# 1ac

## Framing

#### The subject is fundamentally unstable, their connections as real as cells but at the same time uncertain. This state of being never-quite-here constantly immerses the subject into the principal of insufficiency.

Bataille 1 [Georges; “The Labyrinth” retrieved from “Visions of Excess” (1930); librarian by day, literary figure, sociologist, and philosopher by night; recut SHS KS] \*brackets for gendered lang

The very fact of assuming that knowledge is a function throws the philosopher back into the world of petty inconsistencies and dissections of lifeless organs. Isolated as much from action as from the dreams that turn action away and echo it in the strange depths of animated life, he led astray the very being that he chose as the object of his uneasy comprehension . ' 'Being'' increases in the tumultuous agitation of a life that knows no limits; it wastes away and disappears if he who is at the same time "being" and knowledge mutilates himself by reducing himself to knowledge . This deficiency can grow even greater if the object of knowledge is no longer being in general but a narrow domain, such as an organ, a mathematical question, a juridical form. Action and dreams do not escape this poverty (each time they are confused with the totality of being) , and, in the multicolored immensity of human lives, a limitless insufficiency is revealed; life, finding its endpoint in the happiness of a bugle blower or the snickering of a village chair-renter, is no longer the fulfillment of itself, but is its own ludicrous degradation-its fall is comparable to that of a king onto the floor. At the basis of human life there exists a principle of insufficiency. In isolation, each man sees the majority of others as incapable or unworthy of "being." There is found, in all free and slanderous conversation, as an animating theme , the awareness of the vanity and the emptiness of our fellowmen; an apparently stagnant conversation betrays the blind and impotent flight of all life toward an indefinable summit. The sufficiency of each being is endlessly contested by every other. Even the look that expresses love and admiration comes to me as a doubt concerning my reality. A burst of laughter or the expression of repugnance greets each gesture , each sentence or each oversight through which my profound insufficiency is betrayed-just as sobs would be the response to my sudden death, to a total and irremediable omission. This uneasiness on the part of everyone grows and reverberates, since at each detour, with a kind of nausea, men discover their solitude in empty night. The universal night in which everything finds itself-and soon loses itself-would appear to be existence for nothing , without influence, equivalent to the absence of being, were it not for human nature that emerges within it to give a dramatic importance to being and life. But this absurd night manages to empty itself of "being" and meaning each time a man discovers within it human destiny , itself locked in turn in a comic impasse, like a hideous and discordant trumpet blast. That which, in me , demands that there be "being" in the world, "being" and not just the manifest insufficiency of human or nonhuman nature, necessarily projects (at one time or another and in reply to human chatter) divine sufficiency across space, like the reflection of an impotence , of a servilely accepted malady of being . Being in the world is so uncertain that I can project it where I want-outside of me . It is a clumsy man, still incapable of eluding the intrigues of nature, who locks being in the me . Being in fact is found NOWHERE and it was an easy game for a sickly malice to discover it to be divine , at the summit of a pyramid formed by the multitude of beings, which has at its base the immensity of the simplest matter. Being could be confined to the electron if ipseity were precisely not lacking in this simple element. The atom itself has a complexity that is too elementary to be determined ipsely. 1 The number of particles that make up a being intervene in a sufficiently heavy and clear way in the constitution of its ipseity; if a knife has its handle and blade indefinitely replaced, it loses even the shadow of ipseity; it is not the same for a machine which, after five or six years, loses each of the numerous elements that constituted it when new. But the ipseity that is finally apprehended with difficulty in the machine is still only shadowlike . 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 [their] 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, 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 of the human being . What is commonly called knowing-when a man knows his neighbor-is never anything but existence composed for an instant (in the sense that all existence composes itselfthus 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 [hu]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 of particles 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 play as 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 human beings into a foggy labyrinth formed by the multitude of "acquaintances" with which signs of life and phrases can be exchanged. But when [one] he escapes the dread of "being" through this flight-a "being" that is autonomous and isolated in night-a man [one] 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.

#### The interdependent subject is socialized into norms, forever chasing the façade of completion in order to stabilize oneself while fundamentally overlooking the inescapable confusion of the labyrinth.

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

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 unim- portant “acquaintances” and chatter), but also as a peripheral element orbiting around a nucleus where being hardens. What the lost child had found in the self- assured 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[they are] 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 de- grades 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 aggre- gates 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 □ 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 of a 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 periph- eral 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 grimace es 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 □ 177 insufficiency of peripheral existences is absolute insufficiency in total existence. Above knowable existences, laughter traverses the human pyramid like a net- work of endless waves that renew themselves in all directions. This reverberated convulsion chokes, from one end to the other, the innumerable being of man- opened 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, some- times absorbed in the nonchalance of animality and abandoned to the secret pale- ness 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.

