### Part 1

#### The subject is fundamentally unstable as it exists as a particle of a grand structure. This incompleteness forces beings to operate inside of norms to control the porous self. These nuclei of relative stability purport dangerous façades of completion – bodies out of orbit are rendered expendable.

Bataille 1 [Georges; “The Labyrinth” retrieved from “Visions of Excess” (1930); librarian by day, literary figure, sociologist, and philosopher by night; //Dulles VN]

Emerging out of an inconceivable void into the play of beings, as a lost satellite of two phantoms (one with a bristly beard, the other softer, her head decorated with a bun), it is in the father and mother who transcend him that the minuscule human being first encountered the illusion of sufficiency. In the complexity and entanglement of wholes, to which the human particle belongs, this satellite-like mode of existence never entirely disappears. A particular being not only acts as an element of a shapeless and structureless whole (a part of the world of unimportant "acquaintances" and chatter), but also as a peripheral element orbiting around a nucleus where being hardens. What the lost child had found in the selfassured existence of the all-powerful beings who took care of him is now sought by the abandoned man wherever knots and concentrations are formed throughout a vast incoherence. Each particular being delegates to the group of those situated at the center of the multitudes the task of realizing the inherent totality of "being." He is content to be a part of a total existence, which even in the simplest cases retains a diffuse character. Thus relatively stable wholes are produced, whose center is a city, in its early form a corolla that encloses a double pistil of sovereign and god. In the case where many cities abdicate their central function in favor of a single city, an empire forms around a capital where sovereignty and the gods are concentrated; the gravitation around a center then degrades the existence of peripheral cities, where the organs that constituted the totality of being wilt. By degrees, a more and more complex movement of group composition raises to the point of universality the human race, but it seems that universality, at the summit, causes all existence to explode and decomposes it with violence. The universal god destroys rather than supports the human aggregates that raise his ghost. He himself is only dead, whether a mythical delirium set him up to be adored as a cadaver covered with wounds, or whether through his very universality he becomes, more than any other, incapable of stopping the loss of being with the cracked partitions of ipseity. IV. The Modalities of Composition and Decomposition of Being The city that little by little empties itself of life, in favor of a more brilliant and attractive city, is the expressive image of the play of existence engaged in com- 176 0 THE LABYRINTH position. Because of the composing attraction, composition empties elements of the greatest part of their being, and this benefits the center-in other words, it benefits composite being. There is the added fact that, in a given domain, if the attraction of a certain center is stronger than that ofa neighboring center, the second center then goes into decline. The action of powerful poles of attraction across the human world thus reduces, depending on their force of resistance, a multitude of personal beings to the state of empty shadows, especially when the pole of attraction on which they depend itself declines, due to the action of another more powerful pole. Thus if one imagines the effects of an influential current of attraction on a more or less arbitrarily isolated form of activity, a style of clothing created in a certain city devalues the clothes worn up to that time and, consequently, it devalues those who wear them within the limits of the influence of this city. This devaluation is stronger if, in a neighboring country, the fashions of a more brilliant city have already outclassed those of the first city. The objective character of these relations is registered in reality when the contempt and laughter manifested in a given center are not compensated for by anything elsewhere, and when they exert an effective fascination. The effort made on the periphery to "keep up with fashion" demonstrates the inability of the peripheral particles to exist by themselves. Laughter intervenes in these value determinations of being as the expression of the circuit of movements of attraction across a human field. It manifests itself each time a change in level suddenly occurs: it characterizes all vacant lives as ridiculous. A kind of incandescent joy-the explosive and sudden revelation of the presence of being-is liberated each time a striking appearance is contrasted with its absence, with the human void. Laughter casts a glance, charged with the mortal violence of being, into the void of life. But laughter is not only the composition of those it assembles into a unique convulsion; it most often decomposes without consequence, and sometimes with a virulence that is so pernicious that it even puts in question composition itself, and the wholes across which it functions. Laughter attains not only the peripheral regions of existence, and its object is not only the existence of fools and children (of those who remain vacant); through a necessary reversal, it is sent back from the child to its father and from the periphery to the center, each time the father or the center in turn reveals an insufficiency comparable to that of the particles that orbit around it. Such a central insufficiency can be ritually revealed (in saturnalia or in a festival of the ass as well as in the puerile grimaces of the father amusing his child). It can be revealed by the very action of children or the "poor" each time exhaustion withers and weakens authority, allowing its precarious character to be seen. In both cases, a dominant necessity manifests itself, and the profound nature of being is disclosed. Being can complete itself and attain the menacing gradeur of imperative totality; this accomplishment only serves to project it with a greater violence into the vacant night. The relative THE LABYRINTH 0 177 insufficiency of peripheral existences is absolute insufficiency in total existence. Above knowable existences, laughter traverses the human pyramid like a network of endless waves that renew themselves in all directions. This reverberated convulsion chokes, from one end to the other, the innumerable being of manopened at the summit by the agony of God in a black night. V. The Monster in the Night of the Labyrinth Being attains the blinding flash in tragic annihilation. Laughter only assumes its fullest impact on being at the moment when, in the fall that it unleashes, a representation of death is cynically recognized. It is not only the composition of elements that constitutes the incandescence of being, but its decomposition in its mortal form. The difference in levels that provokes common laughter-which opposes the lack of an absurd life to the plenitude of successful being-can be replaced by that which opposes the summit of imperative elevation to the dark abyss that obliterates all existence. Laughter is thus assumed by the totality of being. Renouncing the avaricious malice of the scapegoat, being itself, to the extent that it is the sum of existences at the limits of the night, is spasmodically shaken by the idea of the ground giving way beneath its feet. It is in universality (where, due to solitude, the possibility of facing death through war disappears) that the necessity of engaging in a struggle, no longer with an equal group but with nothingness, becomes clear. THE UNIVERSAL resembles a bull, sometimes absorbed in the nonchalance of animality and abandoned to the secret paleness of death, and sometimes hurled by the rage of ruin into the void ceaselessly opened before it by a skeletal torero. But the void it meets is also the nudity it espouses TO THE EXTENT THAT IT IS A MONSTER lightly assuming many crimes, and it is no longer, like the bull, the plaything of nothingness, because nothingness itself is its plaything; it only throws itself into nothingness in order to tear it apart and to illuminate the night for an instant, with an immense laugh-a laugh it never would have attained if this nothingness had not totally opened beneath its feet.

