## 1 ac haha whats work

How I would love one day to see all people, young and old, sad or happy, men and women, married or not, serious or superficial leave their homes and their work places, relinquish their duties and responsibilities, gather in the streets and refuse to do anything anymore. At that moment, let slaves to senseless work, who have been toiling for future generations under the dire delu- sion that they contribute to the good of humanity, avenge them- selves on the mediocrity of a sterile and insignificant life, on the tremendous waste that never permitted spiritual transfiguration. At that moment, when all faith and resignation are lost, let the trappings of ordinary life burst once and for all. Let those who suffer silently, not even uttering a sigh of complaint, yell with all their might, making a strange, menacing, dissonant clamor that would shake the earth. Let the waters flow faster and the moun- tains sway threateningly, the trees show their roots like an eternal and hideous reproach, the birds croak like ravens, and the ani- mals scatter in fright and fall from exhaustion. Let ideals be declared void; beliefs, trifles; art, a lie; and philosophy, a joke. Let everything be climax and anticlimax. Let lumps of earth leap into the air and crumble in the wind; let plants make strange ara- besques, frightful and distorted shapes, in the sky. Let wildfires spread rapidly and a terrifying noise drown out everything so that even the smallest animal would know that the end is near. Let all form become formless, and chaos swallow the structure of the world in a gigantic maelstrom. Let there be tremendous commotion and noise, terror, and explosion, and then let there be eternal silence and total forgetfulness. And in those final moments, let all that humanity has felt until now, hope, regret, love, despair, and hatred, explode with such force that nothing is left behind. Would not such moments be the triumph of nothingness and the final apotheosis of nonbeing?

E. M. Cioran, Romanian madman, 1934, “Pe culmile disperării” Translated by Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston. Fundaţia Pentru Literatură Şi Artă "Regele Carol II,". HHurt.

#### Nonproductive expenditure disappeared—humanity exists in a state of self-objectification that is part and parcel with the West’s mission to eradicate mystery and unproductive consumption. The prohibition of wasteful expenditure mirrors the topic’s imperative to render all engagement with workers useful. The will to productivity dictates what is useful debate activity and a way to exist.

#### The suppression of excessive generosity in Wenzhou is justified by productive rationality and the desire to promote modern mechanisms of productivity. The CCP violently attempting bend the people to productive expansion, the Wenzhou people made more sacrificial offerings than before. They are an example of a profound holdout against productive economic engagement.

Yang 13. (Mayfair, Professor of Religious Studies and East Asian Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, “Two Logics of the Gift and Banquet: A Genealogy of China and the Northwest Coast,” Taipei: National Chengchi University, Institute of Foreign Languages, Translation Center, 2013.) mnyl

