom (the ability to suspend an immediate relationship toward desinhibitors, the environment) and the Open, which is the possibility to know the being as such and also to build his world. On the other hand, the animal has a relationship of fascination with its environment, it is extremely absorbed by its desinhibitors, without knowing what it is.

The animal bathes into what we call the animal captivity, a state of amazing proximity with things, without unveiling or even veiling of what are these things. A phenomenon which Forrest Gump seems quite close to, in this

very direct relationship with things, persons, activities, events he meets, whatever they are.

However this does not make him an animal but an other kind of being: into him the human being in the world and the animal captivation are gathering. The split between human and animal strengthens. If he never seems to decide of anything, going from place to place, accident-like, he though loves and looks for Jenny all his life, his childhood friend, with whom he has a child and get married with by the end of the film. The character of Jenny (and the sexual relationship he has with her) but also their child constitute the main reason of Forrest's mysterious running: "What severs—not solves—this secret bond that ties man to life (nature), however, is an element which seems to belong totally to nature but instead everywhere surpasses it: sexual fulfilment". It is from the moment he can be with Jenny and their child that Forrest stops running. We can try to perceive into his character something else than these inoffensive and reassuring figures of the simple-minded or the animal-human, but rather the prophetic figure of the great ignorant. In an exegesis of the Pauline Epistle to the Romans, concerning redemption, Basilides tells us:

God will bring on the whole world the great ignorance, so that every creature may remain in its natural condition and none desire anything contrary to its nature. Thus, all the souls who find themselves in this expanse, whose nature it is to remain immortal in this place alone, will stay here below, knowing nothing other than or better than this expanse; in the regions below there will be no news and no knowledge of the realities above, so that the souls below may not be tormented by desiring impossible things, like fish striving to graze on the hills with the sheep—for such a desire would be their destruction.

The natural life is therefore abandoned by any spiritual element, it is unsavable, but nevertheless blessed, because it received the great ignorance. It is about a regained animality of man at the end of history, a moment where "darkness and light, matter and spirit, animal life and logos (the articulation of which in the anthropological machine produced the human) are separated forever. But not in order to close themselves in a more impenetrable mystery". So Forrest Gump could be considered not as new definition of the relation human-animal, but more as a possible figure of the great ignorance, which lets be the animal and human parts outside of the being, "saved precisely in (his) being unsavable", without taking on a historical task, no longer being the place of separations.

Forrest could maybe sit at the messianic banquet of the righteous, a day where the accomplished humanity, humans will be reconciled with their animal nature.

**HE IS THE  
UNKNOWN AND  
FORGOTTEN ORIGIN  
OF HISTORY**

**OR**

Scarface, or the capitalism victor  
Scarface, or how to succeed and die for capitalism  
Scarface, or the serious parody of capitalism

Bartleby, or the seduction  
Bartleby, or the profanation of the choice  
Bartleby, or the inoperativity of capitalism  
Bartleby, or the possibility of the void

Abagnale, or the parody of destiny  
Abagnale, or the seductor

Cole Sear, or the total witness  
Cole Sear, or the unintentional culpability  
Cole Sear, or the historical task  
Cole Sear, or the grave digger successor

Zelig, or the realm of appearances  
Zelig, or the the volatility of stones

The man without qualities, or the man with all qualities  
The man without qualities, or the domination of the status  
The man without qualities, or the impossibility of the void

Theorema, or the seduction  
Theorema, or the mystery of the self  
Theorema, or the destructor

Bouvard and Pécuchet, or how to manage not to succeed  
Bouvard and Pécuchet, or the difficulty to believe  
Bouvard and Pécuchet, or the era of undecidability  
Bouvard and Pécuchet, or the Einstein relativity theory  
Bouvard and Pécuchet, or the impossibility of the choice

Forrest Gump, or the total participant  
Forrest Gump, or the parody of destiny  
Forrest Gump, or the end of historical task  
Forrest Gump, or the great ignorant

Un coup de dés, or randomness as destiny  
Un coup de dés, or the celebration of contingency  
Un coup de dés, or making space

The invisible man, or the conspiracy  
The invisible man, or the possibility of disappearance  
The invisible man, or the inhuman  
The invisible man, or the human

# Bibliography

Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer, *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Theodor Adorno & Max Horkheimer, Amsterdam: Querido, 1947.