#### This incompleteness comes by way of interdependency as agents necessitate expressing their desires through language which renders the subject vulnerable and open to the other. Every subject is trapped in the labyrinth of their incompleteness and as a result look for ways to map themselves out through production – the idea that increased creation will make the self whole.

Bataille 2 [Georges; “The Labyrinth” retrieved from “Visions of Excess” (1930); librarian by day, literary figure, sociologist, and philosopher by night; //Dulles VN]

Starting from an extreme complexity, being imposes on reflection more than the precariousness of a fugitive appearance, but this complexity-displaced little by little-becomes in turn the labyrinth where what had suddenly come forward strangely loses its way. A sponge is reduced by pounding to a dust of cells; this living dust is formed by a multitude of isolated beings, and is lost in the new sponge that it reconstitutes. A siphonophore fragment is by itself an autonomous being, yet the whole siphonophore, to which this fragment belongs, is itself hardly different from a being possessing unity. Only with linear animals (worms, insects, fish, reptiles, birds, and mammals) do the living individual forms definitively lose the faculty of constituting aggregates bound together in a single body. But while societies of nonlinear animals do not exist, superior animals form aggregates without ever giving rise to corporeal links; men as well as beavers or ants form societies of individuals whose bodies are autonomous. But in regard to being, is this autonomy the final appearance, or is it simply error? In men, all existence is tied in particular to language, whose terms determine its modes of appearance within each person. Each person can only represent his total existence, if only in his own eyes, through the medium of words. Words spring forth in his head, laden with a host of human or superhuman lives in relation to which he privately exists. Being depends on the mediation of words, 174 0 THE LABYRINTH which cannot merely present it arbitrarily as "autonomous being," but which must present it profoundly as "being in relation." One need only follow, for a short time, the traces of the repeated circuits of words to discover, in a disconcerting vision, the labyrinthine structure ofthe human being. What is commonly called knowing-when a man knows his neighbor-is never anything but exis- ' tence composed for an instant (in the sense that all existence composes itself thus the atom composes its unity from variable electrons), which once made of these two beings a whole every bit as real as its parts. A limited number of exchanged phrases, no matter how conventional, sufficed to create the banal interpenetration of two existing juxtaposed regions. The fact that after this short exchange the man is aware of knowing his neighbor is opposed to a meeting without recognition in the street, as well as to the ignorance of the multitude of beings that one never meets, in the same way that life is opposed to death. The knowledge of human beings thus appears as a mode of biological connection, unstable but just as real as the connections between cells in tissue. The exchange between two human particles in fact possesses the faculty of surviving momentary separation. A man is only a particle inserted in unstable and entangled wholes. These wholes are composed in personal life in the form of multiple possibilities, starting with a knowledge that is crossed like a threshold-and the existence of the particle can in no way be isolated from this composition, which agitates it in the midst of a whirlwind of ephemerids. This extreme instability of connections alone permits one to introduce, as a puerile but convenient illusion, a representation of isolated existence turning in on itself. In the most general way, every isolable element of the universe always appears as a particle that can enter into composition with a whole that transcends it. Being is only found as a whole composed ofparticles whose relative autonomy is maintained. These two principles dominate the uncertain presence of an ipse being across a distance that never ceases to put everything in question. Emerging in universal playas unforeseeable chance, with extreme dread imperatively becoming the demand for universality, carried away to vertigo by the movement that composes it, the ipse being that presents itself as a universal is only a challenge to the diffuse immensity that escapes its precarious violence, the tragic negation of all that is not its own bewildered phantom's chance. But, as a man, this being falls into the meanders of the knowledge of his fellowmen, which absorbs his substance in order to reduce it to a component of what goes beyond the virulent madness of his autonomy in the total night of the world. Abdication and inevitable fatigue-due to the fact that "being" is, par excellence, that which, desired to the point of dread, cannot be endured-plunge[s] human beings into a foggy labyrinth formed by the multitude of "acquaintances" with which signs of life and phrases can be exchanged. But when he THE LABYRINTH 0 175 escapes the dread of "being" through this tlight-a "being" that is autonomous and isolated in night-a man is thrown back into insufficiency, at least if he cannot find outside of himself the blinding flash that he had been unable to endure within himself, without whose intensity his life is but an impoverishment, of which he feels obscurely ashamed.

#### Accumulation occurs at the expense of particular bodies being demarked unnecessary – those rendered “unsocialized” have norms inflicted upon them. Thus, the Role of the Ballot is to vote for the debater who best dwells within insufficiency.

O’Shea [Anthony; “Desiring Desire: How Desire makes us Human, All too Human”; Sociology; 2002; http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.1034.4228&rep=rep1&type=pdf; University of Sunderland; LCA-BP//recut Dulles VN]