#### Accumulation occurs at the expense of particular bodies being demarked unnecessary – those rendered “unsocialized” have norms inflicted upon them. Rather than chasing after an insufficient completeness, the subject needs to fight against taboos, dangerous untouchables, through performing transgressions as a way to embrace the inherent confusion and instability of the world.

Noys 1 [Benjamin; “Georges Bataille A Critical Introduction; Pluto Press; 2000; Professor of Critical Theory and coordinator of the MA English Literature. His research focuses on critical and literary theory, with particular interest in the avant-garde, film, and the cultural politics of theory; SHS KS]

In fact, it is out of the play of difference between these two states that it becomes possible to posit the limits of continuity and discontinuity as limits that are fictional.1 This would mean that absolute continuity and absolute discontinuity would both be impossible and instead life would exist in the flow and turbulence that Bataille finds in the difference of these two states. As he writes in Guilty, life is ‘a constant destabilisation of the equilibrium without which it wouldn’t be’ (G, 15–16). Bataille, of course, suggests that absolute continuity as such would be death, and we could argue the same for absolute discontinuity: to be cut off completely from other organisms and the environment would be deadly. However, while continuity may not be primary as a state in which we could exist Bataille is correct to note its primacy as an effect of opening and of communication between bodies. Without this opening discontinuous bodies would not be possible, and these discontinuous bodies exist as discontinuous by denying their continuity, the difference that inhabits them. As Derrida has argued ‘the experience of the continuum is also the experience of absolute difference’ (CR, 115) and Bataille suggests that fundamental continuity be thought of ‘like the waves of a stormy sea’ (E, 22), which is an inscription of difference in continuity. The necessity of difference undoes the opposition between dis- continuous and continuous and forces a different thinking of difference beginning from impossibility. Bataille expands this intuition through analysing the play of transgression and taboo, which broadly correspond to continuity and discontinuity. Transgression is ‘a movement which always exceeds the bounds, that can never be anything but partially reduced to order’ (E, 40), and this breaking of the boundary connects it to continuity. The taboo is the boundary and as Bataille points out, using the example of the biblical command- ments, it often regulates sexuality and death and thereby forms the limits of a discontinuous existence. While transgression and taboo closely correspond to continuity and discontinuity they are not as easy to regard as separate states, and Bataille is more sensitive to the necessary coexistence and mutual dependency of transgression and taboo. At the same time they remain irreconcil- able, and it is the constant clash of transgression and taboo which drives eroticism to its ‘ultimate intensity’ (E, 40). Bataille resists the idea that transgression could lead to the complete lifting of all taboos on sexuality and the return to some idyllic state of nature. That prospect is a myth that refuses to negotiate with the violence and anguish involved in sexuality, and so a project of sexual liberation based on a natural sexuality will actually increase sexual misery. This is because transgression can never eliminate all taboos: ‘But a transgression is not the same as a back-to-nature movement; it suspends a taboo without suppressing it’ (E, 36). While Bataille resists a project of sexual liberation his thought of transgression is actually an expansion of sexual freedom that is sensitive to the violence that all sexuality involves. Bataille likens this play of transgression and taboo to the Hegelian dialectic, specifically to the operation of the untranslat- able aufheben: ‘transcend without suppressing’ (E, 36 n. 1). For Derrida, ‘Here, we must interpret Bataille against Bataille, or rather, must interpret one stratum of his work from another stratum’ (CR, 127) because ‘Bataille is even less Hegelian than he thinks’ (CR, 128). Bataille is conceding too much too quickly by assimilating the play of the difference between transgression and taboo to a dialectical operation. Just as a reading of transgression as a movement back to nature threatens to eliminate the necessary tension between transgression and taboo that generates sexuality so a dialectical reading threatens to eliminate the play of trans- gression in taboo in a dialectical ‘synthesis’ or aufheben that will bring these forces into equilibrium. When Bataille makes clear that transgression and taboo require each other and that they are irreconcilable he is resisting any possibility of an equilibrium of the difference between these two forces: ‘Transgression piled upon transgression will never abolish the taboo, just as though the taboo were [is] never anything but the means of cursing gloriously whatever it forbids’ (E, 48). This difference between transgression and taboo cannot be held together in a stable arrangement nor can it be reconciled dialectically. These forces are never balanced because transgression has a certain dominance over taboo as the force that makes taboo possible. In the very movement of transgression towards ‘infinite excess’ (E, 40) it solidifies the taboo as it reveals the fragility of the taboo. As Bataille puts it, the taboo can only ‘curse gloriously whatever it forbids’. What is forbidden must be possible, for example incest or murder, or there would be no need of the taboo. If it were naturally impossible for us to murder or commit incest then neither possibility would arise. That we do have taboos on these acts makes those taboos secondary to the transgressions they rule out. Of course, at the same time, transgression can only operate as a movement across the boundary of the taboo so, although it may be a ‘primary impulse’ (E, 40), it too is secondary to the limit it crosses. In the complex difference between trans- gression and taboo which is primary and which is secondary is undecidable and they swirl around each other in the turbulence that Bataille always regards as a play of differences. It is one of the decisive arguments of this book that Bataille’s work traces this movement from a thought of the impossible to a thought of the impossible as an effect of difference. For Bataille life exists in this difference: ‘Life is a swelling tumult continuously on the verge of explosion’ (E, 59). Life is this tumult that the difference between taboo and transgression produces and the explosions are the effect of transgression as the opening of taboos. Humans try to restrict this tumult, especially in the organisation of labour, which requires the deferment of enjoyment to allow accumulation. However, to organise enjoyment through the limit of taboos is at the same time to make possible the transgressions that already fissure those taboos. It is not possible to line up taboo on the side of rationality and trans- gression on the side of irrationality because the inextricable relation between taboo and transgression gives them both ‘a certain illogicality’ (E, 63). Once again, contrary to the hope of Hegel, difference cannot be regulated by logic (as Hegel attempted in The Science of Logic). Furthermore, for Bataille trans- gression has a certain privilege as the opening of this tumult, this play of difference, because it is the ‘primary impulse’ and the ‘explosion’ that is life (which at the same time touches on death). This is why Bataille is obviously more interested in transgres- sion than taboos, and he analyses transgression as a social phenomenon that has two forms. The first is an organised trans- gression, which describes the fact that transgressions do[es] not destroy social life but are necessary for it. So, festivals, ceremonies and sacrifices are often forms of ‘communal negativity’ which are fundamentally stable: ‘The frequency – and the regularity – of transgressions do not affect the intangible stability of the prohibition since they are its expected complement ...’ (E, 65). The other form of transgression happens when these socially organised transgressions go off the rails, because ‘once a limited licence has been allowed, unlimited urges towards violence may break forth’ (E, 65). This is the possibility of what Bataille calls an ‘unlimited transgression’ (E, 65) that threatens the fabric of the social order and we could use the example, although Bataille does not, of moments of revolt before they become stabilised in the form of a revolution. The difficulty is that, however useful this distinction between organised and unlimited transgression is for the description of social phenomena, it cannot maintain its own stability in the face of transgression. If transgression is the act of crossing boundaries then the boundary between the two types of transgression is also vulnerable. Bataille himself makes this clear by firstly noting that unlimited transgression only emerges from organised transgres- sion, and we can reverse this to say that any unlimited transgression can also become an organised transgression. Bataille’s own writing itself follows this movement of crossing and returning that is the play of transgression and taboo, and finds itself constantly on the limits of sense. Once again Bataille is developing and exploring an a-concept because transgression not only describes an act of crossing and rupture but also crosses and ruptures itself. It has no secure conceptual identity and just like sovereignty it is ungovernable, headless, but not simply nonsensical. Instead it spreads out beyond itself and ruptures all concepts generally; it is a movement that wears out concepts. It cancels itself out because pure transgression and pure taboo are impossible just as are organised transgression and unlimited transgression. Bataille is operating within limits that are fictional and it makes no sense to talk of transgression without taboo, because a pure transgression would destroy the possibility of transgression. Without boundaries to cross, or laws or rules to break, transgression would not exist. Moreover, if there were to be a pure taboo that would make no sense either; it would be unthinkable because it would not even appear as a taboo. By stressing the inextricable relation of these forces Bataille also resists the idea that we could oppose irruptive forces to their cor- responding limitations because, as with transgression and taboo, they are bound up together. As with transgression though, the irruptive forces are a force of opening and any corresponding limitation is formed from those irruptive forces as it limits them. There cannot be a pure irruptive force or a pure limitation, just as there cannot be a pure transgression or a pure taboo. If life exists in the tumult between these impossible limits then both these limits are deadly – pure transgression or pure taboo would be an end to life. As we have seen, the same arguments apply to organised and unlimited transgression: organised transgression is never so organised that it cannot break out of its limits and unlimited transgression is never so unlimited that it can do without organisation. It may be wiser therefore to speak about transgres- sion, if we can respect the tensions of this experience in the way that Bataille’s refinements try to. If these limits are impossible and deadly then life is a play of difference and these impossible limits are effects of difference too. Here Bataille is returning to his artic- ulation of heterogeneity that we saw him develop in the essay on Sade and which he also explored in ‘The Psychological Structure of Fascism’ (1933–34) (VE, 137–60; BR, 122–46). Transgression opens a heterogeneous economy of an irreducible difference; it also opens possibilities of writing on transgression as hetero- geneous that Bataille will exploit in his fiction.