Agamben, Giorgio, *The Kingdom and the Glory*, Stanford: Stanford University, 2011.

Agamben, Giorgio, *Profanations*, New-York: Zone Books, 2007.

Agamben, Giorgio, *The Open*, Stanford: Stanford University, 2004.

Agamben, Giorgio, *What Is an Apparatus & Other essays*, Stanford: Stanford University, 2009.

Bailly, Anatole, *Le Dictionnaire Grec Français*, Paris: Hachette, 1895.

Baudrillard, Jean, *Seduction*, Ctheory Books, 2001.

Benjamin, Walter, *Selected Writings Vol.1*, Cambridge, Harvard Press, 1996.

Benjamin, Walter, *Early Writings, 1910-1917*, Cambridge, Harvard Press, 2011.

Bernays, Edward, *Propaganda*, Singapour: Ig Publishing, 2005.

Buffat, Marc, *Lettres à d'Alembert sur les spectacles*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau 1758, Paris: Flammarion, 2003

Debord, Guy, *Society of the Spectacle*, New-York: Zone Books, 1994.

Gaffiot, Félix, *Dictionnaire abrégé Latin Français*, Paris: Hachette, 1936.

Itard, Jean, *Report about Victor de l'Aveyron*, 1806, Chicoutime: Chicoutime University, 2004.

Quantin, Meillassoux, *Le Nombre et la sirène, Un déchiffrement du Coup de dés de Mallarmé*, Paris: Fayard, 2011.

Molinié, George, *Hermès mutilé - Vers une herméneutique matérielle*, Paris: Champion, 2005.

Reyes Mate, Manuel, *Sur le concept de négligence (éloge du chiffonier)*, Paris: éditions Mix, Bordeaux: école des beaux-arts de Bordeaux, 2011.

Reyes Mate, Manuel, *Minuit dans l'histoire*, Paris: éditions Mix, 2009.

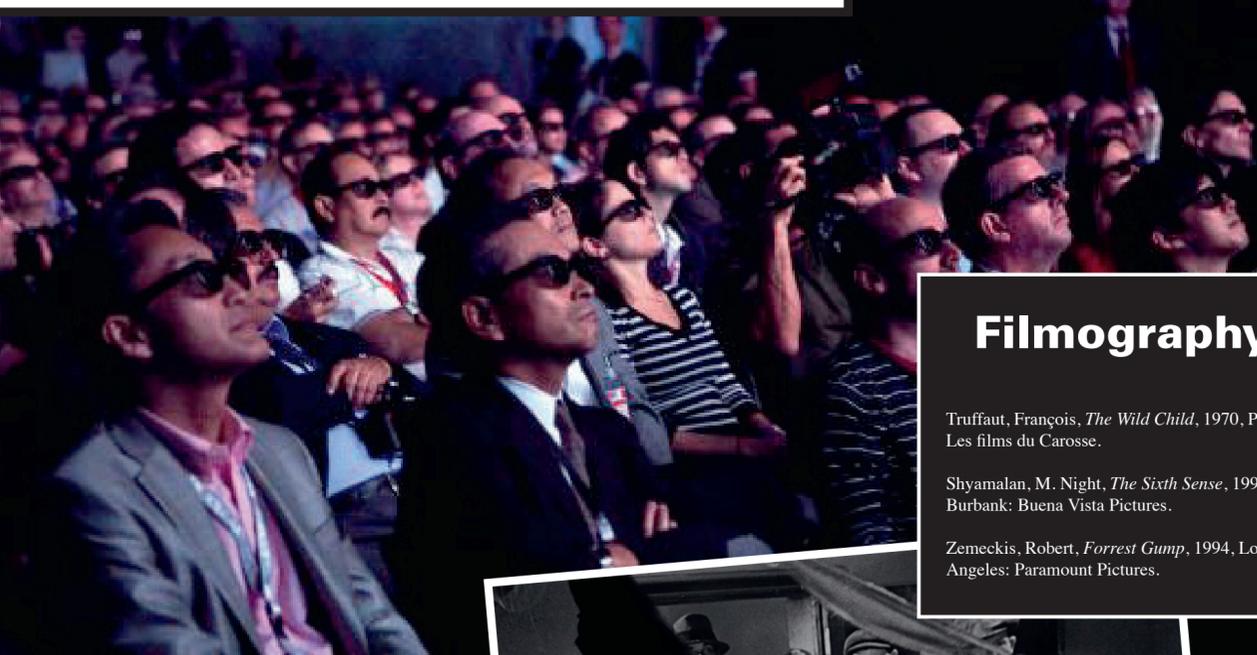
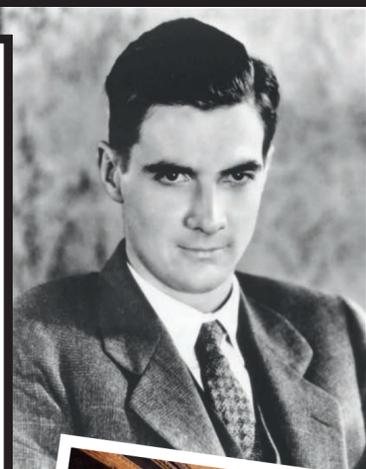
Scherrer, Thierry, *La gloire dans l'œuvre de Saint Irénée*, Rome: Gregorian&Biblical BookShop, 1997.