However, Bataille’s work takes the Nietzschean spirit of anti-utilitariansim to new heights. **Central to Bataille’s passionate critique of modernity was** his notion of **“ritual expenditure”** as a key form of “non-productive consumption” **that has all but disappeared in our utilitarian and future -oriented modern life.** These expenditures include **religious festivals, massive rituals and sacrifices, competitive spectacles, lavish court luxuries and ceremonies,** large non -productive monastic communities, and **giant monuments like the Egyptian pyramids and medieval European cathedrals, that we moderns consider “wasteful” and “useless”** (Bataille 1985; 1989a). For Bataille, these expenditures allowed people to maintain a deep connection with the sacred realm of the gods, ancestors, and supernatural beings. **He envisioned archaic humanity as being like the state of animality, where consciousness is in a state of original oneness and immanence with the world.** This original **non-differentiation between self and the world** he called the state of “intimacy” (Bataille 1989b) . Bataille’s notion of intimacy resonates with the Daoist state of original cosmic unity. However, **what breaks up this originary monistic world for Bataille is** not language, as in Daoist philosophy, but **tool-use,** reflecting the Marxist influence on Bataille . For Bataille, **increasingly in human history, distinctions are drawn between human and animal, and between humans and supreme beings, whereas before there was a sense of continuity between humans, animals, and gods** (Bataille 1989b). **With progressive tool -use, not only animals become “things” for the use of humans, but humans themselves become increasingly objectified** as “things.” According to Bata ille, **the longing for a return to our original lost “intimacy” is** then **partially satisfied through periodic effervescent religious rituals and festivals that refocus people on “the present” and allow them to indulge in an excess of material waste and loss. To destroy material wealth is to destroy the “thingness” that has come to imprison us and to allow us to get back to intimacy with the gods for a time.** For example, **Bataille points out that in animal sacrifice, wild animals are seldom offered in sacrifice. It is domesticated animals, draft animals or meat -bearing animals that are slaughtered, in keeping with this posited need to destroy the “useful” in the animal.** Non -Reciprocity and Wasteful Destruction in Chinese Rituals Turning now to the Chinese cultural past, we find “waste” not only in banqueting, but also in rituals and festivals of a religious nature, when sacrifices are offered to transcendent beings residing in other worlds. Sacrifices in China are a form of religious gifts given to the gods and ancestors. The char- acters 祭祀 , both with the “spirit” radical, refer to the act of making a sacr i- fice to spiritual forces or supernatural beings. The ancient Chinese characters 犧牲 display the “cow” or “ox” radicals, and referred to “animals used for sacrif icial rites, such as oxen, goats, and pigs” ( Ci Hai 1976: 872). **In sacrifice,** the gift that is given represents the transfer of wealth from this world to another world beyond this one, and **return is quite uncertain or not at all.** Sa c- rifice is an archaic mo de of ritual common to all ancient cultures. In sacrifice, the simple Maussian notion of reciprocity in the gift does not suffice. Ce r- tainly there is the hope that in sacrifice to ancestors and spirits, these beings would respond ( 對 ) to such gifts and rewa rd the sacrificers. However, **sacrifice** also **reaches for something beyond a return. Sometimes,** in excessive no-holds -barred sacrifice, **there is simply the desire for** destruction or s**elf -destruction for its own sake, a transgression of the supposedly “natural” human instrumental pursuit of life, survival, and species expansion.** So **Bataille wanted to explore** a dimension of **sacrifice where it ceases to be a** mere **means to gain** a **repayment from the gods, but displays an excessiveness that becomes a spiritual end in itself.** This second logic of the gift, found in **the excess of the gift, enables one to transcend the means-end relationships that entrap us in the conventional world.** I must say here that I did not start doing fieldwork in rural China ha v-ing already r ead Bataille, but I discovered Bataille’s relevance to Chinese culture after my fieldwork encounters with the frequent theme of prohibition of “waste” (Yang 2000). Local officials in rural and small -town Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province where I did fieldwork i n the 1990’s to 2012 were always calling on the people to scale down their rituals and avoid waste or going into debt to pay for lavish weddings and funerals. Many large-scale religious rituals and ritual processions were just banned altogether. The reasons that off i- cials chastised the local people for excess ritual expenditure were that people would not have enough money for investing in their family businesses, in children’s education, and that these activities were “superstitious.” 6 While officials expected the people’s excessive waste of money on rituals to decline with increased prosperity and exposure to the rational influences of modern urban culture in the area, the opposite occurred. As local people had more money to spend, their family and community rituals became more lavish. Wenzhou local officials’ attempt to scale down ritual expenditure r e- minds me of the Canadian colonial authorities in 19th century British Columbia who banned potlatches because they encouraged “heathenism” and “indolence” (even though they always noted how energetically the natives prepared for potlatches) (Cole 1991). Below are two entries by colonial agents in British Columbia: 1883 – The energy they display in collecting property is certainly remarkable... but unfortunately, so much is squandered at feasts and otherwise, that they have not as they ought to have, conti n- uous comfort. 1890 – I am sorry to say that I cannot report any improvement among these Indians; they seem to have given themselves up again to the “Potlatch,” which has absorbed the whole of their time and energies..., and, in conse -quence they have earned very little money, though they could all have ob -tained remunerative employment at the different canneries had they chosen to work. (Codere 1950: 82-83) Anthropologists who have studied the Northwest Coast natives observe that they were quite hard -working, especially for their potlatch accumulations. They were also quick to adapt to the Western money economy and were skillful in becoming economically prosp erous, compared to other Native American groups. According to Douglas Cole, amongst the four recorded reasons for the European banning of potlatches in 1885, the “economic re a- son was doubtless the most important: the [potlatch] system was based on the hoar ding of goods, not for savings and investment, but for seemingly senseless waste... The potlatch was not only a waste of time, but a waste of resources, and incompatible with the government’s goal of Indian economic and social progress” (Cole 1991: 140). 7 Thus in the entries by colonial agents above, what the colonial authorities really objected to was that the natives did not spend enough time working in the way that they approved of, in fulltime and permanent employment attached to the modern disciplinary apparatus of capitalist economy. Like the Canadian colonial officials before them, **the C**hinese **C**ommunist **P**arty **in contemporary Wenzhou are** also **trying to bend the local people to the modern rational enterprise of ascetic and disciplined savings, investment, accumulation, and productive expansion** ( 擴 大在生產 ). The local culture of Wenzhou, which indulges in excessive ritual waste, is today an anomaly in China, an obstinate holdout in an oceanic tide of utilitarianism. Earlier in China, Rebecca Nedostup has shown h ow the Guomingdang government in the 1930’s also tried to put an end to lavish expenditures in Nanjing for the lunar calendar Ghost Festival and other traditional festivals by switching to a solar calendar (Nedostup 2008). Later, the Chinese Communists of course went much further than the Guomindang in prohibiting public religious rituals altogether, and persecuting those who dared defy the ban. Thus, we can see clearly here that both **the colonial Canadian authorities and the Chinese Guomindang and Communists were modern colonizing state forces who sought to systematically suppress archaic Bataillean cultures of excessive generosity and ritual destruction of wealth in order to promote modern utilitarian mechanisms of productivity and disciplinary power.** Ho wever, at the same time, I have also discovered that in China, the condemnation of wasteful ritual expenditures is not limited to either the R e- publican era or the Communist period, but has a venerable genealogy stretching back into ancient Chinese history. For example, one often finds sentiments by educated Confucian scholars like this one, traveling through the Wenzhou area during the Qing Dynasty, chastising Wenzhou people for their wastefulness: The local custom o f **the people** within the Commandery **of Wenzhou** is to support spirit mediums and get access to spirits and ghosts. They **hold elaborate** Buddhist **ceremonies and** **Daoist rituals, engaging in extravagant expenditures and exhausting their energies in these efforts. Unconcerned with heavy-duty wastefulness,** each year during the first lunar month, they hold a lantern festival that lasts over ten days. These attract festival -goers late into the night, the men mixing freely with the women. They also get into competitions of dragon lanterns, each with fine detailed craftwork. Well over several tens of gold pieces are wasted on a single large dragon lantern. Gongs and drums are beaten thunderously, the boisterous din is insane. In just a few days, the dragon lanterns are then put to the torch. This sort of reckless wastefulness must be immediately prohibited. Lao Daoyu, Leisurely Tour of the Ou River ( Oujiang Yizhi ), Qing Dynasty, 18 th c. 8 Unlike **modern Chinese elites** who **wanted to end the “superstitions” that prevented China from developing modern science and economic growth,** what disturbed educated Confucian sensibili ties in late imperial China about popular religion was its wastefulness and the foolhardy ritual extravagance of poor people. Confucians in late imperial China did not oppose religion against science, or see religion as “backwards” or primitive in a linear history, but they looked down on the customs of the common people and decried the popular overindulgence in religious sentiments. In Qing Dynasty Quanzhou, a city that was China’s greatest cosmopolitan port city in the Song and Yuan Dynasties, Confucian officials also objected to wasteful expenditures: During the Universal Salvation Festival, all households in Quanzhou put t heir offerings in the streets. They set up opera stages and dis play many precious things. These cost people all their property and ex haust the funds of temples... Even though poorer families are strained by the amount of expenditure, they never stop trying to make more offerings than the others. (Xu and Xu 1990; quoted in Wang, M.M. 1995: 62)

#### Models of economic engagement as well as debate condemn us to productive existence. This condemns life to bare existence. The endless drive for productivist politics with workers mirrors productive research in debate, which when taken together guarantees humanity’s destructive turn to warfare and nuclear weapons.