#### Living organisms currently abide by productive expenditure where they expend in ways favorable to growth, but working expenditure to an ends necessarily bites back into trying to understand the un-understandable world.

Stoekl (Allan; a professor of French and comparative literature at Penn State University, Batailleâ€™s Peak: Energy, Religion, and Postsustainability, 32-38; SHS KS) \*brackets for gendered lang

For Bataille nature and society are one and the same because both are nothing more than instances of energy concentration and waste.1 The refocus on energy production and use has profound implications: “Man” is not so much the author of his own narrative, or the subject that experi- ences and acts, as “he” is the focal point of the intensification or slackening of energy flows. For this reason human life on earth must be seen as just one instance of many energy events: moments in which energy is absorbed from the sun lead to growth and reproduction but, just as important, energy is also blown off. Humans in this sense are no different from any other animals, though their wastage of energy might be more intense through its very self-consciousness. All social productions—all cultural produc- tions—are therefore seen as modes of energy appropriation and squander- ing; their value or lack of value must be seen in the context of their role as conduits in the flows of energy through humans outward to the void of the universe. These flows are gifts not necessarily to other humans but to the emptiness of the sky. Gifts, or put another way, destroyed things, things whose end lies in immediate consumption not utility and deferred pleasure. Bataille’s work anticipates much recent analysis, which sees value— economic, cultural—deriving from energy inputs: humans may “produce,” but their productive activity is dependent on the quantities of energy that they are capable of harnessing. Human evolution — physical and cultural — in this view is a function of the channeling of energy: taking advantage of abundant energy (derived from agricultural inputs or, later, from fossil fuels), humans reproduce and populate the earth; suffering, on the other hand, from a lack of energy, their society contracts, and they find ways to cope with eternal shortage. Surplus and shortage are thus intimately linked; each is always present in the other, and each must be recognized in its fun- damental role in the preservation, extension, intensification, and ruin of the community. There are, no doubt, many ways in which the centrality of energy for life can be read. In the nineteenth century a kind of cultural pessimism was all-pervasive: since the second law of thermodynamics postulated the en- tropy of any given field of energy, we could then infer that any society, any life form, any planet would eventually lose the energy it had at its disposal and sink into quietude, feebleness, death. From the larger argument about energy, and the eventual fate of the sun and all other stars, commentators were quick to see a similar effect in society: the fadeout of energy led to weakness and cultural decadence. Society was on a death trip just like the sun; humans, presented in this reactionary mode, could brood over their fate but could do little to prevent it. Bataille consciously points in the opposite direction. In Bataille’s view, rather than entropy, the magnificent expenditure of energy, characterized by the violence and brilliance of the sun, leads to the conclusion that energy is limitless and that the chief problem lies not in its hoarding and in the warding off of the inevitable decline, but in the glorious burn-off of the sun’s surplus. In effect, the problem becomes how best to expend rather than how best to envision the consequences of shortage. For all that, Bataille is not an optimist in the conventional sense of the word because he does not link abundant energy and its glorious throughput with the placid satisfac- tions and order of a middle-class existence. In the 1950s there was a lot of talk about “energy too cheap to meter”: the promise of the nuclear energy industry. That was good news, appar- ently, because it would allow us to live happy lives with a maximum num- ber of appliances; we could always own more, always spend more, with the ultimate goal being human comfort. Growth was the name of the game — it still is—and growth in comfort was made possible when more energy was produced than needed. If energy is nothing more than the power to do work, then an unending surplus of energy meant nothing more than a continuous rise in productivity, a concomitant rise in the number of objects citizens could look forward to possessing, and the personal satisfaction asso- ciated with those objects. Bataille too envisages a constant surplus of energy, but his energy is very different from the metered or unmetered kind. True, one can momentarily put some of Bataille’s energy “to work.” But there is always too much of it to be simply controlled; it always exceeds the limits of what one would be capable of devoting to some end. Bataille’s energy is therefore inseparable from the wildly careening atoms of Sade or even the profoundly formless matter envisaged by Bruno. “Cursed matter,” be it the charged matter studied by Durkheim, or the “base matter” of Bataille’s gnosticism, or the mortal meat of Sade’s “transmutation,” is not only matter that is left over and so can contribute its energy to further growth; it is also matter that is burned off, which leads nowhere beyond itself, and so is dangerous, power- ful, sacred.5 Bataille’s energy shoots through a charged matter that obtrudes in sacred ritual and erotic “wounds”: the “share” of energy is not a resulting order but a base disorder. Such matter is in excess, not inert but virulent, threatening, turning as easily against the one who would wield the power as against a supposed victim. But along with this, the excessive, material world is “intimate,” not a useful, classifiable thing, but a moment of matter that does not lead outside itself, can serve no useful purpose, is not anchored in time in such a way that it becomes a means rather than an end. Of course no energy can be surplus in and of itself. The supposed sur- plus energy, too cheap to meter, of the 1950s was only surplus in relation to a power grid: there was to be so much of it that it would pulse through the power grid, illuminating backyard patios and electrically heating split- level homes for free. And the more split levels that would be built, the more available—domesticated—energy there would be to fuel the world— and so on, presumably, to infinity. Bataille’s energy, however, is in surplus on another kind of grid—that of the semiotic categories of a comprehen- sible social system. It is what is left over when a system completes itself, when a system depends on energy in order to complete itself—but it only does so by excluding the very energy that makes its completion possible. Put another way, we can say that a social system needs to exclude a surplus of energy (hence matter) in order to constitute itself as coherent and com- plete. There are, in other words, limits to growth, be they external (as in an ecology) or internal (as in a social philosophy or ideology).6 That surplus/ energy, in Bataille’s terminology, is “cursed,” always already unusable, out- side the categories of utility. It is thus not servile, not ordered or orderable. A banal example: if a rural region can produce only so much food, then its “carrying capacity” is limited; the excess human population it produces will have to be burned off in some way. A surplus of humans in a given locale will lead to contraception, warfare, celibacy, sacrifice.7 A certain equi- librium, tentative and never truly stable, will result. Human energy, human population, will have to be lost: effort that could be spent in nonsustain- able growth—producing more things that could not be absorbed—will be spent, spewed out, in other, nonproductive activities: again, war, the production of (left-hand and right-hand) sacred artifacts, “useless” art, and so on. The inevitable limit of the system — economic, ecological, intellec- tual—always entails a surplus that precisely defeats any practical appropri- ation. This uncontrollable and useless energy courses through the body, is the body, animating it, convulsing it: this is a threatening energy that prom- ises death rather than any straightforward appropriation. “Excess” matter will therefore be different in kind from its double, the “share” that can be reabsorbed into the system: the excess matter-energy will not be easily classifiable, knowable, within the parameters of the grid. It will always pose itself as a profound challenge. Against the coherent oppositions and reliable significations found operating within a given sys- tem of energy use, it constitutes a series of instances of energy in flux: never stable, never predictable, but a matrix of free energy-symbolization at the ready, to open but also to undermine the coherency of the system. Rendered docile, energy makes the system possible (society, philosophy, physics, technology); revealing itself as excessive, unconditioned, at the moment the edifice achieves its fragile summit, energy opens the abyss into which the system plunges. The Accursed Share, first published in 1949, has had a colorful history on the margins of French intellectual inquiry. Largely ignored when first pub- lished, it has gone on to have an interesting and subtle influence on much contemporary thought. In the 1960s, fascination with Bataille’s theory of economy tended to reconfigure it as a theory of writing: for Derrida, for example, general economy was a general writing. The very specific con- cerns Bataille shows in his work for various economic systems is largely ignored or dismissed as “muddled.”8 Other authors, such as Michel Foucault and Alphonso Lingis, writing in the wake of this version of Bataille, have nevertheless stressed, following more closely Bataille’s lead, the impor- tance of violence, expenditure, and spectacular transgression in social life.9 The basis for Bataille’s approach can be found in the second chapter of the work “Laws of General Economy.”The theory in itself is quite straight- forward: living organisms always, eventually, produce more than they need for simple survival and reproduction. Up to a certain point, their excess energy is channeled into expansion: they fill all available space with versions of themselves. But inevitably, the expansion of a species comes against limits: pressure will be exerted against insurmountable barriers. At this point a species’ explosive force will be limited, and excess members will die. Bataille’s theory is an ecological one because he realizes that the limits are internal to a system: the expansion of a species will find its limit not only through a dearth of nourishment but also through the pressure brought to bear by other species.10 As one moves up the food chain, each species destroys more to conserve itself. In other words, creatures higher on the food chain consume more concentrated energy. It takes more energy to produce a calorie consumed by a (carnivorous) tiger than one consumed by a (herbivorous) sheep. The ultimate consumers of energy are not so much ferocious carnivores as they are the ultimate consumers of other animals and themselves: human beings. For Bataille, [hu]man’s primary function is to expend prodigious amounts of energy, not only through the consumption of other animals high on the food chain (including man himself) but in rituals that involve the very fundamental forces of useless expenditure: sex and death.11 Man in that sense is in a doubly privileged position: he not only expends the most, but alone of all the animals he is able to expend consciously. He alone incar- nates the principle by which excess energy is burned off: the universe, which is nothing other than the production of excess energy (solar bril- liance), is doubled by man, who alone is aware of the sun’s larger tendency and who therefore squanders consciously in order to be in accord with the overall tendency of the universe. This for Bataille is religion: not the indi- vidualistic concern with deliverance and personal salvation, but rather the collective and ritual identification with the cosmic tendency to lose. Humans burn off not only the energy accumulated by other species but, just as important, their own energy, because humans themselves soon hit the limits to growth. Human society cannot indefinitely reproduce: soon enough what today is called the “carrying capacity” of an environment is reached.12 Only so many babies can be born, homes built, forests harvested. Then limits are reached. Some excess can be used in the energy and popu- lation required for military expansion (the case, according to Bataille, with Islam [OC, 7: 83–92; AS, 81–91]), but soon that too screeches to a halt. A steady state can be attained by devoting large numbers of people and huge quantities of wealth and labor to useless activity: thus the large numbers of unproductive Tibetan monks, nuns, and their lavish temples (OC, 7: 93– 108; AS, 93–110). Or most notably, one can waste wealth in military buildup and constant warfare: no doubt this solution kept populations stable in the past (one thinks of the endless battles between South American Indian tribes), but in the present (i.e., 1949) the huge amounts of wealth devoted to military armament, worldwide, can lead only to nuclear holo- caust (OC, 7: 159–60; AS, 169–71). This final point leads to Bataille’s version of a Hegelian “absolute knowl- edge,” one based on the certainty of a higher destruction (hence an absolute knowledge that is also a non-knowledge). The imminence of nuclear holo- caust makes it clear that expenditure, improperly conceived, can threaten the continued existence of society. Unrecuperable energy, if unrecognized or conceived as somehow useful, threatens to return as simple destruc- tion. Bataille’s theory, then, is a profoundly ethical one: we must somehow distinguish between versions of excess that are “on the scale of the universe,” whose recognition-implementation guarantee the survival of society (and human expenditure), and other versions that entail blindness to the real role of expenditure, thereby threatening man’s, not to mention the planet’s, survival. This, in very rough outline, is the main thrust of Bataille’s book. By viewing man as a spender rather than a conserver, Bataille manages to invert the usual order of economics: the moral imperative, so to speak, is the furthering of a “good” expenditure, which we might lose sight of if we stress an inevitably selfish model of conservation or utility. For if conserva- tion is put first, inevitably the bottled-up forces will break loose but in unforeseen, uncontrollable, and, so to speak, untheorized ways. We should focus our attention not on an illusory conservation, maintenance, and the steady state—which can lead only to mass destruction and the ultimate wasting of the world—but instead on the modes of expenditure in which we, as human animals, should engage.13 But how does one go about privileging willed loss in an era in which waste seems to be the root of all evil? Over fifty years after the publication of The Accursed Share, we live in an era in which nuclear holocaust no longer seems the main threat. But other dangers lurk, ones just as terrifying and definitive: global warming, deforestation, the depletion of resources — and above all energy resources: oil, coal, even uranium. How can we possibly talk about valorizing heedless excess when energy waste seems to be the principal evil threatening the continued existence of the biosphere on which we depend? Wouldn’t it make more sense to stress conservation, sustain- ability, and downsizing rather than glorious excess?