Thomas W.I. and D.S. Thomas, *The child in America: Behavior problems and programs*, New York: Knopf, 1928.

Vallos, Fabien, *Convivio*, Paris: éditon Mix, CNEAI, Centre d'art contemporain de l'Onde, 2011.

Vallos, Fabien, *Nu et beurré*, Bordeaux: école des beaux-arts de Bordeaux, 2010.

Vallos, Fabien, *Théorie de la fête : festivité, inopérativité & désœuvrement*, Paris, Thesis, 2010.



## Filmography

Truffaut, François, *The Wild Child*, 1970, Paris: Les films du Carosse.

Shyamalan, M. Night, *The Sixth Sense*, 1999, Burbank: Buena Vista Pictures.

Zemeckis, Robert, *Forrest Gump*, 1994, Los Angeles: Paramount Pictures.



## Table of Illustrations

### COVER

- Still of *The Matrix* directed by Andy and Lana Wachowski, produced by Warner Bros released in 1999.
- Still of *The Holy Mountain* directed by Alejandro Jodorowsky, produced by ABKCO and released in 1973.
- Portrait of Max Weber (1864-1920) in 1894

### PAGES 2-3

- Still of *The Society of the Spectacle* directed by Guy Debord released in 1973.
- Portrait of Ron Hubbard (1911-1986), an american author of science-fiction and fantasy stories, also known as the founder of the Church of Scientology.
- Chavy Chase in *Memoirs of an Invisible Man*, directed by John Carpenter, produced by Warner Bros and Studio Canal, released in 1992. *The invisible man* (originally written by H.G. Wells and published in 1897) is here unveiling emptiness, unveiling what has no veil anymore, he is unveiling its inhumanity, its existence in the void.
- Portrait of Claude Vorilhon (born in 1946) known as Rael. He is the founder and leader of Raelian Movement (1974) which is an UFO religion.
- Portrait of Robert Musil (1880-1942) in 1917.
- Leonardo Dicaprio in *Catch me if you can*, based on the life of Frank Abagnale, Jr., directed by Steven Spielberg, produced by Dreamworks SKG, released in 2002.
- The Eiffel Tower at the Paris Universelle Exposition of 1889.
- Still of *The Holy Mountain* directed by Alejandro Jodorowsky, produced by ABKCO and released in 1973.
- Engraving by Charles Huard for an edition of *Bouvard and Pécuchet* by Gustave Flaubert, 1904.

### PAGES 4-5

- Google image for 3D cinema.
- Portrait of Karl Marx (1818-1883) in 1872.