#### Instead the 1ac sacrifices productive engagement with the topic, just like how in Wenzhou wealth is sacrificed and the will to productivity of workers is rebuked. Voting aff is the affirmation of a sovereign moment, where individuals can experience the basic freedom of luxuriousness that profane life has sought to eradicate.

Yang 13. (Mayfair, Professor of Religious Studies and East Asian Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara, “Two Logics of the Gift and Banquet: A Genealogy of China and the Northwest Coast,” Taipei: National Chengchi University, Institute of Foreign Languages, Translation Center, 2013.//mnyl)

At the beginning of the 21 st century, what can we learn from this an-cient de bate over funerals and burials? Whil e some of the common people back in ancient times might have sided with Mozi against the profligacy of the rich, at the same time, most of them probably would not have wished to shortchange their dead by skimping on their ritual honors. After so much modern destruction of traditional Chinese religious culture, our understanding of this ancient quarrel would be different from the ancients. From a Bataillean modern perspective, we might say, **“What better way to waste and destroy wealth than burying precious goods deep into the ground in graves where they will never be used or enjoyed by the living?”** Following Bataille, we can say that such **“waste” of resources on death instead of life is an expression of otherworldly religiosity and a direct challenge to the modern focus on temporal and profane life. We now live a life that has condemned us to an incessant grindstone of production, and a way of thinking that is about rational-utilitarian maximization. This endless expansion of productivism is ultimately unsustainable, as environmental degradation, labor exploitation, and global climate change are all warning us. The modern world enjoins us to thrift, productivity, and maximization, but offers very little in the way of destructive release through ritual and festival to transcend this temporal world.** Although Mozi’s populism can still speak powerfully to our modern world, the fact remains that today in China, it is usually rural, peasant, and small-town people, such as my fieldwork subjects in Wenzhou, who most insist on reviving traditional ritual expenditures, wasteful religious festivals, and lavish funerals and burials. **Indeed, the desire for ritual expenditures in China is in direct relationship to the lack of exposure to modern formal education** provided by the state. Urban Chinese have for the most part been absorbed into the consumerist expenditures that feed back into the productivism of the capitalist economy. Bataille’s experience of the horrors of war as a soldier in the trenches of World War I informs his theory of the modern decline of ritual expenditures and the modern obsession with industrial productivism and military expenditures in his The Accursed Share , vol. 1. For Bataille, **the law of physics in the “general economy” of the universe decrees that surpluses must be destroyed in order to rebalance the life and death, wealth and subsistence. With secularization and the decline of religiosity, modernity closes off** the joie de vivre of **ritual profligacy and religious destruction. Thus, modernity condemns us to the other single outlet for our destructive desires: the catastrophic destruction of modern warfare. Thus, the more we diminish ritual destruction, the more our destructive impulses turn to warfare. From the Reformation to the mid-20th century , it was Europe that was constantly at war, having closed off the paths to ritualized destruction of wealth. Since the early 20th century, as more of the Third World is brought into the embrace of our common modern productivism, we have also seen a concomitant increase in war throughout the rest of the world. We can see what happens with our surplus production of weapons of war: the stockpiled weapons get used sooner or later.** Today, in the modern period, we have a quite different system of state-sponsored destructiveness in ritual sacrifice, for the modern state has almost entirely captured the archaic religious practice of sacrifice. Modern states, or would-be states, send off their young men to death in wars and lavish rewards and monuments to the collective memory of state or revolutionary martyrs. As the modern etymological dictionary Ci Hai shows, the modern notion of “sacrifice” ( 犧牲 ) retains the same connotations that were there in the archaic words for sacrificial victims: making a donation ( 捐 ), giving up something ( 棄 ), or sustaining a loss of wealth. Modern connotati ons that the term suggests are: making a sacrifice of one’s time, one’s personal benefit or career, one’s family, and one’s power. However, the modern term does retain the ancient meaning of the sacrifice of one’s (or another’s) life, although in the modern sense, sacrifice is usually understood as being for one’s own country. All of these impetuses for sacrifice focus on temporal and profane life, except for the latter, when one gives up one’s life for a higher and more transcendent cause. Thus, mortality becomes immortalized for the collective or the state good. I submit that in this sort of modern self -sacrifice for the state or one’s country, we are back to the domain of religiosity, even for such an atheistic state as Communist China. This suggests that although the modern state has exerted tremendous efforts to stamp out extravagant and “wasteful” ritual expenditures in the domains of family and community life, at the same time, it has quietly incorporated the last vestige of archaic religious sacrifice fully and deeply into the state body. Thus, we should not be fooled by thinking in terms of the modern state being secular, and religiosity lying in the private domain of the family or even the public domain of civil society. Under cover of modern state secularization drives, the state has actually appropriated the most powerful religious force, Bataille’s [the]nonreciprocal gift for itself. Thus, with self-sacrifice for state war-making, we are back to Bataille’s thesis that the decline of traditional ritual expenditures and religious destruction of surplus values, conducted by families and communities, has led to new outlets for modern state war-making. How can we in modernity retrieve or re-appropriate some of this second logic of the gift, or this powerful religious force back from the state that has captured it, and use it for communities, families, persons, and other non-state social formations? **In The Accursed Share,** vol. 3, **Bataille** (1993) **introduces his notion of “sovereignty,” which he defines as “life beyond utility” or “the use of resources for non -productive ends.”** Whereas Marx f o- cused on material production and distribution by and for the proletariat, **Bataille subverts Marx in conceiving of alienation as the process whereby one is made into a mere instrument for production. In Bataille’s notion of alienation, one loses one’s “sovereignty” or the basic freedom of attaining moments of transcendence from the chains of earthly profane life. Rituals and religious consumption allow ordinary people to attain “sovereign moments” that used to be reserved for monarchs and aristocracies leading lives of luxury. These “sovereign moments” attained in trance, prayer, meditation, spirit possession, or in states of eroticism, sobbing, laughter, poetry, artistic inspiration, and after drinking wine, are all moments when we experience a fundamental state of freedom. Thus, in modernity, we can strive to hang onto and expand these “sovereign moments” that have not been appropriated and deployed by the state. And we can continue to engage in ritual expenditures that enhance local community solidarity and identity. These include donations to charities, NGO’s, social movements, and religious and kinship organizations and ritual activities; constructing temples and monasteries, and so forth.** Conclusion Whether we are addressing Mauss’ reciprocity of the gift or Bataille’s nonreciprocity of ritual waste and sacrifice, both logics have venerable genealogies in ancient Chinese culture . Indeed, there is some evidence to su g- gest that potlatch culture, or the excessive ritual destruction of wealth that came with it, can be found not only among Northwest Coast natives in the New World, but also in archaic China and northeast Asia, where it may have originated. In Chinese modernity, these logics of the gift have been weakened, and the second logic has become imperiled, due to the ravages of radical state secularization, the decline of religiosity and religious festivals, and the more recent inroads of profit-driven capitalist rationalization and radical consumerist materialism. These two logics of the gift can counter the two powerful forces of the modern state and modern capitalism, which today have become a single combined force in China, that of state capitalism. Thus, we must work to retrieve both these gift[s] logics which have been so central to ancient Chinese culture, and reintegrate them back into modern life . They may enable us to strengthen social solidarity rather than relying on state integration, nationalism, or state power to generate social solidarity. **Sacrifice ( 犧牲 ), in the original Chinese sense of transferring wealth from the profane world to a higher divine world, must be recuperated from its modern sense of sacrificing one’s life for the state. It’s Bataillean sense of killing the “thingness” in ourselves that robs us of our “intimacy” and immanence in divinity, must be recuperated and grasped for modernity.**