#### We must strive towards a solar economy—to be like the sun, a never-ending gift that keeps giving. In order achieve this, we must engage in the transgression of non-productive expenditure, giving without expecting anything in return—a wasteful expenditure that resets the world in chaotic equilibrium.

Timofeeva 20 [Oxana; “From the Quarantine to the General Strike: Professor, Leading researcher European University at St Petersburg, Tyumen State University; SHS KS]

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[s] 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 gen- eral 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 necessitates 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 ener- gy 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)

#### Thus, the standard is to embrace non-productive expenditure.

#### Prefer additionally:

#### [1] Incessant mindsets of production and calculation over-manage the labyrinth and give the subject a false sense of sufficiency, we must instead embrace our insufficiency and discover methods outside of the management sphere.

Painter-Morlland 17 [Mollie Painter-Morlland; THE PROBLEM WITH THE IDEA THAT « ONLY WHAT CAN BE MEASURED CAN BE MANAGED » : BATAILLEAN INTUITIONS; 2017/1 N° 91 | pages 150 à 159 ISSN 1144-0821; <https://www.cairn.info/revue-rue-descartes-2017-1-page-150.htm>] SHS KS

What Bataille may help us understand, is that we do not gather « facts » to weigh our options to make decisions based on utility and profit. Instead, what we value is driven by subjective desire, rooted in complex relational networks that operate as the basis of both constraint and opportunity, intuiting the best ways to remain in relation. We are always in the process of loving, acting, living – we relate first, and rationalize after the fact, in retrospect, always too late. This perspective urges us to rethink the ontological basis of facts versus value distinction. « Facts » are not to be measured, calculated and traded. Instead it is to be observed, understood, and experienced. In reality, it does not exist as such, but is bound up with our ongoing processes of valuation and our experiments in relating to others. Beyond calculation… Sovereignty The problem with the idea that only what can be measured can be managed, is that it leads to « misery thought », a calculative mindset that can only justify the expense of time, energy and resources when it will pay off in terms of a neat cost-benefit analysis 2 . Bataille’s political economy helps us understand our proclivity towards excess, non-calculative expenditure and relational exuberance, which characterize human behaviour and systems, but in a real sense, all life. He describes the three luxuries of nature, i.e. eating, death and sexual reproduction, as intimately related examples of our basic proclivity towards excess. Death is an inevitable, accidental consequence of eating another species, but death itself, as the inevitable passage of the generations over time is also an exuberant dispersal of molecules and energies, without which no new life can come into being 3 . In a real sense, our embodied life merely traps our molecules only temporarily, and they long to be freed. This desire to escape our bodily constraints is also evident in sexual reproduction, since in it, the individual foregoes his/ her own growth and creates another, generously caring and giving, indefinitely. Yet Bataille goes even further to suggest that the sexual act goes far beyond what is reasonably necessary for reproduction – for him the sexual act is in time, what a tiger is in space – luxurious, excessive, destructive 4 . A squandering of energy, the ultimate luxury. What we witness is what Bataille calls « a draining away, a pure and simple loss, which occurs in any case 5 ». There is no way in which this loss can be explained a somehow useful, because it is not at all a question of utility, but rather one of acceptability, which is a thoroughly subjective and relational affair. What Bataille’s analysis offers, is an understanding of that which lies beyond calculation, that which allows for what he calls « sovereignty ». In trying to understand why so many of our ethics management strategies, or interventions to promote sustainable consumption fails, I found the concept of sovereignty fascinating. We think that fear of punishment would disincentivize misconduct like fraud and corruption, but it does not. We hope that showing people the cost-saving potential of environmentally friendly solutions to waste management and energy use, yet this is often not the main reason why people turn to the solutions. Much stronger motivations seem to be our own values, family practices and upbringing, enjoyment of nature, or in a nutshell – the process of seeking alignment with our own ideas of the beautiful life. We tend to think that appeals to « justice » will move individuals – but the problem is that justice and freedom are in many cases each other’s antithesis. Bataille argues that under the guise of « justice », freedom obtains a « lackluster and neutral appearance » precisely because it offers certain freedoms as compensations for sacrifices 6 . It therefore requires the kind of calculative mindset that defies a sense of freedom and sovereignty. Bataille makes it clear that it is difficult to talk or write about the experience of sovereignty because the object that leads to such experience, withdraws in that moment. It is therefore not something that can be calculated or planned for. Bataille explains that only the « deeply rhythmed movements of music, of poetry, of love, dance have the power to capture and endlessly recapture the moment that counts, the moment of rupture, of fissure 7 ». One poignant example Bataille uses in Volume III of the Accursed Share is that of the « happy tears » that flows when a close relative, who was believed to have died at sea, emerges alive. Bataille recounts how every instance of retelling this story, which occurred in his own family, would unexpectedly bring him to tears. His best explanation of this, is that it is an occurrence that combines a sense of the miraculous, the unanticipated and in some cases, even the sacred. The arrival of tears, laughter, ecstacy, eroticism or poetry corresponds to the very point where the object of thought vanishes 8 . In fact, Bataille argues, we know nothing of what is supremely (souverainement) important to us 9 . (Mis)managing the immeasurable Bataille confronts us with the fact that the immeasurability of the sovereign lays to waste our attempts at « management ». It seems that our motivations to live sustainable lifestyles and act ethically in business has little to do with calculating the consequences or some kind of principled commitment – though we may appeal to principles or favorable outcomes to rationalize our behavior after the fact. We « economize » our action the best we can, to make it seem « reasonable ». In making sense of our decisions and actions we typically resort to miserly perspectives such as « sacrificing pleasure for the sake of principle » or « paying the price for good outcomes ». In the process, we have replaced our intimacy with each other and the world with labor, rational progression, effective operations. All of which has been a degradation from which man have always sought to escape. Through our strange myths, rituals, even cruel rites, Bataille argues, man remains in search of this lost intimacy 10… In fact, as Sørensen explains, Bataille defines the notion of economy as the activity of searching for what we are missing 11. What seems to have happened over time is that utilitarian calculation became the centre of our pursuit of what is missing. Bataille of course predicted that consumercapitalism would excel in casting « what is missing » in its own terms, for its own interests. What is missing has been « growth », « new markets », « serving the bottom of the pyramid », etc. But most importantly, what has always been missing is the « new », the « innovative »: new consumer products, new technology, new business models. Capitalism seemed to have moved effortlessly from the consumption of products and services towards the consumption of consumption and more recently the consumption of the social. If the dystopia of the leisure society in which labor is no longer needed or desired materializes, the consumption of the creative will be all that remains. Perhaps this would explain why it is already now so important, to procure and manage « creatives », and harness « creativity ». Art is also increasingly becoming an investment vehicle of choice… the ultimate paradox of productively employing the excessively priced aesthetic objects as vehicles for investment growth. The preoccupation with the « creative » and « creatives » betrays the same attempt at measuring, managing and engineering outcomes. Some acknowledgement is given to the fact that managing « creatives » in certain ways, destroys their « creativity ». But positivists never give up - many empirical studies are now aiming to set things right. It is just a matter of time till they get to the magic formulae to balance intrinsic and extrinsic motivation through organizational incentives, and combine freedom and discipline in workplace structures. Or will they ? Will creativity succeed in continually defying « management » ? What do we lose if it can’t ? The fact is that in our attempt to restore our lost intimacy with the world and each other, we are bound to sacrifice someone or something. The sacrificed allows us to externalize the lost intimacy, and becoming conscious of this does not change the fact that we are prone to continue treading on the seemingly unstoppable mill of producing what is missing 12. Bataille’s first volume of the Accursed Share does not end on an optimistic note. He believes that because we are prone to acquisition, grasping something, an object, we are incapable of grasping the nothing of pure expenditure .13 In the process, what makes us human escapes us. Managing beyond calculation Could it be that in Bataille pessimism there may also lie an opportunity for us as management scholars ? [He would hate that, of course, which makes this piece so much fun to write]. Management will only be able to do what it originally intended, i.e. deal with « household matters », if intimacy and relationality can again find its place in how we understand human behavior. Bataille’s insights allow us to develop an understanding of our desire for « sovereignty » and « moments of sovereignty » as what is missing, and remains missing. It is also important that we never seek to fully possess intimacy, as this would amount to a deception .14 This entails grappling with the difficult task of understanding what lies beyond calculation, and proposing something instead of calculation, a way of being outside of calculation. Bataille explains that the idea of sovereignty or excess has been relegated to the archaic, the mystical, the primitive – we have come to view it is an affront to reason and intellect, and as such, it has been made suspicious 15. But without this dimension, would we be ever be able to find a way of being in the world other than as calculative beings ? Are we not missing out on understanding what lies at the heart of our deepest motivations and informs our sense of the best ways to live ? But where do we start our pursuit of this understanding – do we seek our answers in the ever more fascinating findings of neuroscience, or psychology ? Or do we accept the findings of complexity theory around the emergence of order in complex systems ?

## Offense

#### Thus, I affirm—Resolved: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike. I’ll defend the resolution as a general principle and PICS don’t negate because general principles tolerate exceptions. I’ll spec whatever you want me to in cx as long as it doesn’t force me to abandon my maximum.

### Contention 1: Festivity

#### Strikes serve as a means of disrupting the dominant, one-sided, capitalist structure of society and instead embracing radical festivities. The government recognizing workers’ rights to strike is an acknowledgement of the futility of politics in the inescapable labyrinth.

Timofeeva 20 [Oxana; “From the Quarantine to the General Strike: Professor, Leading researcher European University at St Petersburg, Tyumen State University; SHS KS]

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 invol- untary 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 inter- vention 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 history to the domain of natural activities, and grasp not, say, climate change as a rebellion of the colonized Earth or revolutionary move- ment 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 plan- etary 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 nonproduc- tive 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 sov- ereign, festive, luxurious moment, but it remains shadowed by the restricted, one-sided logics of usefulness that cannot encompass the totality of the ecological whole.

### Contention 2: Limitlessness

#### Strikes entail a collective action where people can realize their true limitlessness in a height and frenzy of emotions, which allows abstraction from the productive state and a path towards a more disorganized and chaotic system of festivity.

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

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

## Underview

#### [1] 1AR Theory – a] the aff gets it because otherwise the 1NC could engage in unchecked, infinite abuse which outweighs anything else, b] it’s drop the debater because the 2AR is too short to win a shell AND substance so theory can only check abuse for the aff if it’s a win condition