### PAGES 6-7

- Portrait of Edward Bernays (1891-1995) in the 1920's. Nephew of Sigmund Freud, he is considered as one of the most influential person of XXth century and as one of the father of public relations and advertisement.
- Marble head of Pyrrhon of Elis (365-275 BC), probably a Roman copy of a Greek bronze, Archaeological Museum of Corfu, Greece. Pyrrhon of Elis is believed to be the father of scepticism.
- Simon Magus or Simon the Sorcerer (first century AC), detail of the bas-relief of the Saint-Sernin Basilica, Toulouse, France, around 1000 AC.

### PAGES 8-9

- Al Pacino in *Scarface*, directed by Brian DePalma, produced by Universal Pictures, 1983.
- Javanese dancers at the Paris Universelle Exposition of 1889.

### PAGES 10-11

- Michael Keaton in *Birdman (the unexpected virtue of ignorance)* directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu, produced by Fox Searchlight Pictures, released in 2014
- The bowerbirds are known for their unique courtship behaviours. The female bowerbird decorates its nest with coloured objects in attempt to attract males, while the male dances to attract females. Bowerbirds mostly live in New-Guinea and Australia.
- Picture of the *Vénus à la tête quadrillée* 25000 BC, France

### PAGES 12-13

- Portrait of Mickael Jackson (1958-2009) in 2002.
- Google image for the word *croyance* (believe).
- Portrait of Claude Vorilhon (born in 1946) known as Rael. He is the founder and leader of Raelian Movement (1974) which is an UFO religion.
- La danse*, painted by Henri Matisse in 1909 was ordered by a Russian collector Chtchoukine. But, this is the second version of this painting which is conserved in the State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg, Russia), while the first version is conserved in the Museum of Modern Art in New-York, United-States.
- Portrait of Fiodor Dostoievski (1821-1888) around 1876.

### PAGES 4-15

- Portrait of Mickael Jackson (1958-2009) in 2002.
- Google image for the word *croyance* (believe).

### PAGES 16-17

- Portrait of Fiodor Dostoievski (1821-1888) around 1876.
- Martin Cooper born in 1928, known as the inventor of the first cellphone in 1973.
- Still of the videoclip of *Versace* by the hip-hop group Migos, directed by Gabriel Hart, produced by Quality Control Music, released in 2013.
- Tom Hanks and John Fitzgerald Kennedy in *Forrest Gump*, directed by Robert Zemeckis produced by Paramount Pictures, released in 1994.
- Still of *The Holy Mountain* directed by Alejandro Jodorowsky, produced by ABKCO and released in 1973.

### PAGES 18-19

- Yup'ik mask, 19th century, Alaska.
- The lybird can reproduce all the sounds surrounding him, from the singing of other birds to the chainsaw.
- Still of *The King and the Mockingbird* directed by Paul Grimault in collaboration with Jacques Prévert, based on the fairy tale *The Shepherdess and the Chimney Sweep* by Hans Christian Andersen, produced by Les Films Paul Grimault and released in 1952 and 1980.

### PAGES 20-21

- Peter Sellers in *Being there*, directed by Hal Ashby, produced by Lorimar Film Entertainment, 1979.
- Tom Cruise doing a speech for the opening of a new Church of Scientology in Madrid, 2004.
- Sun Ra in *Space is the place*, directed by John Coney, produced by Jim Newman, released in 1974.

### PAGES 22-23

- Charles Bronson (born in 1952) is known as the most violent prisoner of United-Kingdom, he spent thirty-eight years in jail in 120 different prisons across U-K. Bronson, a film about his life is directed by Nicolas Winding Refn and released in 2008.
- Portrait of Walt Disney (1901-1966) in the 1960's.
- Engraved figures of the tomb of Ramesses VI, 1337 BC, Egypt

### PAGES 24-25

- Portrait of Edward Bernays (1891-1995) in the 1920's. Nephew of Sigmund Freud, he is considered as one of the most influential person of XXth century and as one of the father of public relations and advertisement.
- Marble head of Pyrrhon of Elis (365-275 BC), probably a Roman copy of a Greek bronze, Archaeological Museum of Corfu, Greece. Pyrrhon of Elis is believed to be the father of scepticism.
- Simon Magus or Simon the Sorcerer (first century AC), detail of the bas-relief of the Saint-Sernin Basilica, Toulouse, France, around 1000 AC.