#### Contemporary consumer society survives off the utopian fiction of escape from the pain of production and a life of luxury bought and sold by the industry. The problem is the space no longer exists. Our relationship with consumption is currently a “grey zone” where we have over-produced to such an extent that there is nowhere else to go.

(E. M. Cioran, Romanian madman, 1934, “Pe culmile disperării” Translated by Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston. Fundaţia Pentru Literatură Şi Artă "Regele Carol II,". HHurt.)mnyl

Everything is possible, and yet nothing is. All is permitted, and yet again, nothing. No matter which way we go, it is no better than any other. It is all the same whether you achieve something or not, have faith or not, just as it is all the same whether you cry or remain silent. There is an explanation for everything, and yet there is none. Everything is both real and unreal, normal and absurd, splendid and insipid. There is nothing worth more than anything else, nor any idea better than any other. Why grow sad from one's sadness and delight in one's joy? What does it matter whether our tears come from pleasure or pain? Love your unhappiness and hate your happiness, mix everything up, scramble it all! Be a snowflake dancing in the air, a flower floating down- stream! Have courage when you don't need to, and be a coward when you must be brave! Who knows? You may still be a winner! And if you lose, does it really matter? Is there anything to win in this world? All gain is a loss, and all loss is a gain. Why always expect a definite stance, clear ideas, meaningful words? I feel as if I should spout fire in response to all the questions which were ever put, or not put, to me.

#### We affirm the topic as a luxurious economic engagement with the workers, even while there is no more space for material expansion, this absurd model of active and affective transgression is key to subvert the ethics of calculation that dominate contemporary society and empower political multitudes to resist the will to overproductivity and violence of empire. The role of the ballot is to vote for the debater who best overturns productive society

Featherstone 16. (Mark Featherstone, professor of sociology at Keele University, “Luxus: A thanatology of luxury from Nero to Bataille,” *Cultural Politics* Vol 12 Issue 1 pp. 67-71//mnyl)

In this article, I propose to develop an aneconomic theory of luxury that locates the meaning of the state and experience of the luxurious beyond restricted economics in the space of the sacred. In this respect, I will seek to propose a theological understanding of luxury, with the qualification that what we might call the theology of the luxurious is essentially atheological by virtue of its lack of a godhead. Against classic interpretations of the history of luxury, such as those of Christopher J. Berry (1994) and William Howard Adams (2012), my objective in this article is, therefore, to try to separate the notion of luxury and the luxurious from its dependence on ideas of need and necessity, which tends to confine luxury to an abstract space of excessive quantity, and instead to develop an understanding of the human or more precisely nonhuman quality of the luxurious. However, in order to reach this state and suggest a theory of the quality of luxury, my discussion will pass through the work of Berry and others who have shown how luxury resides on the other side of necessity. While my article seeks to move beyond Berry’s work, his discussion has influenced my analysis, primarily because his theory of the de-moralization of luxury informed my position that luxury may function as a critical device able to transgress neoliberal, capitalist realism and the kind of utilitarian calculus that has come to dominate contemporary society (Fisher 2009). Under these conditions, need, necessity, and utility is everything and the world is organized around a form of instrumental rationality that cannot accept waste and useless expenditure. However, there is a sense in which the discussion and analysis of luxury, and in particular a discussion and analysis of luxury in contemporary global capitalism, unlocks a critical perspective capable of moving beyond this utilitarian position. That is to say that an exploration of the idea of luxury[and] enables a shift in perspective that takes in both Max Weber’s (2010) vision of capitalism, where instrumental rationality necessarily results in an austere approach to life and the world, and Werner Sombart’s (1967) alternative view, which explains how capitalism revolves around enjoyment, excess, and, centrally, sexual desire. Given these two spirits of capitalism, which revolve around austerity and luxury, I would suggest that it would be a mistake to imagine that neoliberal global capitalism is simply an iron cage, where instrumental rationality is everything, and instead show how it is possible to locate a space, and world, beyond this miserly condition, in the state of the luxurious. In order to develop this position, I want to extend Sombart’s claim that capitalism is founded in sexual desire into a Freudian (2001) theory of desire and, beyond desire, drive, where the psychoanalytic economy of lack and the satisfaction of lack collapses toward a paradoxical space of absolute plenitude and infinite poverty. The essential point of my article is that this moment, the moment of drive, which is accessible through the state and experience of the luxurious, may open out onto the possibility of a world beyond what Fisher (2009) talks about in terms of contemporary global capitalist realism. In what follows, then, I seek to construct a psychopolitical theory of the quality of luxury and the quality of the luxurious through a consideration of Roman luxury, which I explore through reference to the relationship between Seneca and Nero (Romm 2015); Sigmund Freud’s (2001) central statement of the psychology of luxury, Beyond the Pleasure Principle; and finally Georges Bataille’s (1991, 1993) dark theology of the luxurious, which we find in his three-volume work The Accursed Share. The title of my article is luxus, the Latin word for dislocation, excess, overabundance, extravagance, exuberance, and moving beyond, and I employ this male noun over the female variant luxuria, which has the same English significance, because I want to explain the concepts of luxury and luxuriousness in terms of decline, decay, and eventually the death of phallic austerity. In this respect, my use of the male term luxus relates to the Oedipal, or rather anti-Oedipal, story I want to develop, where the luxurious opens a space for the transformation of male phallic power from an austere form that represses waste into a new form that embraces excess in the name of moving beyond an obsession with restricted economy and productivity. Thus I employ the male noun luxus, rather than the female luxuria, because I want to show how phallic power implies its own collapse and contains the seeds of its own destruction. By contrast, the female term luxuria suggests that opposition to phallic power emerges from somewhere else, the feminine, and that male austerity, rationality, and reason are somehow self-identical. It is this position that I seek to undermine through, first, my exploration of first-century Roman history and, specifically, the struggle between the Stoic philosopher Seneca and the emperor Nero, who together may be seen to symbolize the twin infinitives of ancient austerity and luxury (Romm 2015); second, Freud (2001), who identified Oedipal trauma and desire with the luxuriousness of death; and finally Bataille (1991, 1993), who is clear that there is nothing austere about phallic sovereignty, which is, on the contrary, defined by overabundance and destruction of all forms of vertical authority. The takeoff point for my discussion is, therefore, the relationship between Seneca’s Stoic philosophy and Nero’s reign of luxury, which I connect to Freud (2001) through the idea of Thanatos, or the death drive to nothingness, and his metaphorical connection between Rome and the unconscious, where the ruins of the ancient city become symbolic of repressed unconscious content that psychoanalysis seeks to liberate in the name of self-understanding. On the basis of this connection, my claim is that there is an unconscious state and experience of luxury and luxuriousness that is transhistorical and links the experience of the Romans to the present. My turn to Freud thus pitches Seneca and Nero into the present, where I turn to the works of perhaps the modern theorist of luxury, Georges Bataille, and his concepts of the accursed share, consumption, eroticism, sovereignty, and atheological mysticism. Working through Bataille, I conclude through an exploration of an aneconomic understanding of luxury that has previously been understood economically on the borderline of need. This is where my reference to the Freudian (2001) notion of thanatology, or the word of death, comes into view, because I want to suggest that the principal significance of the state and experience of luxury resides in an attempt to escape the passage of time through either the simulation of death or—in the real experience of the luxurious—the flatline itself. In my view, luxury and the luxurious are[is], therefore, about escape from the thingness, and the temporality of life. Thus I conclude with the claim that luxury—and this is the case for the experience of luxury in contemporary capitalism—should be understood in terms of the sacred and cannot be thought through in profane, instrumental terms, even though today, in the global, capitalist, secular world, the luxurious is hidden inside the profane economy of things. In this way, my final point is that contemporary luxury represents the sacred unconscious of the profane world and, as a consequence, a kind of religiosity without religion, which has the potential to tip over into what Eugene Thacker (2011) calls Bataille’s “divine darkness,” a kind of transcendental materialism, where things suddenly lose their value and the empire of economy collapses toward a new sustainable future where humans live in intimacy and sympathy with their environment. However, before I turn to this thesis, and my line through Seneca, Nero, Freud, and Bataille, I want to contextualize my discussion and explain the relationship between luxury and contemporary social and political thought. In his classic work on the idea, Berry (1994) points out that luxury resides on the borderline of need and necessity. Here, luxury is understood in the context of the shift from ancients to moderns, and the related move from a closed to open conception of the universe. In the modern, open world, the dynamism of desire becomes a positive attribute, and the endlessness of luxury predicated on shifts in understandings of need is recognized as essential to growth. Although Berry’s story takes in the de-moralization of luxury, so that the Socratic-Platonic, Stoic vision of the evil of the passions no longer holds in the modern world, I would suggest that the moral critique of luxury remained a force in Marxism, neo-Marxism, and psychoanalysis, where Freud and Jacques Lacan explained the necessity of Oedipus and repression. In the case of psychoanalysis, the tendency to the de-moralization of luxury really took effect in the late 1960s when Lacan came into conflict with Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari over the fate of Oedipus (Dosse, 2010). Against the classic Freudian figure of necessary repression, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) celebrated anti-Oedipus and the “useless” figure of the schizophrenic, whose principal characteristic was transgression. Following the same approach, Michel Foucault (1990) would later reposition Seneca and the Stoics, so that the Roman guides to living with lack became champions of transgression and self-transformation. In this context, luxury is never simply about economic growth, which, Berry points out, we find in Bernard Mandeville and Adam Smith, but also the transgression of the self and the overcoming of the repressive, austere system set up by Freud’s Oedipus. Of course, in recent years, and centrally since 2008, the moral critique has returned center stage, and the revolutionary power of the transgressive critiques of Deleuze and Guattari and Foucault has faded slightly, simply because the new spirit of capitalism has made luxury its core principle. In the wake of Weber (2010), who imagined an austere, purely instrumental form of capitalism, Sombart’s (1967) economy of luxury and desire is now hegemonic. Although it would be a mistake to imagine that the Weberian model is no longer relevant, because the majority of people still labor under conditions of austerity, postmodern capitalism lives off luxury, which ensures growth and essentially supports its very existence. As Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (1997) saw in the mid-twentieth century, consumer capitalism survives on the basis of its utopian function/fiction— the promise of luxury and the escape from the pain of production is sold to everybody through the culture industry. But the problem of contemporary global capitalism is that the space of luxus, the space of transgression and luxurious expansion, the space for going beyond, the space for more, no longer really exists. In this situation, the modern, open world has started to close down, toward a postmodern, or globalized, world characterized by a lack of space, possibility, and hope. Work is everywhere. Under conditions of closure, where there is no more space, luxury shifts to time, and we seek escape from need and necessity in moments of bliss, but even these moments are now rare. When time is also exhausted, and there are no more moments for luxurious expansion, we are essentially caught in what Paul Virilio (see Armitage and Roberts 2002) calls the “grey zone,” a nonspace of fullness, finitude, and pollution. The problem of luxury today is, therefore, not simply one of environmental resource, which is that the biosphere simply cannot cope with the expansion of the global consumer society in China and India, but also one of planetary dimension, where space and time have become completely full of past luxuries, which are present necessities, and there is effectively nowhere else to go. Here, the very idea of luxury itself, or at least the limit form of luxury and luxuriousness we find in things, has tipped over into absurdity, and there is no more space for material expansion. Thus we approach the idea of the decadence of the super-rich or, in the language of Occupy, the 1 percent who consume the majority of the world’s resources and live in a state of luxury that lapses into absurdity precisely because it is simultaneously inside and outside the profane world of things. The luxuriousness of this class, which is represented in Martin Scorsese’s The Wolf of Wall Street (2013) by the figure of Jordan Belfort, who lives on the borderline of excess and suicide, is also symbolic of the decadence of what Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) call “Empire” and link to the globalization of American capitalism. For Hardt and Negri, the problem of Empire resides in its endless transgression and the condition of overreach. That is to say that, when it reaches its highest level of development, Empire starts to overproduce and sow the seeds of its own destruction because it can no longer recycle its own surpluses. In this respect, Hardt and Negri suggest that overproduction and superabundance, the luxury of Empire, will eventually empower the multitude that will have no need for the control system of capitalism, which survives on the basis of their productivity. While Hardt and Negri’s thesis updates Marx for the twenty-first century, it also relies on the history of Rome and the struggle between the forces of Empire and the Republic to support its vision of the inevitable collapse of the luxurious imperial model. Of course, this connection is not simply coincidental, because the leading nation of Empire, America, was founded upon the Roman Republican ideal and has always remained fearful of the fall into imperial decadence, a concern made explicit in Cullen Murphy’s (2008) popular book, Are We Rome? The story of the decline of Rome is, of course, well known, and has been explored by numerous writers. For example, in his massive The City in History, Lewis Mumford (1968) explains that Republican Rome existed in a contained, managed, bound, Platonic state organized around virtue, or virtus, which we can link to phallic, paternal authority. Drawing on Plato’s original urban psychopolitical theory of the necessity of the just, austere division of labor from The Republic, Mumford’s history moves on to show that military victory, territorial expansion, and economic growth eventually led Rome to become a monstrous psychopatholopolis characterized by excess. In other words, Mumford’s claim is that when Rome lost its connection to necessity and the city was no longer about need, it fell into what he calls “purposeless materialism,” with the subsequent collapse into an orgy of sex, violence, and luxury. Although the particular period Mumford identifies with Rome’s psychopathy, the first century, was under imperial rule, the problem is that this particular version of the rule of the father was never likely to impose Freudian discipline upon the people, primarily because the famous leaders of this period, Caligula and Nero, were essentially out-of-control teens who had never been subject to Oedipal discipline themselves and therefore could never possess masculine virtus, or virtue. As a result of a lack of proper order, Mumford explains, first-century Rome collapsed into excess and luxury to the extent that there was no restriction on desire and the city became a space of Thanatos—the death drive that heads over to the other side of material things.

#### Thus, the plan: I affirm the revolutionary general strike as a method to recognize the unconditional right of workers to strike.

#### We offer a plan for action and resistance -- the revolutionary general strike is a festive event that brings out the power of the masses. Voting aff is a wager to move beyond logics of accumulation and restricted economy, bringing about the only true unconditional guarantee to strike.

Gordienko ‘12 /Andrey, Ph.D., PhD Film & TV @ UCLA “The Politics of Eros: The Philosophy of Georges Bataille and Japanese New Wave Cinema” UCLA Electronic Theses and Dissertations, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/48f92067> brett|rcmnyl

Perhaps, then, Suleiman's effort to periodize Bataille's intellectual itinerary does not contradict Besnier's thesis concerning the centrality of sovereignty to Bataille's thought? This question hinges on whether Suleiman understands the concept of “the political” as well as that of “power” in the same way as Besnier does. I would contend that when Bataille speaks of the seizure of power, he has in mind the "powerless power" of the masses as opposed to the State power. In "Popular Front in the Street," he writes: "What interests us above all ... are the emotions that give the human masses the surges of power that tear them away from the domination of those who only know how to lead them on to poverty and to the slaughterhouse.”65 Power of the masses, of which Bataille speaks, is anarchic power that differs in kind from that form of power which founds the State. The distinction between the two forms of power in turn presupposes two radically different conceptions of revolution. Thus, when Bataille appeals to the power of the masses to revolt, he calls for the destruction of the very form of the State as opposed to mere substitution of some new version of the State for its existing variant. While this distinction inevitably invokes Walter Benjamin’s discussion of the difference (originally posited by Georges Sorel) between a general proletarian strike and a general political strike (with the former entailing the complete negation of the State and the latter merely demanding that the State reform itself), it is in Maurice Blanchot's work that one finds the most precise characterization of Bataille's politics of the impossible that bases itself on the revolutionary potential of the powerless power of the people: “Contrary to 'traditional revolutions,' it was not a question of simply taking power to replace it with some other power, nor of taking the Bastille or the Winter Palace, or the Elysée or the National Assembly, all objectives of no importance. It was not even a question of overthrowing an old world; what mattered was to let a possibility manifest itself, the possibility - beyond any utilitarian gain - of a being-together that gave back to all the right to equality in fraternity through a freedom of speech that elated everyone.”66 Although Blanchot has in mind not the activities of Popular Front in the 1930s, but rather the event of May '68, his work shows a marked affinity with Besnier's decision to discuss Bataille's political logic in terms of ‘possibility’ and ‘impossibility.’ In other words, “the possibility of a being-together” that Blanchot finds disclosed in the image of the agitated masses taking over the streets is the possibility of the impossible – of the community forming spontaneously, without programme, without demands for political representation, held together only by pure effervescence. The power of the people is limitless, he insists, precisely because it incorporates absolute powerlessness - that is to say, powerlessness with respect to the possibilities of founding another State, securing the right to representation, passing new legislation, etc. Indeed, the idea of "freedom of speech" invoked by Blanchot has nothing to do with the ideal of freedom advocated by the proponents of parliamentary democracy inasmuch as the former presupposes that the people need no politicians to represent them and thus rejects the very principle of mediation. As Bataille himself puts it, “for us having the debate means having it in the street, it means having it where emotion can seize men and push them to the limit, without meeting the eternal obstacles that result from the defense of old political positions.”67 Thus, when Suleiman invokes Bataille's calls to seize power in order to question Besnier's thesis concerning the politics of the impossible, she appears to retain the traditional conception of power that presupposes the existence of the State. Besnier, on the other hand, puts forward an entirely different notion of power at odds with the form of the State: “the 'powerless power' which, resistant to all power and in that sense 'impossible,' characterizes the people.”68

#### The aff is a rupture with historic time that builds social energy among the subaltern masses and fights back against cruelly optimistic attachments to reform.

Marc Crépon & Micol Bez 19; Marc Crépon is a French philosopher and academic who writes on the subject of languages and communities in the French and German philosophies and contemporary political and moral philosophy. Micol Bez @ CPES (Cycle Pluridisciplinaire d’Études Supérieures) at the University of Paris Sciences and Letters. The Right to Strike and Legal War in Walter Benjamin's “Toward the Critique of Violence”. Critical Times 1 August 2019; 2 (2): 252–260. <https://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article/2/2/252/141479/The-Right-to-Strike-and-Legal-War-in-Walter> brett

One would be hard pressed to find a writer who was more conscious of the power struggle at play in the act of naming violence than Georges Sorel. Let us briefly turn away from Benjamin and toward Sorel's Reflections on Violence (1907), which was a source of major inspiration for Benjamin's “Zur Kritik der Gewalt.” For Sorel, socialism is meaningless unless it sets as its promise the emancipation of the working class from all situations of domination—in other words, unless its goal is one of creating a society freed from all relations between masters and slaves. Thus, the following question emerges: What needs must we satisfy such that socialist emancipation is not revealed to be a mere illusion? For Sorel, critiquing the masters of the day is not sufficient precaution. We must protect ourselves from the masters of the future. This is why, as we will see, the political strike—the strike understood as an extortion, whose aim is to compromise with the masters of the time—is situated in opposition to such a radical promise of liberation, and constitutes, as a consequence, a betrayal. Herein lies the difficulty of socialism: every time we think (or hope) to have gotten rid of the figure of the master, one way or another he or she finds his or her way back.

Accordingly, we come to understand the problem as the following: How can we safeguard the promise, inscribed within a project of radical elimination of masters that would ipso facto compromise it? For Sorel, this need could not be secured as long as the socialists aimed to conquer power through legal means (in other words, democratically and nonviolently). Their compromises with capitalism, their arrangements, and their weaknesses were nothing more than a way of making themselves acceptable to the masters of their time as possible masters of the future. Is it not in these terms that we should understand their fascination with state power and governmental institutions? With this analysis, Sorel approaches Friedrich Nietzsche's critique of the links between socialism and parliamentarism, formulated some twenty years earlier. They both condemn, for disparate reasons but with remarkably similar terminology, the illusory emancipatory character of such links. Far from trusting a project of emancipation through legal means, Sorel argues for the need to distinguish two radically different forms of political action. The first, parliamentary, one optimistically believes that a continuous path toward social progress can be traced through legal reforms. The second, on the other hand, might be understood as a “pessimistic path” leading toward a necessarily disastrous “deliverance.” The former asserts that there is no means of emancipating the people other than the legal conquest of power through democratic elections, while the latter places all hope in the promises of a general revolutionary strike. Building on this basic distinction, Sorel's project consists of showing that the second way is not only credible, but also moral—sufficiently moral for him to define this pessimistic “march towards deliverance” as a “metaphysics of morals.”2

This decisive distinction between optimism and pessimism, and between reform and revolution, demands two further considerations. First, the distinction rests on two different attitudes with regard to the state. The first (socialist) one might be called the “superstition of the state,” although Benjamin would undoubtedly speak of the “superstition of the law.” In this approach, having gained power through legal means, laws and state institutions are reinforced in order to justify and render acceptable reforms that contradict the initial promises of those who assumed power. It strives to reassure the masters (the dominant class) by showing them that they have nothing to fear for their interests, while asking the subaltern masses to wait. Consequently, the expounders of this superstition refuse all forms of violence that are not legitimized and organized by the state. The preservation of the state is thus favored over the emancipation of the working class, while the promise of a society liberated from master–slave relations is substituted by a desire for their mutual peace. Inversely, revolutionary syndicalism, far from wanting to seize the state and its means, wishes only to radically overthrow it.

The second consideration is that Sorel's critique of the ideology of the preservation and conservation of the state confers a new meaning to the notion of class struggle. It constitutes precisely that which reformist socialism tries to avoid or move beyond. Under the pretext of social peace, this form of socialism seeks nothing more than a compromise, a pact with the bourgeoisie that will not change in the least the balance of power in society. Thus, social peace is suspect and untrustworthy, because for the sake of such a peace, bound by duty, discipline, and silence, the masters will always remain the same. In this sense, social peace is linked to an impounding of speech, a confiscation of the voice that corresponds to the confiscation of all hope for a future deliverance. Hence Sorel's central question: Which voice, one shared rather than dominant, could carry such a hope? We must, in other words, find a word—or, more exactly, the true image of an action—capable of carrying the deliverance. If such an image were to exist, it would need to be resistant to appropriation by the dominant class, and it should have no other aim than to overthrow domination. Sorel calls it a “myth” to distinguish it from a utopia, a myth that can be criticized for offering the false and illusory image of an “enchanted” society to come.

Thus, we arrive at the core of the argument: for Sorel the revolutionary general strike is a myth, one that should be understood as the image of the action necessary to emancipate the working class. It is the image of a rupture with historic time, and it is this that marks its fundamental difference from a utopia. The latter, with its program of ridding society of all its ills, in fact enters into a contract with its own heritage in order to accommodate the pressures of its historical epoch. Conversely, the myth wants nothing to do with the past; marked by a radical discontinuity, it does not express any interest in economic, sociological, or historical data. The myth fully identifies with the rupture that it imposes by fulfilling three main needs: (1) to find a word for the future, one whose eschatological dimension is not threatened by scientific discussions; (2) to invent a word whose consideration is not subjected to the condition of its feasibility, nor of its probable or possible effects; and (3) to present an image of a radical class struggle that would abolish all confusion between fields—in other words, an image that would erase all risk of a paradoxical reinforcement of domination and would, rather, precipitate its undoing.

This is, then, the function of the proletarian general strike: it is a myth whose strength lies in its dual character. On the one hand, the myth is meant to unite the working class, without requiring any submission in return. It imposes itself without taking the shape of a command uttered by an organization or a party. On the other hand, it immediately exposes the insufficiency of the reforms proposed by the system, unveiling the abyss that separates revolutionary hope from all forms of compromise. Such a myth cannot accommodate any preservation or conservation of the law. The result is the justification of violence that constitutes one of the most distinctive traits of Sorel's thought. Nothing can happen without violence, as a politics that tries to contain violence will be unable to respond to the mythical imperative of undoing all domination. This is, ultimately, the terrible (and terrifying) law of the myth: there can be no salvation without a violent overthrow of the current state of affairs.

#### A truly surrealist poetics is a marvelous embrace of joy before death, the refusal of all exterior forms, and a sovereign moment of non-meaning and thus radiating beauty. You should vote aff for the Ac’s performance of a surrealist poetics of sacrifice

Hirsch 14. Alexander Hirsch, professor of political science at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, “Sovereignty surreal: Bataille and Fanon beyond the state of exception,” Contemporary Political Theory (2014) 13, pg. 292/mnyl

It is no coincidence that Bataille articulated this theory of sovereignty most elegantly in his many reviews of surrealist poetry. In his published appraisals of René Char, Jacques Prévert, Henri Pastoureau, André Breton, Malcolm de Chazal and Comte de Lautréamont, sovereignty emerged as a kind of foil. One’s poetry missed the mark if it failed to express the esthetic resonance of sovereignty: ‘Only sacred, poetic words’, Bataille (1990) insists, ‘have ascertained the power to manifest full sovereignty’. This means that poetry, for Bataille, is assigned the special task of relating meaningful and instrumental discourse to what Gemerchak (2003) describes as ‘the point that opens the void’, thus articulating a language that ‘leads nowhere and asserts nothing’ (p. 149). For Bataille, the explicit objective of such poetry is to awaken the reader to the sacred domain of erotic immersion in an overwhelming sovereign reality. ‘For us’, Bataille (1994) confirms, ‘ “poetic” cannot have a set value in the same way as an Anjou wine, or English cloth ... “Poetic” undercuts the desire in us to reduce things to the dimensions of reason’ (p. 138). Indeed, as Bataille put it in a letter to René Char, ‘Surreal poetry, written or illustrated, is the only sovereign cry’.

Consistent with this view, in 1929, Bataille launched a surrealist journal, Documents, conceived as a ‘war against received ideas’. Although its lifespan was short, the journal managed to attract several prominent figures of the surrealist movement, including Michel Leiris, Joan Miró, Robert Desnos and André Masson. Against the modish surreal methodology of the day – and especially calling into question the ‘automatic writing’ of André Breton, which circumvented the ‘con- scious control of image-making’ – Documents set out to embrace ‘violence, sacrifice and seduction’ as the principal tenets of a surrealist poetics. Much of the journal focused on articulating what Bataille (following Hegel) termed ‘impotent beauty’. By this, Bataille (1990) meant to express the idea that truly beautiful appearances and experiences do not (indeed, cannot) act, ‘since action would first destroy what beauty is: beauty which seeks nothing’ (p. 16). Such beauty is sovereign insofar as it ‘is on that side of the world where nothing is yet separated from what surrounds it ... Beauty is sovereign, it is an end, or it is not: that is why it is not susceptible to acting, why it is, even in principle, powerless ...’ (p. 16). Sovereignty is on the side of beauty, in other words, insofar as beauty leads nowhere, insofar as it is powerless to accomplish anything. Beauty remains utterly useless, inassimilable and, as such, thoroughly sovereign.7

This insistence on beauty’s sovereign nature stems from Bataille’s surreal poetics. Surrealism’s archive of artifacts that estheticize non sequitur, its vivid expressions of ordinary life, its full range of imagination, its underlying madness and its penchant for evoking startling effects, equipped Bataille with a way of articulating a sovereign world flush with beautiful meaninglessness. He was especially inspired by surrealism’s defiant spirit. Surrealism emphasized what he called the ‘refusal of exterior forms, of the servitude of the real world, a principle of freedom focused on language, on the breaking of the bonds of language in oneself’ (quoted in French, 2007, p. 89).8 Surrealism, as Bataille wrote in an essay dedicated to Char, lionizes the ‘sovereign being’, the only important thing for whom ‘is to exist[s] in that instant, without expecting its plenitude to depend on anything and without undertaking anything whose result counts for more than the present moment, without any will or intention except the empty space’ (p. 129). In this way, surrealism helps to posit a kind of immanent sovereign ontology. After all, as Bataille (1993) writes, ‘sovereign is what you and I are, [but] on one condition – that we forget, forget everything’ (p. 440, my emphasis). Sovereignty – surreal, beautiful, powerless, irrecoverable loss – gets foregrounded through forgetting, a letting go of one’s sense of self. And surrealism holds the key to this forgetfulness, given its attunement to a reality fecund with oblivion.9

#### Perfect communication is never possible—something will always go unsaid or be unclear. But debate should not try to avoid this failure, but rather protect it. The 1ac maintains the strange contact with the nonproductive forms of engaging workers in China, rather than binding them to the responsibility of clarity and the blinding light of positivism.

#### This is the only ethical option—indeterminacy of communication opens onto the incompleteness of being and the attempt to evoke a future where one is impelled to speak for another only papers over the incommensurability of communication and is done in bad faith.

#### The aff on the other hand is a joyful embrace of both the desirable and undesirable elements of communication. We cannot purge our existence of the accursed share of language, only by protecting the impossible difference fundamental to existence as communicators can we make debate great again.