We attempt to understand and communicate this experience but communication does not precede it. Communication is only a technology of the profane and is never enough to capture desire. It is the very excess of desire that overflows and forces us to communicate. We are in this sense driven to communicate by desire first; an understanding of desire develops through profane communication only after the experience. Desire is a primary force and communication is but a secondary affect. The excess of desire brings us together and so helps constitute the profane and social life in order that it finds release through, for instance, communication. Desire remains more than, and is capable of rupturing, the profane. It is in this way rather like Foucauldian power: whilst we may attempt to know and understand desire in order to curb and limit it, our attempts are only ever temporary. Bataille (1954, 1967, 1973) argues that in prehistory humans attempted to split the original sacred, Natural World into a profane and a sacred world as an attempt to negate, or deflect, the violence of the Natural World. This led to a second separation of the sacred as both a world that is inherent in, or immanent to, us and one completely beyond us that transcends our understanding and knowledge. The sacred becomes more transcendental as the profane world attempts to establish itself. We, as humans, are aware of this increasing separation whilst retaining a desire for the sacred. We cannot attain the transcendental because it is always other to us and as The Other (Lacan, 1982). Bataille’s sacred, contra Durkheim, does not follow the profane as some psychic fantasy of an ideal. It is ephemeral, only occasionally glimpsed through the rending of desire, yet is more than us and beyond meaning and words (Bataille, 1967, 1976). It is transcendental, beyond any human concept of good or evil, ideal or pure societies. These are human conceptions; they are too limited and cannot adequately describe the sacred. We are both faced with a feeling of loss of the sacred whilst paradoxically desiring it and yet fearing the implication that the sacred as immanent requires – the return to the violence of the Natural world. In effect the sacred becomes something separate to us and which we can never hope to obtain because it lies beyond our profane world bounded by law. Separation can only ever be temporary; we remain destined to die. The sacred also remains immanent as an inner experience that we can recoup at moments when we transgress the rules of our profane world. Such moments can occur in mass events such as the Mardi Gras, feast days, war, orgies, public executions and torture and more private ones, marriage, sex, love, joy, hope, laughter (Bataille, 1973). In all of these we can become caught up in a desire so strong that we transgress the rules and taboos of our world because we are able to face up to and accept the realization of death. What moves us is a desire that rends our being, ruptures us momentarily, fleetingly and teasingly, to reveal the sacred and then is gone, leaving us incomplete but needing to communicate this rapturous experience (Bataille, 1954). Peter Tracey Conner (2000) contends that Bataille’s point is that the ecstatic experience is the exception: different to and beyond everyday life. For Bataille, however, the sacred is immanent; laughter, joy, passion, pain and desire are the excesses of everyday life, not its exception. Bataille’s story is one of a continual cycle of experience. It is the rise of an angel through desire to the sacred only to be followed by the expulsion and fall of Lucifer, an angel found wanting by God, contaminated by, but not enough for the sacred (O’Shea, 2001a). This rending experience of desire that reveals the sacred is anti-Hegelian and non-phenomenological. The desiring subject is lost in and to desire: we do not possess desire; desire takes us. What returns is not the original phenomenological subject that can reflect upon itself. There is no self-aware Phoenix that rises from its own ashes and that can give meaning, form and reality to the world, only a ruptured human that experiences its own insufficiency. Nor is there some improved Hegelian traveller that experiences desire, sublates the desired object and becomes more than it. What is expended by desire is an Icarus, burnt by the Sun, found wanting by it, wanting to return to it even whilst knowing that it is insufficient to contain the very experience of desire and the sacred. As anti-Hegelian and non-phenomenological, Bataille’s subject does not choose to transgress but transgresses because of the excessive movement of desire. At the very moment of touching the sacred the subject is both lost to and beyond the profane and its rules and taboos: in a sense there is no transgression at this moment as there is nothing to transgress. Transgression occurs only when the subject returns to the profane: transgression requires the existence of rules and taboos and a subjection to them. Rules are not facts or immutable certainties but technologies of the profane (Bataille, 1954, 1967, 1973). For Bataille (1954: xxxii), ‘We have in fact only two certainties in this world – that we are not everything and that we will die’. The profane social world with its rules exists to distance us from but cannot deny or negate death. Desire momentarily reveals the sacred, exposes us to death and places us beyond being and transgression. For Bataille (1967, 1973) our fear of death marks us as human, as individuals, and it is this fear that led to the development of the profane and modern societies. Our fear stems from our fear of total annihilation, our fear of becoming undifferentiated, the loss of our individual being to become a non-being. Bataille does not suggest that we, as humans, have either negated or never had an animalistic nature. He argues that this still forms part of being and so we are open to imperatives and desires that stem from this and are neither entirely of the profane world nor entirely rational. An acceptance, or absence, of a priori fear of death is embedded with the homogeneous and a return to the Natural World. The profane world, the world of work, attempts to separate us from or reduce the violence of the Natural world through scientific, rational endeavours aimed at understanding and increasing our separation from the Natural world achieved by the creation of technologies. The profane as the world of rational endeavour that denies death. Death takes on two forms within Bataille’s thought. There is the brute certainty of death that we cannot deny and which comes to every living being. Our fear of death, however, is conceptually different from this and differentiates us from every other living thing. Our fear of death marks us as human, is culturally and socially based and indeed is formative of culture and society (Bataille, 1954). We have come to fear death as the total annihilation of our being only because we have become separated from the Natural world. Death is thus the limit experience of our profane world. Any transgression of the profane world therefore means that we must face up to and overcome our fear of death. Fear of violence leads the profane world to establish a separation between itself and the Natural world through the creation of cultures and societies and their maintenance by the establishment of rules and taboos. The dialectical, radical (anti) Hegelian nature of Bataille’s thought, however, demands that rules and taboos can only be understood with their inverted form – transgression. Rules depend on what they are designed to prevent. A speed limit of 30 mph is dependent on preventing a vehicle from exceeding this speed and presupposes both the existence of such a vehicle and a wilful driver’s intent to exceed it. A rule can only exist with transgression as its other. Without transgression rules or taboos cease to be, they become immutable facts or truths which exist without recourse to the profane world (Styhre, 2000). They become inviolable, natural imperatives of our animalistic nature. The rule does not precede transgression, they imply and exist within each other, transgression is immanent to the rule (Guerlac, 1997). For Styhre we transgress because we are human: ‘eroticism [a form of transgression] is based upon the desire of human beings to be beyond themselves’ (Styhre, 2000). Yet transgression for Bataille demonstrates that we are not the centre of existence; we do not desire, desire overwhelms us; we do not transgress because we are human but are human because of transgression. What is important is that transgression is not the simple act of either a knowing or a revolutionary subject but occurs as the second part of a double movement that follows excessive desire and joins it to the profane (Bataille, 1954, 1957). The first movement places us beyond the profane into the sacred. The desiring subject is now beyond rules and taboos and so does not transgress them but can self-affirm itself.

#### Prefer:

**[1] Productivity: current pedagogical models are centered around the productive child dialectic: we *must* center our discussions on philosophy oriented for and through community.**

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The impossible resists the incarnation of friendship and communion in the form of the brotherhood. It is not attached to the figure of the brother or to any incarnation in presence, and so it resists the making present of community in any form. Of course, the impossible is also the opening of the question of community in all its forms, a question that it does not presume to resolve. To purify community of all its ‘contamination’ for whatever political agenda is an activity that leads to the destruction of community. A community without foreign bodies is a dead community, a community that lacks any communication with its outside. It is in the negotiation with the foreign body that community is at stake, and the punitive rejection of ‘immigrants’ is a sign of the paucity of the thought of community at present. We are very far from the sovereign generosity of Nietzsche who ‘is on the side of *those who give* ...’ (AS2/3, 370). The impossibility of community can also return us to our opening question – the relationship between Bataille and philosophy. Bataille’s reading of Nietzsche has led us to the impossible as the opening of community, and it can also lead us to impossibility as the opening of philosophy. In their different ways both Nietzsche and Bataille are impossible for philosophy; they are foreign bodies who cannot be accepted within the body of philosophy without provoking a violent sickness. Philosophy; responds with agitated gestures of appropriation that assimilate them to the history of philosophy or rejections that exclude them from philosophy altogether. However, Bataille contaminates philosophy with impossibility by considering its necessity for philosophy: ‘This condition of impossibility is not the excuse for undeniable deficiencies; it limits all real philosophy’ (TR, 11–12). Impossibility is not an excuse for poor thinking where the impossible is casually invoked to justify our own inadequacies, but it forms a real limit. The impossible is not only a limit that prevents philosophy from achieving the universal knowledge that it desires, it is also the limit that provokes that desire. Philosophy begins from the impossible: ‘Philosophy responds from the start to an irresolvable exigency’ (TR, 12). So, impossibility can never be removed from philosophy as an impediment that blocks the path of knowledge, but it is the dispersal of the path into the labyrinth of thought. Therefore the impossible functions for philosophy analogously to the way it functions for community, as a ‘real limit’ which both sets up a limit and which is a limit as an opening possibility. This is why the refusal of philosophy to recognise impossibility is also a refusal of philosophical thought to recognise community. Philosophy, so often read as the work of many solitary (male) individuals, resists the effect of community, the being-in-common that touches on all philosophy. To read philosophy as impossible does not mean the end or destruction of philosophy but a different thinking of philosophy. Bataille, following Nietzsche, moves towards this when he suggests a different image of philosophy, an image that subverts the philosophical image of philosophy: ‘A philosophy is never a house; it is a construction site’ (TR, 11). Philosophy thinks of itself as a completed architectural form, and in an article in Documents Bataille had noted that whenever we find a taste for architectural construction ‘we can infer a prevailing taste for human or divine authority’ (EA, 35). The image of the house is an image of completion that imposes an authoritative completion on thought but a thought of the impossible undermines this image and reveals that philosophy is really a construction site. For philosophy this incompletion is only ever a stage in a movement towards completion, even if that completion be infinitely deferred. For Bataille philosophy can only be thought as this incompletion, as a construction site rather than a house and without the taste for authority that the architectural construction imposes on thought.

#### [2] Intersubjectivity: all ethics need to account for how subjects interact with others, otherwise we’d theorize in a vacuum and philosophy would be useless. Beginning with the solar economy emphasizes the intrinsic connectedness to land and body.

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In his time, Bataille was inspired by the idea of founding such a syncretic science that would consider the physical, geological, sexual, philosophical, and political in their mutual intersection, which, as proclaimed throughout “The Solar Anus,” is ultimately parodic. He did not have enough discipline to complete this science into a proper system (he hated completed systems; maybe that is why his promises given in the preface and theoretical introduction to The Accursed Share were not really carried out...), but he gave it a good name — general economy. Energy for general economy is not only what matters, but what matters the most. Its currents define all economic life. Today we know it very well. We are, however, used to thinking of energy as a limited resource for all productive activities. For Bataille, this was not the case. He saw the problem not in the lack, but in the excess of energy. We, living organisms, receive more energy than we really need and can accommodate. In this sense, we are not poor, but rich, as is everything and everybody on Earth. It is because of this excessive energy that all animals and plants can grow and reproduce, but even growth and reproduction cannot ex- haust what we receive for no cost. The overall growth is limited by “the size of the terrestrial space” (Bataille 1991: 29), within which animals and plants develop, invade the lands, crowd and replace each other. Life itself is an extravagant luxury with death as its culminating point. Living forms rotate in nature’s macabre dance. A superabundance of energy comes from the sun: “Solar energy is the source of life’s exuberant development. The origin and essence of our wealth are given in the radiation of the sun, which dispenses energy—wealth—without any return. The sun gives without ever receiving” (Ibid: 28). Be like the sun! — this is basically a Bataillean motto for the possible future of the political economy adjusted to the planetary scale and balanced with the ecological whole. General, or solar economy is the economy of gift as opposed to one of exchange, it privileges consumption over production and expenditure over accumulation. How to imagine such an economy? Bataille provides an example of extreme poverty in India contrasted to excessive wealth in the US: “General economy suggests, therefore, as a correct oper- ation, a transfer of American wealth to India without reciprocation” (Ibid: 40). This sounds like a simple solution, but at the same time absolutely impossible. Why? Because we are used to thinking about such matters in terms of restricted human economies. We consider social life as interactions of separate objects, individuals or groups, national states, and other units, with their specific needs, interests, or functions, whereas general economy only comprises the planetary whole and its equilibriums. In fact, it cannot be practiced by humans within the system of capitalist states, based on accumulation and ownership, where all things seem to be designed for being not dis- tributed for free, but possessed and exchanged at a profit. As Aman- da Boetzkes comments on the place of solar energy in Bataille’s ecological thinking, his account of solarity implies that “a global infrastructure that drew from a freely available source is inimical to capitalism’s restricted energy economy” (Boetzkes 2017: 317). In a similar vein, Imre Szeman (2020) explains that we can, indeed, imagine a global transition to “cleaner” solar energy that would replace more “dirty” fossil fuels, but such a solar-energy-based capi- talist economy will not equal a solar economy qua general economy. From Bataille’s claim that the passage from a restricted to a general economy must accomplish a Copernican transformation with “a reversal of thinking—and of ethics” (1991: 25), Szeman makes a step to the idea that “This Copernican change of perspective ne-cessitates a politics of revolution rather than reform” (Szeman 2020: 137). What Bataille seem to miss in The Accursed Share is a kind of political strategy: for this, an injection of Marxism is needed. An accomplishment of political revolution toward the solar can only be global and international and start from abandoning the idea of economic growth as the main principle of our societies. On a global scale, as Bataille says, there is no growth, “but only a luxurious squandering of energy in every form” (1991: 33). Human economies attempt to appropriate its flows and subordinate them to particular finite ends, but, after all, “beyond our immediate ends, man’s activity in fact pursues the useless and infinite fulfillment of the universe” (Ibid: 21). There is always a limit of growth, and an excess that must be spent this or that way. This excess is called “the accursed share.” If every surplus is invested in further growth of the system like capital, a catastrophic outcome is just a matter of time. Warfare is an example of such an outcome; particularly the prospect of the nuclear war was a matter of concern for Bataille and people of his generation. Bataille’s general economy is paradoxi- cally rational: what it suggests is recognizing the limits of growth and thinking through the strategies of nonproductive expenditure as self-conscious activity. We should stop being greedy and stop striving for individual growth, which ends up with planetary energy restoring its balance in an uncontrolled and catastrophic way. Nonproductive expenditure must be taken seriously and organized as a conscious politics of gifts without reciprocation—a glorious politics. As emphasized by Allan Stoekl in his very important book Bataille’s Peak: Energy, Religion, and Postsustainability (2007), which explores Bataille’s general economy as the theory for the twen- ty-first century, this approach promotes a new ecological ethics: Bataille’s theory is profoundly ethical but only in the sense that the instant of preservation, of meaning, of conservation, of knowl- edge, is the unforeseen offshoot of another movement, that of the drive to spend without counting, without attempting to anticipate return. [...] Not nuclear war, but the channeling of excess [...] not generalized ecocide, but an affirmation of another energy, another religion, another waste, entailing not so much a steady state sus- tainability (with what stable referent? Man?) but instead a postsus- tainable state in which we labor in order to expend, not conserve. (Stoekl 2007: 32–59)

#### [3] **internalism: the labyrinth is an insufficient model to base calculi off of because It is rooted in disorienting every subject within it, thus, we must defer to an internal theory, one which resides in our incomplete understanding of an innate insufficiency. Ethics must be binding, otherwise we could infinitely opt-out and they’d be purposeless.**

### Contention

#### I affirm; A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.

#### Strikes are a form of non-productive expenditure as we interrupt the machine of productivity and act against established economic norms without any particular gain.

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Bataille’s notion of violence—and the difference between the two kinds of violence—allows for the creation of a bridge from general economy to general politics that is only sketched here but deserves to be developed at a greater length in some future work. Basically, the idea is the following: for a general emancipatory politics, the point is not to interpret solar violence—pandemic outbreak, climate change, volcano eruptions, tornadoes, and so on—as nature’s revolt analogous to human emancipatory struggles, but to grasp human emancipatory struggles as solar violence that correlates to the solar economy. Roughly said, nature does not strike, because it does not care, but: what if a human strike could go really general—not in terms of Sorel, but rather in terms of Bataille? Thus, one of the most shocking effects of the coronavirus is that it interrupts, not entirely, of course, but partly at least—due to necessary quarantine measures—the processes of capitalist production and exchange. Some employed become unemployed, others are sent to a kind of involuntary vacation. Offices and institutions are closed, and the work is stopped or reduced, with a serious loss for individuals and countries relying on their restrictive policies, so that the considerable intervention of states is needed in order to preserve the capitalism system, in whose indissolubility the absolute majority of people so strongly believed only yesterday. Does this sudden interruption not refer to some perverted image of the general strike? From the quarantine to the viral strike; from climate change to the solar strike—these could be the mottos for a general politics in times of pandemics and global warming. If we put it like this, we should explain the strike not as an expression of need, but as an excessive wave of dangerous festivities that replace work. Decolonization or revolutionary violence, too, can be interpreted as general, if we extend it from the domain of human 162 Oxana Timofeeva history to the domain of natural activities, and grasp not, say, climate change as a rebellion of the colonized Earth or revolutionary movement of the oppressed nature, but human decolonizing struggles and revolutionary movements as radical climate change: it is getting hot. To make things clear: general economy as political project comprises the self-conscious activity of people that takes the solar economy of the universe as its model. In this, it is opposed to the restricted policies that seem to save and preserve as well as to grow and accumulate, but in fact unconsciously follow the planetary drive for destruction, which is seemed to confront. In turn, self-conscious activity will seem to repeat planetary debauchery, but in fact will dialectically transform it into glorious nonproductive expenditures. I  do not suggest any new form of politics, but invite the rethinking of existing ones. Every progressive protest movement, every strike, every revolution already carries this sovereign, festive, luxurious moment, but it remains shadowed by the restricted, one-sided logics of usefulness that cannot encompass the totality of the ecological whole.

#### The formation of unions and the organization of strikes is a form of transgression which a. is a communal organization that voices the peripheral and b. builds relations between subjects who pursue similar goals and interests.

Suetzl [Wolfgang; “The Anti-Economy of Sharing” Wolfgang Suetzl is a philosopher, media theorist, and linguist at the University of Ohio; Dulles VN]

(c) Bataille’s idea of a solar economy helps to understand that scarcity is an experience created on the level of individuals and groups, and that economies of exchange promote that individualization, whereas moving beyond exchange means going beyond individualism and reciprocity. Sharing can be described as a communal behavior that transcends individual boundaries and transgresses hierarchical boundaries. It is this perspective that has allowed the commons to be researched as an institution of sharing that serves all, rather than as a stage for “tragedy” in which scarcity inevitably returns through the pursuit of utility by “rational beings”, and which therefore should be abolished (Hardin 1968, 1244)2 ; (d) Bataille’s view of expenditure makes it possible to understand sharing as something different from merely another economic form (that would lead back to exchange, as in what is currently called the “shareconomy”); (e) Bataille’s notion of excess as universal allows it to understand the effect of sharing, i.e., that the shared good seems to become “more”; sharing can be understood as the setting-into-work (Heidegger’s Ins-WerkSetzen) of plenty; (f) Bataille’s emphasis of mortality, his idea of death as “nature’s luxury” and of war as waste allows us to understand sharing as an activity that embraces mortality and finiteness, whereas exchange does nurture the illusion of a deathless existence in which every limitation can be overcome, every problem has a solution and every illness a cure; and where therefore dying itself becomes meaningless and embarrassing, and cultural resources that allow us to deal with tragedy are lost. As Baudrillard has shown, there is no space for death in exchange. In the every act of sharing, therefore, we acknowledge our common mortality and the finitude of the world; in other words, we mourn. Bataille considers mourning as a form of unproductive expenditure (1985, 118); (g) the affirmation of mortality and finitude is also the affirmation of life and play. Just like pain becomes more bearable when it is shared, diversions are more “fun” when shared, and laughing is very much a behavior that reveals its wisdom when shared and its foolishness in isolation; (h) the emphasis of non-productiveness in Bataille’s notion of expenditure helps understand why sharing has mostly been considered and researched in the context of consumption (e.g. Belk 2009; Botsman and Rogers 2011); (i) Bataille’s non-returnable expenditure is structurally equal to the principle of nonreciprocity that defines sharing as different from the exchange (Benkler 2004; Woodburn 1998). Sharing is not a mutual, but a communal kind of action.

### Method

#### We must deny productive modes of thought at every corner and instead affirm wasteful excess. Attachment to consumption in its survivalist form of hoarding forms of labor, avoids an embracement of loss which is crucial to the efficacy of any strategy. The toxicity of the logic of accumulation haunts every workplace

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Wealth would be expended and lost in a round of exchanges where each giver had to give more to demonstrate their superior status. By contrast the crises of the capitalist world simply spurred further accumulation and increased economic divisions. As this economic division became sharper Bataille saw the possibility of the working class using a modern *potlatch* as a political weapon. Deprived of economic wealth the working class could only assert its social power by humiliating the bourgeoisie through the appropriation of its wealth *and* its immediate expenditure. Unlike the bourgeoisie where ‘wealth is now displayed behind closed doors, in accordance with depressing and boring conventions’ (VE, 124; BR, 175) the proletariat can restore the generosity and nobility which have disappeared from modern life. Although this was consciously expressed in Marxist terms Bataille saw this seizing of the means of production not as the prelude to a better and more productive socialist society but as the occasion for a festival of expenditure: ‘Class struggle, on the contrary, becomes the grandest form of social expenditure when it is taken up again and developed, this time on the part of the workers, and on such a scale that it threatens the very existence of the masters’ (VE, 126; BR, 178). Bataille would have agreed with the Italian communist Amadeo Bordiga (1889–1970) that ‘One does not *build* communism’,2 as for him at that time communism was an experience of violent consumption. Instead of exploring communism as accumulation Bataille chooses to examine it as a principle of loss; therefore communism is no longer a better or more rationally organised economic form than capitalism (as so many Marxists have argued) but a more irrational one. Marxism can no longer be reduced to being the mirror image of capitalism or restricted to being a new form of political economy. Bataille’s communism is a heterogeneous communism of what is excluded by capitalism: ‘It excludes in principle non-productive expenditure’(VE, 117; BR, 168). Of course, non-productive expenditure can be seen as another name for the accursed share, from which Bataille will try to lift the curse of exclusion in his later work. Already in ‘The Notion of Expenditure’ Bataille tries to develop an initial characterisation of this excluded non-productive expenditure by marking out its difference. The first distinction he draws is the one between production and consumption, and, as we have seen, Bataille is already trying to displace the emphasis that both capitalism and socialism place on production. However, it is not enough to move towards consumption because there are two forms of consumption. There is productive consumption, broadly speaking consumption which serves the reproduction of the system or the consumption necessary to survival rather than life. This form of consumption is actually directed towards production, it is subject to the delay and detours necessary to reproduction. There is, however, another form of consumption, unproductive expenditure which is an end in itself. Unproductive expenditure is the principle of loss which is excluded by modern society but which still lives on within it, revealed in the traces and remnants of the great exercises of expenditure of the past and of ‘primitive’ societies. Bataille gives a number of examples of the survival of processes of sumptuary expenditure, for instance in the continuing fascination we have with jewels. These functionally useless items, except for decoration, lead to massive expenditures both in their recovery from the earth and in their sale. For Bataille they have the profound unconscious meaning of ‘cursed matter that flows from a wound’ (VE, 119; BR, 170). Jewels, especially the great diamonds, are often rumoured to be cursed or possessed of a malign power to excite greed and violence. Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868) is the classic fictional exploration of this ‘cursed matter’ with its story of a fabulous and uncanny diamond circulating through multiple acts of theft and betrayal before it finally returns to that locus of fantasies of a ‘primitive’ Orient – India.3 Bataille’s other examples include games, both the expense of putting on sporting events and the gambling and excessive consumption they provoke (a tendency which has increased since Bataille wrote), art and sacrifice. In each example Bataille finds that we still remain attached to this principle of loss, of non- productive expenditures which remain more and more confined to the margins of existence. This marginal existence of the principle of loss conceals the fact that in reality non-productive expenditures are not a minor economic phenomenon but the very origin of economy. Bataille’s turn to ‘primitive’ societies is not a romantic projection of the ‘noble savage’ who exemplifies unproductive expenditure but an act of what Goux calls ‘ethnological decentring’ (CR, 196). By returning to a different possibility of economy Bataille dislodges our tendency to project capitalism as the eternal model of economy.

#### The current model of state-based domination has been decentralized, which necessitates innovation: the affirmative rethinks the methods by which we explore. Our aim is to develop strategies that eradicate the political dialectic once and for all.

DeLeon 12 [Abraham; associate prof @ UT san antonio; Chapter 17: Against the Grain of the Status Quo: Anarchism behind Enemy Lines,” in Anarchist Pedagogies; 2012] \*brackets in og text

Infiltration: a word that may evoke a host of thoughts and fantasies from soldiers operating behind enemy lines, police informants gaining access to criminal organizations, or to scenarios of radicals inserting themselves into corporations or research **labs. Whatever the scenario,** infiltration can be tactic **that anarchists pursue** when thinking about operating within current institutional realities, especially if interested in teaching in public schools. Although this claim is entangled within complex relationships of power and privilege, struggle arises wherever domination coalesces, especially within institutional structures and settings (Sharp, Routledge, Philo & Paddison, 2000). Power conjures, “the threadings, knottings and weavings” of social relationships through a intertwining of the social, political, moral, educational, and historical realities of a given society. In this way, power is “crucially and unavoidably spun out across and through the material spaces of the world” (Sharp, et al., 2000, p. 22). This chapter thus looks to situate itself and build radical pedagogy within the threads and knots of contemporary relationships of power; inbetween what Holloway (2010) has called the “cracks” of capitalism, trying to “desperately find . . . faults beneath the surface, or to create cracks by banging the walls” (p. 8). Cracks have emerged through environmental disaster, economic collapse, psychological alienation, a crisis of identity, and decades of war and imperial aggression conducted by the West. It is under these historical conditions that resistance needs to be conceptualized. Creating, finding and exploiting “cracks” within a diffused and networked capitalism demonstrates that dated narratives of revolutionary struggle are no longer viable and there is “no guarantee of a happy ending” (Holloway, 2010, p. 9). Unfortunately, although these narratives may provide comfort amid an onslaught of capitalism, war, death, terror, and alienation, they do not open up, nor allow, alternative possibilities of resistance to form outside the boundaries they construct. In some ways, these may only help to reproduce the current order we find ourselves in. This does not mean that we should resign ourselves to the throngs of nihilistic defeat, asthere is indeed potential for radical hope within the cracks of Empire. The multitude, with its potential for infinite possibilities, can build a complex and dispersed resistance through the breaks, tears, and folds of our social order (Deleuze, 1992), and the tactics and pedagogies that we envision as radicals can attempt to capture this spirit. Although the manifestations of these cracks and folds is yet to be seen, I leave the reader to their own radical imaginations in devising ways to subvert a networked and diffused machine (Shukaitis, 2009). Evoking the metaphor of a “machine,” as I describe the multifaceted nature of contemporary capitalism, harkens to Trotter’s (1990) claim that colonialism operated in a very similar way, divorced from individual interactions and operating abstractly through “official” and “unofficial” discourses, forms of knowledge, ways of knowing, the morality of a given era, and the reproduction of knowledge to name a few. The analogy of a machine also challenges that human agency is solely at the center of how social system operate, because machines, “create, distribute, and organize populations and impose regimes of conduct, agency and effectivity” outside of individual actors and agency (Grossberg, 2010, p. 36). Radicals (within and outside the labor movement) had ingenious ways in which to deal with the machines of capitalism, occurring through tactics that spanned strikes, sit-ins, walking out, and subversion to even more direct forms like sabotaging machinery, bringing production to a halt. Sabotage is a tactic that anarchists need to rethink in light of how labor is now dispersed among a wide variety of institutional realities (factories, banks, corporations, and public institutions, for example), as well as the contemporary knowledge and abstract economies. The machines of capitalism that produced goods during the height of the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century provide us a way in which to think of societal machines and tactics that can be adapted for current conditions. How do we as anarchists, who want to teach and work with students, deal with the contradictions of being located within the same institutions that seek to discipline bodies and coerce us? How do we sabotage these machines and build a radical pedagogy from this perspective? Sabotage provides a provocative conceptual framework in which to think about building alternative forms of resistanceand aligns with ways in which anarchists have historically conceptualized direct political action. This is even more interesting when we think of how this will emerge through educational practice, as teaching allows us to directly engage ideology, challenging students’ conceptions about the world around them. With this type of important, dare I say political work, why do some anarchists shun the world of public teaching and service? Education is at the “front lines” of the contemporary ideological war conducted by corporate media, official organs of the State, and influential economic institutions. Whether that emerges through corporate textbooks that omit subaltern experiences and worldviews, standardized testing that stress rote memorization, or a curriculum that reproduces Eurocentrism and Western ways of knowing, education is invested in reproducing dominant conceptions of the world. However, sabotage can take myriad forms, and this chapter will build on the conceptual idea of building politics of infiltration. It has been well established that police and other State agents have infiltrated radical political movements, especially with the rise of anarchist praxis over the past two decades (Borrum & Tilby, 2004). Anarchists should think about assuming this same tactic, using the idea of infiltration as a guiding way to think about our praxis within institutional realities and as a way to think about diffused forms of sabotage. **Although anarchism is rife with identity and lifestyle politics that detests any signs of “selling out,” this has only proven to further marginalize us in the eyes of the larger society that we must work at convincing how terribly oppressive the current social arrangement is. In the end,** our movement is going to have to be broadbased and span multiple identities, social locations, political affiliations, and a renewed sense of politics that seeks to look at how, “the contemporary world has been made to be what it is [and] make visible ways in which it can become something else” **(**Grossberg, 2010, p. 1). Stoler (2010) discusses the idea of reading and analyzing “against the grain” of archival documents to unearth new interpretations and voices. This chapter urges radicals to think of our social actions along these same lines of thought: against the grain of dominant ideologies that serve to support historically oppressive realities. In this chapter, I will attempt to propose a politics of infiltration through a peculiar anarchist lens that seeks to subvert capitalism and its accompanying institutional realities through a diffused resistance stemming from bodies; bodies immersed in oppressive institutional realities. I dance through theoretical traditions to demonstrate how infiltration can be conceptualized as not only a physical practice (such as our work in classrooms), but also can be a theoretical framework in which to situate our practice, always looking for cracks, weaknesses, and oppor- tunities to sabotage dominant conceptions of the world that demonstrates another world is possible. Although radicals may think of this action as “selling out,” I want to reframe teaching and working within institutions as a potential form of infiltration, inserting other ways of knowing and being into the academy to challenge systemically oppressive realities. Shannon (2009) reminds us that cooptation lurks around every corner and Shukaitis (2009) warns us of the recuperative nature of capitalism. Both of these realities are firmly acknowledged as risks, however, it should not immobilize us into inaction. Nor should this resign us to “ghettoizing” ourselves into intellectual enclaves where conversations are more about nodding our collective heads in agreement rather than challenging our own practices with alternative voices and tactics. Indeed, tensions can be the basis for a critical reflection about what we are actually doing in our practice and engaging a wide variety of techniques and approaches to explore these, such as writing and political organization. Communities of practice, whether in activism or through qualitative research, are an essential feature of building bridges with other like-minded activists and scholars (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Cooptation and recuperation are indeed challenges we will face but should not stop us from doing something, keeping in mind the question that Lorde (2003) had when she struggled with the tools of the master (p. 25). This chapter will hopefully allow the conversation to continue about the role of anarchist theory in building alternative forms of praxis, pedagogy, and direct action, especially within the context of public education and the contradictions that anarchists face within hierarchical and coercive institutions.

#### The absence of sacrificial expenditure only allows the acceleration of violence beyond all limits, resulting in total warfare, racialized violence, and nuclear annihilation.

Pawlett 15

(William Pawlett. Senior Lecturer in Media, Communications, and Cultural Studies at the University of Wolverhampton. (2015). *Georges Bataille: The sacred and society.* London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. pg. 93-5)

Yet Bataille’s argument is more sophisticated and nuanced that his critics allow. If sacriﬁce is primarily an internal form of violence (internal to a clan, community or society) then war and conquest involve the directing of a portion of this violence onto external enemies. This external channelling is, for Bataille, morally repugnant because it involves a deferral, accumulation and rationalisation of the unleashing of violence. Violence breaks free from its ritual limits and accelerates beyond containment, becoming far more destructive. While violence still breaks the profane routines of society, it does so for the allegedly ‘rational’ purpose of accumulating wealth or territory – that is for growth. Clearly, externalised and rationalised violence involves far larger numbers of victims than does sacriﬁce. Standing armies are developed. Warfare, throughout modernity, has increasingly affected non-combatants. No member of society is, in any sense, protected from violence – indeed, all are made vulnerable with the emergence of ‘total war’ and the threat of nuclear holocaust in the twentieth century. Crucially, the deferral and channelling of violence also opens up the space for the hypocrisies of ideology and propaganda which attempt to further rationalise the directing of violence onto external enemies by depicting enemies as lower, inferior or inhuman. For Bataille, the social and epistemological conditions for racial hatred and ethnic violence are set up only through the externalisations of violent excesses that are characteristic of modernity. We might say that a religious social system is more honest (or rather less dishonest) about its violence than a ‘rational’, ideologically managed social system. Finally, the acquisitive and exploitative drive for continual growth generates new and unforeseen manifestations of the accursed share, new outlets for the catastrophic squandering of resources that cannot be contained within ritual or any other limits. The channelling of the accursed share into military, colonial and ideological violence does not make these societies more stable; it does not protect or shelter its people at the expense of others, but actually condemns society to serial conﬂict, to an endless circulation of violence, a violence ‘set free on all sides’ (Bataille, 1989a, p. 85). If sacriﬁcing 20,000 people per year is a monstrous aberration, is the ‘sacriﬁce’ of thousands of road users and pedestrians killed and injured in accidents across all developed nations any less monstrous? The major difference seems to be only that the deaths caused by trafﬁc accidents are absolutely meaningless, whereas the deaths in Aztec sacriﬁcial rites were charged with meaning. Bataille acknowledges that tendencies towards the externalisation of violence were present, if inchoate, in Aztec society even at the time of the earliest ethnographic accounts. Yet clearly, sacrificial violence was the central social dynamic. Bataille recounts how prisoners of war, taken by the Aztecs and destined for sacrifice, were made ‘insiders’ by being treated well, adorned and sometimes given concubines, enjoying a life of privilege for up to a year before their immolation. Of course, Bataille does not contend that such victims were thereby willing, and he frequently notes that the powerful within even small-scale or archaic ‘collective’ cultures used religion to control and abuse their people (Bataille, 1988, p. 60). Aztec ritual, at the time of the Spanish invasion, was a degraded, ‘compromised’ form of sacrificial kingship, yet it is still able to illustrate a profound moral difference from the conditions of modern societies. In stark contrast to Aztec society, the European industrial revolution made possible an immense growth in wealth and energy during the nineteenth century, and there was relative peace in Europe between 1815 and 1914. Isn’t this clear evidence of the economic and moral superiority of Western, industrialised cultures? For Bataille, this growth of wealth and prosperity was, in fact, accompanied by a terrible impoverishment in the conditions of life, especially for the working classes. Further, the excess energy generated by industrial production was, in time, turned to catastrophically violent ends: ‘the two world wars organised the greatest orgies of wealth – and of human beings – that history has recorded’ (p. 37). The development and accumulation of resources such as armies, machine guns, tanks and war planes channelled growth into catastrophe as millions of lives were annihilated on a scale previously unimaginable. In other words, growth as simple proﬁt or unlimited accumulation can never continue for long – rather growth, left unchecked, will generate new, uncontrollable and catastrophic expenditures. The horrors of the trenches and the death camps, and of nuclear devastation, massively exceed and disable any possible sense of the ‘good’, of beneﬁts or ‘proﬁts’ – even ﬁguratively such as lessons learned by humankind. By contrast, the violence of the potlatch was largely symbolic (scant consolation for the slaves who were sacriﬁced) and even Aztec society at the height of its sacriﬁcial fervour never practised ‘sacriﬁce’ on the scale of Passchendaele, Auschwitz, Hiroshima or Afghanistan. Indeed, Aztec violence was strictly limited to feast days, military expeditions and festivals. Applying Bataille’s perspective, such limits allow, activate and contain the expression of the accursed share. We might sum up this argument by simply saying that if the sacriﬁcial violence of the Aztecs, Tlingit and Kwakiutl was terrifying, the violence unleashed by modernity is far, far worse. investigated in some detail later in this book. For the moment, however, the issue is a more elementary one: that of theorizing the relation between the closed field of the cosmic energy reservoir (0), and the local pool of nonequilibrium economy, open to exchange.