### PAGES 26-27

- Portrait of Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898). He is a french poet, mostly known for *Un coup de dés n'abolira jamais le hasard*, published in 1897. He is one of the most influential poets of 19th century.
- Portrait of Frank Abagnale Junior (born in 1948), an American security consultant, known as a former impostor, check forger and confidence trickster. For four years he assumed eight different identities from a doctor to an airline pilot. He inspired the film *Catch me if you can* in 2002.
- Camposcia retusa or the spider decorator crab, it mostly lives in the tropical waters of Indo/West Pacific area, including the Red Sea.
- Miniature depicting the messianic banquet of the righteous, 13th century, Ambrosian Library of Milan.
- Louis Thomas Ardin (1916-1999) known as Moondog, "the viking of the 6th avenue" in New-York, 70's.
- Elephant courtship ritual, 2005, Africa.
- Still of *Cave of forgotten dreams* directed by Werner Herzog produced by Creative Differences, released in 2010.
- Tom Hanks in *Forrest Gump*, directed by Robert Zemeckis produced by Paramount Pictures, released in 1994.
- Tom Cruise in *Minority Report* directed by Steven Spielberg produced 20th Century Fox by released in 2002
- Detail with Mummies and Dancers, from an illuminated manuscript, late 14th century.
- Oil crisis, Amsterdam, The Guardian, 1973.
- Poster produced by artists of the Creel Commission (whose Edward Bernays was part of), ordered by the president Woodrow Wilson to change the mindset of United-States citizens originally opposed to the involvement of United-States in the First World War. After six month of an intensive propaganda United-States went to war the sixth of April 1917.
- Statue of Liberty at the Paris Universelle Exposition of 1889.
- Google image for 3D cinema.
- Woody Allen with Calvin Coolidge and Herbert Hoover in *Zelig* directed by Woody Allen, produced by Orion Pictures Corporation, released in 1983.

### PAGES 28-29

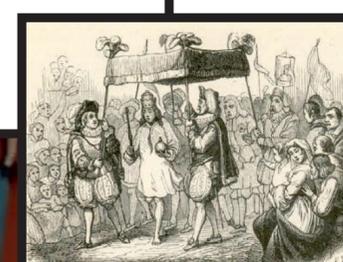
- Bruce Willis and Haley Joel Osmnt in *The Sixth Sense*, directed by M. Night Shyamalan and produced by Buena Vista Pictures, 1999
- John Lennon in *Forrest Gump*, directed by Robert Zemeckis produced by Paramount Pictures, 1994.

### PAGES 30-31

- Portrait of Howard Hughes (1905-1976) in the 1920's. He was a businessman, an investor, an aviator, an aerospace engineer, an inventor, a filmmaker and a philanthropist. He inspired a dozens of films.
- View of the Studiolo de Federico da Montefeltro, 15th century, Urbino, Italy.
- Google image for 3D cinema.
- Still of *The Invisible Man*, directed by James Whale, produced by Universal Pictures and released in 1933
- The Crystal Palace in 1910, before The Festival of Empire held in 1911.
- Engraving of Vilhelm Pederson for *The emperor's new clothes* edition of 1849, written by Hans Christian Andersen.
- Tom Hanks and Richard Nixon in *Forrest Gump*, directed by Robert Zemeckis produced by Paramount Pictures, 1994.

### BACK COVER

- Book cover of the first edition of Dale Carnegie's *How to win friends and influence people*, 1936.



**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Written by Victor Delestre, Dirty Art Department, Sandberg Instituut, Amsterdam, April 2015.

**THANK**

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Juliette Lizotte, Ailsa Cavers, Deborah Bowmann, my parents and friends.

THIS IS COPY **Nº 1869341** OF  
THE MOST POPULAR WORK OF NON-FICTION OF OUR TIME

**HOW  
TO WIN  
FRIENDS  
AND  
INFLUENCE  
PEOPLE**



**BY DALE CARNEGIE**

1. What are the six ways of making people like you? *See pages 73-128.*
2. What are the twelve ways of winning people to your way of thinking?  
*See pages 131-209.*
3. What are the nine ways to change people without giving offense or  
arousing resentment? *See pages 213-243.*

*Pocket* BOOK *edition* COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED