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PLEASURE'S TREBLE

I: Definitions

Regarding pleasure, we can propose three theses: 1) The immediate cause of pleasure is always matter. Otherwise put, there are only material pleasures. 2) Whatever the point of matter by which pleasure is caused, the effect of pleasure is written in the alphabet of the places of the body (that is also to say in language, which supposes the body and which the body supposes). Otherwise put, there are only corporeal pleasures. Corollary: supposing that a body can be the cause of pleasure for another body, it can only be so through what is material (that is also to say by the language that traverses it, since language is material). 3) Every pleasure binds as its cause a part [parcelle] of matter that is not that body, for some place of a body that is not this part. It is therefore at the point of encounter between a part of matter (cause) and a place of the body (effect). For such an encounter to be possible, it is necessary that cause and effect be at once co-present and distinct. There must therefore exist a well-defined ensemble to which belongs, under the same heading and at the same time, parts of matter and bodies, which manifest their co-presence and their distinction at the same time. This ensemble constitutes a world, whose law of good definition is a nature. Otherwise put, every pleasure is of this world, and every pleasure is natural. Corollary 1: pleasure requires presence. There are no pleasures from another world. Corollary 2: pleasure is a criterion of the natural, and not the inverse. There are no pleasures against nature.

We will call *thing* the part of matter that causes a pleasure (the etymology thing [chose] *causa* has here some meaning). Of the thing, only a material quality (heavy/light, hot/cold, sugared/salty, blonde/brown, symmetrical/misshapen, intelligent/stupid, etc.) can cause pleasure. Of the body, place of effects, only a material quality (taut/slack, excited/calm, tumescent/detumescent, the pleasant/painful, etc.) can spell out pleasure. Otherwise put, pleasure requires a physics of qualities and every physics of qualities is physics of a possible pleasure.

Let us agree that a thing is only a sum of material qualities. To accept that, reciprocally, every sum of qualities is a thing. A body can only spell out an effect of pleasure because it can have material qualities: in other words, insofar as it is also a thing. Pleasure requires a real distinction between things, between thing and body, between bodies. But this real distinction presupposes the belonging of bodies to the ensemble of things.

If the body were not a thing, there would not be the spell of effects, but insofar as it is a thing, it can be cause of a pleasure for another body. Since there is no pleasure without the spell of effects on a body, the general possibility that there is any pleasure depends on the general possibility that this body be the possible cause of a pleasure.

Otherwise put, the pleasure that a body takes from another and the pleasure that a body causes another body permits the existence of all pleasure. The encounter of pleasure between two bodies is the fundamental pleasure.

Every material quality can cause pleasure; every corporeal quality can spell the effect of pleasure. A thing is a sum of material qualities. It is therefore a superabundance of causes of possible pleasures. A body, in regard to pleasure, is a sum of corporeal qualities. It is therefore a superabundance of possible spellings-out of an effect of pleasure. The world is a sum of things and bodies. It is therefore a superabundance of qualities. And it is a superabundance of possible causes and effects of pleasure.

The richness and diversity of a world is the abundance of things and bodies—and for each thing and each body, the abundance of its qualities. The stability of a rich and diverse world is the stability of the relation of each thing and each body to its qualities. The more a world is stable, rich and diverse, the more numerous the possible occasions of pleasure. Such is the ancient world.

II: The ancient world

To the realized encounter of a thing and a body fits, above all, the Greek name for beauty: *kalos*. That thing alone is beautiful that can by some quality cause a pleasure; it is beautiful only from the point of a body where this effect is spelled out. The name of the beautiful gathers within itself what of the superabundant qualities of things release pleasure; it names the Quality as such of the Thing as such, insofar as possible cause of a pleasure for the Body as such; it summarizes the possible form of whatever pleasure that this is. If every physics of qualities is the physics of a possible pleasure, it is also a physics of the *kalon*. A world where pleasure is possible is a world of beauty—and reciprocally.

As the encounters of pleasure adjoin things and bodies and, as things and bodies are the world, affirming that there is only a world of things and bodies is to affirm that there is no other rule than pleasure—and reciprocally (Epicurus). To affirm

that there is another rule than pleasure is to affirm that there is another world than that of things and bodies—and reciprocally (Plato).

The world of qualities of things and bodies is the world of Homer, that is, a world of beauty. The violet of the sea, the rose of the dawn, the glistening of meat, the gilding of palaces, the radiance of faces and limbs spell out the text of possible pleasures (and, of course, that of pains, which is the same text). Such is the world that covers, in ordering, the Platonic dichotomies or the Aristotelian syllogisms or the Stoic implications or the Sceptical tropes. Through these diverse analyses, the Homeric text is supposed to find a syntax (for qualities, adjectives; for things and bodies, substantives) and a logic (for qualities, predicates; for things and bodies, subjects).

From this syntax and this logic are obtained by calculable derivations the syntaxes and logics of Tragedians, Comedians, poets, historians, orators, rhetors, novelists (imitating the rhetors), etc. As partial or total syntaxes and logics of a world of things and bodies, these are syntaxes and logics of possible pleasures. And as syntaxes and logics can only govern things and bodies if they also govern parts of language (speeches and texts), they institute these parts as immediate causes and immediate locales of a possible pleasure. Language itself and not only that of which it speaks can be called beautiful, equal, symmetrical; it can become subject of a predicate or the substantive of an adjective; the body can be invoked by it. Language speaks of the world from the point of pleasure, and, at the same stroke, language itself can cause a pleasure. The *Odyssey* holds in its breast the place of Demodocos, author and reciter of the most beautiful epic verse. Gorgias will later praise Helen in sentences that want to be as beautiful as her.

In a word, the ancient world comes down to a structuring question: how is Homer possible? We discover there, folded back upon themselves, the three questions that articulate pleasure's treble: *quid* of pleasure? *quid* of copulation? *quid* of love?

III: The ancient world and the triple of pleasure

Pleasure

According to ancient doctrine, pleasure has as its fundamental paradigm the starving man who eats, the parched man who drinks. Against this standard, every pleasure is measured and legitimated. Whether this has anything or not to do with the always present possibility of droughts and famines is of little import. The point is that the relation of the thing to the body is fundamentally thought as incorporation. Thus the causes of pleasure are governed according to the ways that permit incorporation (the five senses) and according to the greater or lesser degree of fulfillment of these (passage from the exterior to the interior, absorption or not). Finery (exterior to the body, but in contact), spectacles and sounds (absorbed but not

transformed), foodstuffs (absorbed and transformed) etc., find their inscription and their hierarchy from the least to the most natural. In a parallel fashion, the more that a cause of pleasure is approached by the body, the more severely intemperance (*akolasia*) reveals itself. Truly, according to Aristotle, there is only intemperance where there is contact.¹

Each realized incorporation is directed toward only one meaning: devoration. Is it necessary to conclude that a world founded on pleasure finds its ultimate principle in a law of universal devoration? One might think so, if we take seriously the figure of Cronos, the devouring father that Zeus had to dethrone and castrate. Plato puts it differently: left to themselves, the pleasures innate in each person are simply the deployment of every devoration; the bestial part of the soul begins by gorging itself on food and wine; it continues through rape and murder; it finishes by no longer abstaining from any kind of foodstuff (*Republic*, IX, 571c-d). This is the world of Cronos and it is also the world of our dreams.

But there is *philia*. It is true that the insipidities of the vocabulary of friendliness have obscured its precise import. The science of language allows us to parry. Regarding the family of *philos*, Benveniste proposed precise propositions.² More than feelings of affection, the word goes back to a non-affective institutional relation. It designates the obligated comportment of a member of the community in regard to his foreign guest (Benveniste, 341). To treat someone as of his own who isn't is to affirm that he is a member of the same social body, precisely because he is not: such is the strict relation of hospitality. A series of words with opposed or symmetrical meanings are born here: *xenos*, *hospes/hostis*, *Gast* (formally analogous to *hostis*), *hôte*, etc.

In the eyes of a modern, nothing here concerns nature. Because modern nature is radically different from society (even if the reciprocal isn't admitted by everyone). But what's proper to *phusis* is exactly that it lets itself be adequately grasped by the very notions of social belonging: filiation, family, *genos*, rule, etc. More precisely, polis and *phusis*, circles of social belonging and natural classes, allow themselves to be grasped at the same point, which is *philia*.³ Not at all that *polis* and *phusis* cover each other. Much to the contrary, the two systems could not be more distinct, *nomôi*

1. On all this, see M. Foucault, *L'Usage des plaisirs* (Paris: Gallimard, 1984), Chapter 1, and especially 49-50. One difference, however: Foucault doesn't give a place to incorporation as such. This point is of major importance.

2. Émile Benveniste, *Vocabulaire des institutions indo-européennes I* (Paris, Minuit, 1969) 335-353.

3. I use here polis in an extended sense to designate the ensemble of everything that treats of social belonging, that it is a question of the polis properly called or of the family or of *genos* or of some other circle of belonging. We will note that Aristotle and his school are often misunderstood; far from having naturalized the polis and its fundamental operations, one could say that they politicized nature and its parts. The expression *zoon politikon* has a double entrance. The theory of species and the theory of *politeiai* are constructed from the same point. On condition, however, of remembering what this supposes: city and

for the one, *phusis* for the other. But their radical distinction precisely founds their analogy in the Greek sense: equality of relations. It is even their express condition: only independent systems can be analogues. Precisely because *nomôi* and *phusei* are radically opposed, it is permissible to affirm that every relation of the polis finds its analogue in a relation of *phusis*, and reciprocally.

But *philia* is at the foundation of all relations; it is therefore par excellence what remains equal to itself in the two systems.

Social belonging is established by an affirmation; everything in it that claims to be able to be stated (place of birth, relations, sex, activity, etc.) depends on this first affirmation, what one would formerly refer to the symbolic. It is even this that founds hospitality. Conclusion: in ancient *phusis* as in the *polis*, belonging is not observed, but affirmed. Otherwise put, ancient *phusis*, in the same way as the *polis*, rests on the laws of hospitality.

One sees that the commentary of Empedocles authorizes such a hypothesis: *philia* enables *phusis*, in holding at the heart of the same ensemble opposed and dissimilar existents (inversely, *neikos*—strife—introduces discord into the heart of related and similar existents). This proposition only has meaning through another: *philia* enables all the species of human communities, *neikos* destroys them. But has Empedocles done anything else than make explicit possibilities to which the most common words give birth? *Kalos*, *philos*, *phusis*, *polis* are the rings of a same and single golden chain. *Philia* is the unique principle by which the world is sustained as a world of beauty and pleasure, in the two places that suit it, *phusei* and *nomôi*.

For there to be incorporation, there has to be a community of nature. Moderns agree: they would even go so far as to speak of assimilation. But the nature that is thus invoked is not ancient *phusis* but modern nature. Ancient incorporation is completely different. It lets itself be presented thus: the physical body welcomes as one of its essential parts the thing that is not of it. Law of hospitality in *phusis*. Thus drinking and eating are the horizon of ancient pleasure, but in ancient drinking and eating, the ingested substance remains essentially distinct. In the same way, the stranger, treated as guest, is not required to renounce his nature as a stranger; just as rain watering arid earth only moistens by remaining forever rainwater, however fine the divisions that it undergoes in penetrating the grains of earth; or as the scattered grain only fertilizes the soil by never becoming soil; or as drink quenches thirst; or as food assuages hunger by never giving up its own nature as wine or bread.

We are here—it's necessary to underline this—opposed to the modern paradigm of nutritional assimilation.⁴ This latter is the consequence of the compatibility of natures, which comes back in the final instance to a unified molecular substrate,

nature are only analogues because they are distinct. This is opposed to social Darwinism and socio-biology.

4. One concludes, reciprocally, that assimilation is opposed to hospitality.

always already given. The incorporation of ancient pleasure is affirmation—and not consequence—of co-naturality. Moreover, the very word co-naturality is deceptive. It translates *sungeneia*, but the Greek refers itself to *genos* and *genos* is not a genetic community; it is a system of social belonging, a system of affirmative relation, natural in the sense of *phusis*, but not in the sense of modern nature. There is only *sungeneia* between existents with distinct essences and at the point of their sustained distinction; their community is crucially what is not given. One could even say that it is crucially what is rejected. This is why it can and must be affirmed. This is also why this affirmation is precarious; barbarism traverses the divisions of the *polis*, and chaos the cut-outs of *phusis*.

If we agree that all the figures of encounter—*sungeneia*, mixture, repletion (see Plato for this terminology)—allow themselves to be summarized by the word *philein*; if we agree that every fulfillment of an encounter lets itself be summarized by the word *kalos*, we will have illuminated the aphorism to *kalon philon esti* that accompanies the doctrines (it is due to Theognis, v, 17, and taken up by Plato, *Lysis*, 216c). The beautiful is distinct from us, it is said, but we receive it as allied. We translate: 'the beautiful is ours' and we understand that the word *philon* contains an ethical commandment: 'act in every encounter as a welcoming host and beauty will come to the world.' If we agree that *kalon* is grasped from the point of pleasure, we can comment, with precautions: every pleasure articulates one of the laws of hospitality by which the present world is sustained.

Philia is alliance [*apparentement*] affirmed. It therefore supposes a point from which this affirmation issues. This point is named the Same. Far from being obtained from an abstraction from resemblances, its potency consists in affirming the Same beyond resemblances and dissemblances. Through it are read in synonymy the co-belonging of *polis* and the co-naturality of *phusis*. Saying that pleasure is related to us (*philon*) is only to say that it is governed by the Same. The thing causes a pleasure of the body insofar as the relation of pleasures grasps what there is of the Same in the cause and in the effect. It is not at all that the body and the thing are indistinct or confused. Much to the contrary, there is only pleasure (encounter, mixture, etc.) if their distinction is real. Except in a second time, it is affirmatively abolished, or rather surmounted. Pleasure qua pleasure is only the material mark of what there is of the Same between a thing and a body that are really distinct; reciprocally, the sanction of what there is of the Same between thing and body will only be a pleasure. The fact of pleasure proves that there is something of the Same, as it proves that there is some *philia* in nature. Synonymous proposition: 'there is a *phusis*.'

But we know that body and thing enter into relation because they are both matter endowed with qualities (a thing, at the heart of an ordered world in a nature). Is this then the place of the Same? Not necessarily. Let us suppose, to the contrary, that matter as such does not come under the Same; that, to the contrary, it fundamentally come under the Other. What in the being individuated by a body comes under the Same is not called matter, but, for example, *soul*; in return, one allots the metonymic name of *body* for what in the body comes under matter and the Other.

In parallel, what in the thing comes under the Same, will readily be called *idea* and what in the thing comes under the Other will bear the homonymic name of thing (bed, dust, justice, etc.). The conclusion thus imposes itself: precisely because pleasure is pleasure of the body, and thus incorporation of a thing that is not the body, it must be that pleasure comes under the soul and the idea. Only the soul and the idea can affirm the Same at the heart of the materially dissimilar.

One step further and we will say that there is only an effect of pleasure in the place of the soul and through the idea. More precisely, if we agree to call *idea* what in the thing makes that it is incessantly the Same as itself and the Same as the soul, then only the idea is an adequate cause of a pleasure. If we agree to call soul what makes the being individuated by a body is incessantly the Same as itself and the Same as the idea that it contemplates, then only the soul is an adequate place for the effects of pleasure. Pleasure is the effect that the idea occasions in the soul. Whence the procession that in the cause of pleasure purifies step by step the diverse and in the place of effects of pleasure always filters more systematically what belongs to the soul: *ascesis* that goes from the Same to the Same.

To such pleasures fits the Greek name of the beautiful. But if it is necessary to understand that the beautiful, dependent here on ideas and souls, is not synonymous with Homeric beauty, entirely dependent on bodies and things, then we will use the language and coupling that it proposes. In *kalos kagathos*, we will shift the accent to the second term: the beautiful that, in the new world, stenographs pleasures will receive the name of the good. According to Newspeak, only the Good adequately denominates the encounter of pleasure, in precise substitution for the Beautiful. From such a world, however, Homer must be banished, because he would render the name of the Good as dark as an extinguished sun.

One will have recognized the Platonic step.

There is at least another: let us suppose in effect that matter could find in itself the affirmative foundation of the Same, then everything changes.

If matter finds in itself the foundation of the Same and if one admits that one of the tasks of philosophy is to say the Same, then the Same must be said as the Same of matter; it must therefore be said materially. The atomist axiom is precisely this: it states that there is only one way of saying materially whatever there is, which is writing (and, for the Greeks of the classic age, writing is writing alphabetically). The axiom therefore comes down to stating that there is in matter what spells out, letter by letter, the text of the Same. Before one could recognize any of the qualities by which one letter is not another, one will retain for the letter as such only one negative minimal quality: indivisibility (half a letter is nothing, unless by being instituted as a new letter, as happened to H).⁵ Briefly, the atom is nothing but the

5. I allude here to the notation of the initial aspiration in Classical Greek by the coarse spirit. One knows that this sign (put into currency by the Alexandrian grammarians of the third century) was obtained on the basis of the left half of the letter H, split in two. More generally, the doctrine of the letter for the Greek philosophers (so prevalent with

letter of the Same and if the Same is written materially, it can only be written in atoms, since the atom is solely the name of the defining property of every letter in general.⁶

The soul and the idea can exist; if they exist, they will be material; if they are material, they will be referable to the atom. Under any hypothesis, they will be neither necessary nor sufficient for spellings-out. If they are somewhere the Same, then they say nothing more than the atom itself. If, in return, the atom is the material letter of the Same and if pleasure is nothing but the material mark of what there is of the Same, then pleasure alone is necessary and sufficient to spell out the text of the soul and the idea insofar as they encounter something.

One will have recognized the Epicurean step.

The Sexual Act

Sexual pleasure is the pleasure that one body can cause another body. If it exists, sexual pleasure therefore consists in this: that one body incorporates another. But this is impossible.

Impossible through penetration. The ancient doctrine announces its incessant failure (Lucretius, IV, 1091 sqq.). All sexual techniques are ornaments, dissimulations, insufficient compensations for this loss. Orgasm is a dream and dream substitute for the impossible fusion or mutual and reciprocal incorporation of bodies. Excepting the beast with two backs and the divided spheres of Aristophanes—mythic escape clauses—cannibalism would remain. This is even the constant horizon of coitus, as Lucretius testifies (IV, 1108-1109).

the atomists) is to be related to a major event: the deep and remarkable orthographic reform, conceived in Ionia in the course of the 6th century and applied in Athens under the Archonate of Euclide (403 BC, date of the reestablishment of democracy after the fall of the Thirty Tyrants: is it a coincidence?). See H. Pernot, *D'Homère à nos jours* (Paris: Garnier 1921), or, failing which, M. Lejeune, *Phonétique historique du mycénien et du grec ancien* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1972) S239-241; and, from a properly philosophical point of view, the work of E. Havelock (notably, *Preface to Plato*, Harvard University Press, 1963).

6. The negative in the name of the atom is demonstrably analogous to the negative in the name of the unconscious. In the two cases, it is a question of naming a real positivity. That negative names impose themselves is due to the structures of what is subject to representations and images (the imaginary). The name of the unconscious takes its meaning from the fact that every modern representable representation is alleged to suppose a consciousness; the name of the atom takes its meaning from the fact that every ancient representable representation (whether it is a question of techniques, or politics, or morals, or physics, etc.), allegedly puts some division and some recomposition to work. From a philological point of view, we will note that Democritus had forged a positive name for being: *to den*, obtained by the scission of the negative *mēden*, 'nothing.' It is not impossible that Lucretius remembered this in splitting the Latin *nihil*: *Nil igitur mors est ad nos neque pertinet hilum* (III, 830). We will further note that the Latin *hilum* is a quasihomophone of the Greek *hylē*, 'matter.'

With one reservation: if coitus is cannibalistic, this doesn't follow from what is sexual, but from the very nature of pleasure. We know that devoration is the only real incorporation. Not coitus alone, but every encounter between beings endowed with a body has cannibalism for its ultimate horizon—if at least it should be organized by pleasure. Once again, Plato speaks clearly: the nourishment from which the bestial soul does not abstain in dream is human flesh. To the very extent that he devotes himself to pleasures without restraint, the man of tyranny becomes—no longer in dream alone, but in reality—a man-eating wolf (Republic, VIII, 565e-566a).

But cannibalism is forbidden; it is the forbidden *par excellence*. There is therefore no remedy for the failure of penetration.

But *philia*? Without it, it is true, whatever human community there is would be submitted to this trilemma: prohibit every encounter, which is the end of all community; or permit universal devoration, which is the end of every body; or prohibit every pleasure. But there are human communities where, it's said, some pleasure is permitted; for example in those communities modern translators baptize, as well as they can, friendship; or in happy cities which recognize from this that friendship is possible there. *Philia* thus comes to rupture the trilemma. It authorizes pleasures and even pleasant encounters for those who must have renounced the only properly human pleasure: devouring each other.⁷

One objection, however, radical in the matter of coitus: *philia* is useless. It appears that the Ancients, differently perhaps from certain moderns, did not believe that the laws of hospitality extended their empire to copulation (we understand at which point Klossowski broke with Antiquity, but at what point also, translator of Virgil, he marked it). There is in ancient coitus neither *philia* nor beauty. Conclusion: the sexual act, as such, is not a pleasure. It is situated at the impossible point of pleasure. There is not, one cannot have, sexual pleasure.

We take the importance of the theorem. If the only encounters between bodies were copulations, then the conclusion would be inevitable: having stated that there is no encounter of pleasure between bodies, then there is not any possible pleasure (cf p. 2 above).

It is therefore of the first importance that there exist encounters between bodies that are not coitus. Whence the extreme urgency of the proposals on friendship, pathetic, disturbed, very far from their faded translations: ancient friendship is not an attenuated variant of love, but the salvation of the world—of the golden chain that holds the world by rings of *philia* and beauty. Whence also the will that pleasures exist around the sexual act. But this is precisely the point: if they exist, they

7. *Homo homini lupus* is to be taken literally. Whether Hobbes recalls Plato or nursery stories hardly matters. The Frazerians would have no trouble in demonstrating that hospitality emerges precisely at the point of cannibalism: the first gesture of a host worthy of this name is to welcome the stranger to his table. This is because, without the laws of hospitality, the stranger would have constituted the meal. We rediscover this in the figure of the ogre, always tied to the relation host-traveller and the figure of Polyphemus.

only concern the surroundings—essentially the encounters that precede and prepare the act, in conscious imitation of the laws of hospitality. In brief, *philia* stops where coitus begins. But it can outline, enclose, constrain, externally restrain the irremediably barbarous moment.

Forms of politeness and love letters find their place here: 'affections, days passed together, conversations, enthusiasms, laughter,' such is the summary that M. Foucault gives of Saint Augustine remembering his youth (*Confessions*, IV, Chapters 8, 9, 10); and how not to think of Baudelaire, nineteenth century Platonist, 'The races, the songs, the kisses, the bouquets/The violins trembling behind the hills...?' *Billets-doux*, *Petits-soins*, etc. the Tender Land proposes the pleasing and profound image of the world of sexual *philia*. But this world isn't reduced to the map of Tenderness. We find there also and above all Ovid's *ars amatoria* (once again, a systematic and radical disciple of Lucretius, since the *The Art of Love* is the flip-side of Book IV of *De natura rerum*).

But Ovid is not the Kama Sutra. Greek and Latin literature is characterized by not having literalized coitus. They speak of *aphrodisia*: they propose an enlightened practice (*khṛêsis aphrodisiôn*); they found a poetry and a philosophy. It isn't certain that they ever managed to integrate the sexual act. It isn't certain that they ever wanted to.⁸

Coitus in general is the experience of a radical impossibility. The Greek name for the impossible is *apeiron*. Coitus in general is therefore the experience of a radical *apeiron*. But male-female coitus is a need. Not for the individual body (in this regard, masturbation does the job, as Diogenes demonstrates), but for the social and political body. Coitus has to do with the continued life—and therefore the permanence—of political collectivities. To the exact extent that man is a political life (*zôon politikon*), the polis is a live-box [*vivier*].

That their members continue to make them live as long as possible is the defining principle of communities. This supposes in return that they give them the means to live: how to eat (even when one doesn't work the earth), how to drink (even when one is far from a spring), how to copulate (even when one hasn't the force or taste to take some partner by force). Supplying and bringing to presence possible partners for coitus, this is one of the essential tasks for whatever political collectivity there is (one comprehends that the political problem is always a problem of the city and reciprocally). But the possibility of satisfaction requires that need escape *apeiron*.

But coitus will not escape by itself. Differently from hunger and thirst, that bear in themselves their own internal limit since incorporation for them is permissible (*De natura rerum*, IV, 1091-1096). The primary task for communities is thus summed

8. M. Foucault translated the Greek *aphrodisia* as 'sexual pleasures.' This would be satisfactory only on one condition: from the *aphrodisia*, we exclude the sexual act as such and relate them to the laws of hospitality. But this isn't the position of *The Use of Pleasures*, because, precisely, ancient pleasure is not related there to incorporation. Wrongly, to my mind.

up in this: to impose from the exterior some limit to coitus. So one thinks of institutional regulations imposed with an intrinsic brutality: diverse prohibitions, prostitution, shame/modesty, politeness, policing, and above all marriage, of which one understands that, tied to coitus, it is not for the Ancients tied to pleasure.

These regulations have nothing to do with *philia*. They aim solely at the perpetuation of collectivities. At the most one could hope that sometimes they happily combine with procedures of *philia*. Thus the husband can say to his wife: *philè alokhos*, 'dear bed companion'—Homeric speech, though is Homer the reality?

Love

Eros has nothing to do with the predicates: beauty, youth, wealth, sweetness; it doesn't require their existence, even to the contrary, it permits it. Even supposing that they existed without it, it alone authorizes that they have effects. This is why Plato confers contradictory predicates on Eros: being the only source of qualities recognized for the loved and the lover, it is absolutely necessary that it contains the superabundance of possible qualities (Poros) under the form of their incessant lack (Penia). However distant from Plato he is, Lucretius doesn't say anything different: qualities are not the cause of love, but love is the cause of qualities (this is the meaning of IV, 1153-1170, translated by Molière).

Eros has nothing to do with presence: Hector's death does not end Andromache's love. It has nothing to do with nature. Thus, reading the monsters: Pasiphae, taken with a bull, says something about eros, just as much as Philomela transformed into a bird, or Philemon and Baucis transformed into trees, or the Sirens, birds with a woman's head or women with a fish's tail. Once again, Ovid keeps exactly to Lucretius, writing at the same time *Metamorphoses* (love smashing the order of forms) and the *Heroides* (love is a letter addressed to one who will not always reply).

Having nothing to do with predicates or presence, eros has nothing to do with things either of the world or of beauty. It is rather to do with their always possible defection. It therefore has no relation to pleasure. It neither excludes nor demands it.

Neither does it have to do with the sexual act. This is why it doesn't rule out or demand one or the other in the active life: ancient love is neither intrinsically pleasant, nor intrinsically painful. It is happy, in the sense that Lacan gives it: it depends on good fortune. Ancient love doesn't privilege or interdict either chastity or copulation or sweetness or brutality. Whether it takes place or not, the sexual act does not affect it (Echo loves Narcissus forever, who will never touch her; every night, Artemis contemplates Endymion sleeping; Achilles doesn't stop loving Briseis, even though they are united in the flesh). And, reciprocally, it doesn't affect the sexual act: whoever loves, if he is brutal, is not softened by love and will take the loved object as violently as if he did not love it (the love of Tereus is not struck with inauthenticity on the pretext that Tereus has raped his love; Polyphemus in love

remains Polyphemus). Whoever does not love, if he is nice and polite, will also be nice and polite as a nice and polite lover. Briefly, love does not regulate the sexual act. This task is brought out exclusively by marriage, but marriage doesn't concern pleasure any more than it does eros.

IV: Ancient Knottings

Pleasure, coitus, love. The three terms of the triple can remain unknotted, or rather floating, threads. This is how it goes with the poets and Tragedians. It thus belongs to the active life, following fortune and occasion, to combine what can be. But philosophy generally isn't content with this (the Cynics aside, who precisely combine nothing, but are they philosophers?); it is knotting and it is theory. To the knotting that theory operates, it has itself given a name: that of *wisdom*.

Philosophy consists in proposing that *philia* is necessary and sufficient for wisdom. Taken literally, the words say it: it is less a question of loving wisdom (*tèn sophian philein*) than of founding Sophia on *philein* alone (*hè sophia tou philein*). One accepts that every incorporation is impossible and must give way to its metaphorical substitute, hospitality; but one, moreover, affirms that the impossibility of becoming-one is circumvented by means of several euphemisms; one finally affirms that substitution permits the knotting of the threads in some way.⁹ Only philosophy shows clearly and systematically the premises and consequences of the proposition to *kalon philon esti*. Only the philosopher can use, with full knowledge, the word *philos*; every employment of the word *philos* summons philosophy. It seems that Aristotle imposed on it to remain within these strict limits, to explore them with a formidable systematicity.

At the price of philosophy, *knottings* are possible. But are they all? It is necessary to remember that theoretical knotting is not the occasional combination of which the happy life can propose the theater. By it, properties are exchanged and circulate; the properties of one thread allow themselves to be recognized in another, and inversely. Yet an official notice imposes itself: in at least one case, such an exchange entails disaster.

9. Whence we can effectively conclude that the Cynics are not philosophers. We would willingly believe that they deny Theognis' aphorism. The beautiful according to them is not connatural to man, because, in a more general fashion, nothing is connatural to man (except another man, but the other man does not exist, because there is neither an idea of man nor human genre: Diogenes' anecdote). In brief, there is no *philon*. Otherwise put, the very concept of philosophy is dissipated. Outside *philon*, only incorporation remains of pleasure; the only incorporation would be devoration; the only interesting incorporation would be that of man by man. Since cannibalism is interdicted, all is metaphor and, as such, idle chatter. The only behaviour to hold to thereafter: aside from eating and drinking, themselves restrained by the strictly necessary, it is appropriate to restrict as much as possible without dying from the encounters between things and bodies and between bodies. Such is the true import of the definition of pleasure as absence of pain.

Knotting love and coitus in fact, making each the condition and sanction of the other, is to make coitus a malediction, since it is to confer on a need (coitus) the characters of what exceeds every need (love). Henceforth all the limits imposed by political civilisation are struck by radical impotence and *apeiron* takes the form of dissatisfaction without remedy. To the break of impossible incorporation is conjoined the structural defection of the object of love. Each of two reals becomes the material sign and confirmation of the other. The life of man on earth is not that of the traveller who no oasis satisfies, but that of the traveler who finds no oasis.

In regards to love, it becomes filth since lovers are never freed from secretions and wounds of the flesh—fetid odours, disagreeable sounds, awkward corporeality. The ransom of satisfied need is soiling. If love is knotted to need, it ceaselessly takes repulsive routes and knows need's inexorable tempo; need is extinguished from the moment it is satisfied and no matter that the satisfaction is not one. Whence it happens that love is transient, all the while uncovering no principle of suspension. Whence are born Deception and Trickery, fruits of the unnatural union of Amor and Venus.

Coitus-love thus becomes hell on earth, pleasure concentrates itself in impossibility, life is ordered by a maxim of infinite pain. Lucretius proposes a tableau, painted in the colours of blood and flame and more unbearable than any fresco of the Villa of Mysteries. But Plato doesn't less invoke the unlimited dark in the *Philebus* and under the traits of tyrant Eros in the *Republic* (573a-b). Philosophy, as such, recognizes absolute Evil there.

That such a knotting is a disaster entails that no knotting of the three is accessible. There only remain two knottings by two for the friends of wisdom: pleasure/love, but then not coitus (Plato), pleasure/coitus, but then not love (Lucretius).

The great stratagem

The first knot founds what we could call the great stratagem of Plato, most cunning philosopher, who perhaps accomplished to the highest point the ruse of philosophy itself.

Whoever wants to unite the two threads of love and pleasure, a first thing would in fact be necessary: to fill in their mutual foreignness. For this it is necessary to attenuate the demand of incorporation and maximal co-presence that animates pleasure, attenuating the incessant defection of presences and qualities that eros animates. This is exactly what the doctrine of *philia* effects.

But Plato pushes further. He raises cunning to the rank of stratagem, by adding to the metaphor of *philon* that pleasure henceforth is organized by the soul. Every trace of philosophical euphemism and metaphor is thus effaced. Resignation is no longer right, the metaphor reveals itself in not being one, because souls can be united. All the better that they take the idea as such as the cause of pleasure, whose

proper character is precisely to make one of diversity. *Philein* is no longer substituted for union; it is this union itself.

All therefore is organized in plenitude. In place of classing pleasures according to their greater or lesser alliance with the body, one will class them according to their greater or lesser alliance with the soul, the place where ideas are given to contemplate. In place of submitting pleasures to a law of unaccomplishment—one incorporation at least always remaining interdicted—one will conduct them towards an absolute accomplishment: perfect union. Thus the earthly cannibalism of man and the tyrant, all cannibal power, will be vanquished.

But if the idea is the cause of pleasure, then it turns out to have the same traits as the cause of love. Neither presence nor predicates are necessary to it. Much to the contrary, it is defined by not being there where things are, and not having predicates: since the idea is the idea of the predicate as such, no predicate is properly suitable to it except for the transcendental predicates, which precisely are not proper to it: being one, being beautiful, being good. Whence the pleasure of the soul is nothing other than the love of the idea, and reciprocally, to love the idea is to show the effects of pleasure, in the very place where they should be entirely accomplished, namely, the soul.

The condition of this double knotting is, we have said, that the interdiction of the third thread be explicated. To interdict penetration for oneself, this is called chastity. But interdicting penetration for the other, this means striking it with shame. But such a shame wouldn't affect the penetration of woman by man. That would afflict the perpetuation of every political body with shame; the millenarianism of certain Christians will be necessary for thought to consent to it. But we would then have left the ancient world. Plato will content himself by manifesting the strictly political character of the sexual relation, through the institution of the community of women.

Therefore only the relation between men and boys permits the legibility of the condition of good knotting.

Let us take up the reasoning. If penetration in itself is the very experience of the impossible of incorporation, then it is the experience of the impossible of pleasure. So that the relation to pleasure becomes possible, penetration must be forbidden, but, for it to be forbidden, it must be physically possible. There would then be sexual pleasure only where penetration is supposed physically possible and shameful in regards to custom; but it is supposed at the same time only possible and shameful among men; between women, it is supposed physically impossible; between man and woman, it is not in itself shameful. Conclusion: only men can forbid themselves the sexual act and thereby knot pleasure and love; among men, only the messieurs can do it well under all relations (*kaloï kagathoi*, *kaloï* for pleasures, *agathoi* for love, or the reverse. It hardly matters, since the knotting permits all the exchanges). Reciprocal conclusion: what passes between a man and a woman isn't worth philosophy dedicating it a quarter of an hour of trouble (truly, philosophy only speaks of

it in the political register, where it appears that it's better to neutralize the problem by a putting-into-community).¹⁰

Homer undoubtedly made a big deal of it: two epics of thousands of lines so that in each, a husband, one abandoned, the other expected, and a wife, one unfaithful, the other faithful, find each other again; agreed beauty in the representation of a happy family, Andromache, Hector and Astyanax; great care taken to avoid making Patrocles and Achilles appear lovers; Achilles' anger, aroused by a beautiful slave-girl and not by a stripling, etc. In short, all the *Iliad* and all the *Odyssey* erase in advance the myth of the *Phaedrus* and the seduction of Alcibiades. One understands why, yet again, Homer must be banished from a wise republic.

The great strategy

Lucretius asks: why does one body desire another?, because one would like a body to be the cause of a pleasure. But this can't be. Because a body could only produce pleasure for another body if it became quality for this other. For this, there would have to be a fusion of two bodies. But fusion is impossible.

This is, however, only a reprise of the classical topos. To the impossibility, incessantly affirmed, of incorporation, to the taboo against generalized devoration, is added the fundamental materialist thesis: the corollary that one divides itself in two is that two cannot become one. Conclusion: science henceforth, and no longer only opinion, were it correct, has established that no pleasure can come to one body from another body.

When one has understood this, one has understood that pleasure can only come from some material. It is therefore necessary to treat the body as strictly material: an assemblage of atoms. Thus the impossibility of fusion ceases producing an unfathomable pain; it is deciphered, entirely naturally, as a particular case of the non-fusion of atoms, which follows from atomism itself. But treating the body as matter in act requires two strategic sacrifices. The first: renouncing Eros, only taking account of a present body. The second: mastering pleasure itself, in managing the superabundance of corporeal qualities.

To treat matter in the register of atoms is to eliminate qualities, or rather to attenuate their pertinence, in relating them to a single dichotomy: the compatible and incompatible. As matter, a body wants another for coitus, however little they are qualitatively compatible (boy or woman, '*sive puer...seu mulier*,' IV, 1053-4). Quality

10. Homosexual penetration (sodomy) is reputed shameful, which emerges from texts collected notably by K.R. Dover. Whether it was or was not generally practiced, including by good men, is another question. An impartial observer could only fail to interrogate seriously the proposals that one takes for Greek homosexuality, when so much uncertainty bears upon what was practiced or not in this register. G. Vlastos rightfully points to the difficulty (*Socrates*, Paris, Aubier, 1994, 338-9). Given, moreover, that Socrates' and Plato's doctrines touching on boy eros appear to be disjoint (*Socrates*, 60-4), an important part of Foucault's work appears speculative.

being reduced to its minimum, the most certain rule is organized by indifference. One of its means is indulgence: if the woman is not too stupid or ugly, *humanis concedere rebus*, 'allow for humanity' (IV, 1190-1). The other is accumulation: whoever doesn't want to renounce coitus will multiply contacts as much as possible (*Venus volgivaga*, IV, 1070). Thus Plato is systematically mocked. Neither chastity nor dilection nor boys receive any privilege: *Venus volgivaga* is crude spit upon the *Symposium*; the alignment of boy love (*sive puer...sive mulier*) is polite spit upon the *Phaedrus*.

Since the fundamental rule is more quantitative than qualitative, it must consist in a right measure. This rightness is determined by the forces and subsistence of an individuated and very precisely delimited body. Pleasure therefore has as rule the experience of the body insofar as it is like an atom of the universe, ideally indivisible in itself. But the atom is by definition what cannot be mixed with another. Pleasure begins with the conscious assumption of what renders it impossible: real and infinite separation, which bars every incorporation.

Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora ventis/E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem. 'It is sweet, when winds buffet the great sea, to watch from the shore the hard labors of another' (II, 1-2). Famous lines for all: Goethe loved rereading them, and perhaps remembered them (*Ueber allen Gipfeln is Ruh...*). It is necessary to consider them right to the end.

The sweetness of the shore of the first lines is truly only an insufficient sign of true sweetness: *Sed nil dulcius est bene quam munita tenere/Edita doctrina sapientum munita serena*, "But nothing is sweeter than inhabiting the high places fortified by the knowledge of the wise, temples of serenity..." It is sweet to be separated, says Lucretius. Wisdom's strategy is summarized in a maxim: act in every circumstance as an atom, thrown obliquely into an infinite universe that knows nothing of you, in the middle of atoms from which you choose all the more freely by distancing yourself when you will have understood that distancing (*clinamen*) is the condition of aggregations, whose human name is friendship (*philia*).

At the price of this strategy, coitus and pleasure cease to be always excluded from each other. For this it's enough to have some military astuteness: a war of motion, numerous light troops, guided by the tactical rules of the compatible. Thus one will perhaps avoid the catastrophes of incompatible encounter. Its name is the plague. Its cause is incorporation by one body of what is hostile (*alienum*) to it. It has the structure of war, precise inversion of hospitality. This is to say that, in place of the analogy maintained between nature and human communities, it has precisely the inverse structure of pleasure. Theorem: What a body and a material encounter—what two bodies encounter—is pleasure and hospitality if they are qualitatively compatible, suffering, plague and war, if they are not.

But what is more incompatible with the body, which is material (and the spirit, which is subtle matter), than the gods of religion that care for nothing, or the Platonic idea that ignores matter? From the theorem, the consequence follows: the

other name of religion is suffering; and the other name of Plato, Athenian philosopher, is the plague of Athens.

V: The modern axiomatic

1. There are sexual pleasures. Not only are there sexual pleasures, but every pleasure has sexual pleasure as horizon. This latter constitutes a maximum by which the others are measured. Otherwise put, a modern pleasure only merits the name by exposing the genealogical itinerary that binds it to the sexual act.¹¹
2. Love and pleasure can be knotted: there are amorous pleasures.
3. Love and coitus can be knotted: theme of happy sexuality (we will note that the Church, in proposing love as the principle remedy for AIDS, only proclaims the foundations of the modern *dispositif*).

Such is the modern axiomatic. It founds that structure of signification we call sexuality, about which Foucault has written a history. It has several mutations as corollaries. Three, at least.

Corollary 1: pleasure and coitus, love and pleasure, love and coitus can henceforth be knotted. *Philia* is thus useless. It subsists in translation under the modern name of friendship. But modern friendship is mostly insipid. If it is supposed distinct from love, it is judged insufficient—as the agreeable in regard to pleasure, as pleasure in regard to enjoyment, as the beautiful in regards to the sublime, as the world in regards to the universe. If it is not judged insufficient, it is because it is another, more discreet name for love—a love that dare not speak its name (secret, reserved, modest, sublimated, foolish, etc.).

Of course, it is always permissible to believe that *philia* can be restored to its ancient dignity. This belief bears a name: philosophy. In ridicule or grandeur, philosophers, we know, often believe themselves able to salvage several Greek works (possibly by means of translation)—which are politics and love. Ridicule is frequent and grandeur is rare. But when there is grandeur, it is extreme.

Corollary 2: since pleasure and coitus, love and pleasure, love and coitus can be knotted, a triangulation is possible. Particular consequence: there can be love and pleasure in marriage. Societies have undoubtedly doubted for a long time a piece of news so hardly believable.

La Rochefoucauld is still a witness to these reservations: 'there are good marriages,' he writes, 'but nothing delightful in them' (Maxim 113). How not to recognize in the delights here challenged the courtly name of sexual felicity? But the *Maxims* speak in the name of the past. Bourgeois society is on the march, prepared to admit

11. See for example, I. Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Virtue, I, 1, §7, "Casuistical questions."

every species of triangulation—and to replace the medieval figure of the cuckold with the modern figures of the lover and the mistress.

Such a society cannot help but take the next step: not only is love possible in marriage, but since it is possible, it is its necessary condition. Far from love being the consequence of a happy marriage, it becomes its precondition. One will have recognized this strange modern invention one calls the love marriage. The tribes that devote themselves to it end with a single sigh of this order: "We love, are married, are happy in bed." Molière's gentle lovers say this in the mode of hope; they don't yet know that they will find their truth in the triangle of the Boulevard and their coronation with Charles and Diana.

Corollary 3: marriage ceases to pass uniquely as a means of satisfying a major need of the social body. It must find its justification elsewhere (personal happiness, comfort, affection, property, etc.). In a more general way, the relation of man and woman ceases to be the least interesting thing in the world in regards to the concept. That philosophy, at the end of the day, hasn't said anything very interesting about this is a fact, but it henceforth passes for a regrettable insufficiency of philosophy and not for a storable insufficiency of the phenomenon. Reciprocally, the love of boys ceases to be especially admirable for philosophers. It is at least difficult to cite a single one who makes a big deal of it.

In return, the modern axiomatic supposes several other mutations accomplished. Two, at least.

The first is that sexual pleasure is allegedly possible. The ancient world took this as the impossible itself. We could suppose that this passage from the impossible to the possible has something to do with another conversion of the impossible into the possible: the resurrection of the flesh, itself a corollary of the resurrection of Christ, itself a corollary of the incarnation. The proposition would be: only a universe in which the dead are resurrected can accept that coitus and pleasure are knotted. In brief, the possibility of sexual pleasure is entirely contained in Saint Paul, *Cor.* 1.15. Sexual pleasure is a Judeo-Christian invention.

Of course, it is permitted to keep to a more material interpretation. It would seem that sexual pleasure has been substituted, as a paradigm, for drinking and eating. This could have some relation to the conviction that scarcity is henceforth vanquished. Or at least that one knows how to vanquish it. It is in any case certain that sexuation and famine are in complementary distribution. Sexual pleasure would thus be an invention of abundance.

The second mutation is that pleasure is not henceforth founded on incorporation, but on use. Founded on use, it is not founded on the Same, but on the Other: on the irreducibility of that by which things and bodies are mutually other. No need, consequently, for the ruses of *philia*. No need to metaphorize devoration, which loses its pertinence. No need to construct the common language for *phusis* and the

political (modern nature and the political can be radically disjoint without harm, and probably should be).

Modern pleasure is the use, by one body, of what, thing or body, is not this body.¹²

There nevertheless remains one legacy of the ancient world: the pivot of pleasure is quality. But there is a paradox here.

The thing and the body exist in the universe of modern science: in modern matter, ruled by modern nature. But modern science states that matter is without qualities. Or as Whitehead says: 'Nature is odourless, colourless, tasteless, a movement of meaningless matter.' There is therefore a paradox of modern pleasure: it simultaneously requires matter and qualities. But of the two terms will always be missing from it. Whence the formula: the occasion of pleasure, in the universe, is, in its structure, what is lacking from the universe.

Treating this paradox first requires that we respond to the question: what qualities are there in the modern universe?

The general response is clear: qualities, disjoint from matter, have no place in the universe. But pleasure requires qualities and it requires matter. There is therefore only a single adequate cause: what in matter is impossible for matter and, by this, bars the universe. The quality and the pleasure that it causes are deposited in an object of an impossible quest. Whence comes that, in the modern universe, pleasure is a searching [*recherche*] and every search is a search for pleasure. We could call this the modern Holy Grail.

Certainly it happens that the Grail takes shape, fugitive and veiled. Concealed from the mathematized universe, quality is thus gathered into a unique object that can only subsist by evoking the disappearance of the universe that makes of its own disappearance the condition of existence for whatever universe there is: the salvation of Calvin (at the whim of God), the good will of Kant, Mallarmé's stroke of the fan (metaphor of revolution), Marx's surplus-value (signifier of incalculable quality, insisting in the chains of the calculable), the Snark of Lewis Carroll (which is nothing but a Boojum), Proust's Time (qualities only exist in lost things), Poe's

12. Devoration is therefore no longer the horizon of pleasure. If in sexual pleasure, something of cannibalism subsists, this can no longer be attributed to what, in itself, treats of the sexual. According to Kant, cannibalism is present in coitus, but it is only present there (see *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Doctrine of Right, appendix §3; I owe this indication to Guy Lardreau, *La Vérité*, Paris: Verdier). At least the set of commentaries that is given by Kant directly concerns our proposals). We thereby understand what separates Kant from Lucretius, even if we can suppose that Lucretius's text is one of his major sources. We have seen that Foucault translates the Greek expression *khṛēsis aphrodisiōn* as the 'use of pleasures.' As stated, I object to the very idea that *aphrodisia* treats of pleasure (see above). I also object to the translation 'use' and prefer that of 'illuminated practice.' It is undoubtedly true that we can distinguish ancient and modern use.

letter, the guilty party of Sherlock Holmes (known by his qualities alone), Genet's man condemned to death, the Saturnian verses of Saussure, Lacan's objet a.

VI: The Transactions of Pleasure

In a word, the universe renders pleasure impossible, as it renders life impossible. And nonetheless, one lives. Similarly, one finds pleasure, one way or another. Because to the impossible, one can always reply with a transaction. The geometrical place of transactions is determined as society. The major names for the transaction of pleasure are two in number: the commodity and sexuality.

The commodity

One understands nothing of *Capital* if one has not discerned a critical doctrine of qualities. A treatment of qualities that renders them at once graspable and compatible with science. The whole of reality, in the shimmering of the diverse, is inscribed in the commodity-form. That the commodity is a form means that there is no substance in regards to commodities, that there is no substantial beyond of use-value and exchange-value, which analyse the form; but, use-value absorbs all, I rightly say all, the qualities remaining in the Galilean universe. At the same time, in virtue of the laws of the commodity-form, qualities are reduced to exchange-values and allow themselves to be grasped by a general equivalent. In short, commodities are nothing without qualities, but qualities, in the proper sense, only count when neutralized and dissolved in an equivalence.

In the Universe of science, Marx's commodity is the knotting of a matter without qualities (exchange-value) and qualities without matter (use-value). Consequently, the commodity as use-value integrates all the possible causes of a pleasure. One step more and we will recognize the doctrine most widely accepted today, the hypothesis from which the modern subject turns away in horror and which nevertheless incessantly attracts him: there are only the pleasures of the market. The hypothesis remains of an irreducible exception, of a Quality that subsists in the Universe, which nevertheless resists the leveling of market exchange. One will have recognized labor-power and surplus-value as the material Grail: what will always be missing from the fairest salaries. Synonymous propositions: the knotting of matter and qualities was in cross-cap; surplus-value is Marx's *objet a*.

Sexuality

At the same time that market transaction is constituted, so is the modern body as enclave included in internal exclusion in matter. Rather than a cross-cap, one thinks of the Klein bottle that scrambles interior and exterior.

In the body, what permits the transaction is sexuality. Let us take modern sexuality in Foucault's sense. Compared to the qualified body, it represents the without-

qualities of matter; compared to separating matter, it represents the body insofar as it is not reduced to an entwining of non-qualified processes and insofar as it can support the ceaseless demands for reunion. In the sexual register, the qualities of bodies subsist, but thinned-out, weakened, contingent. The body of sexuality is the inconsistent addition of these qualities, Frankenstein's monster just before the seams are finished, what Lacan called the body-in-bits-and-pieces, where nothing more subsists of anatomical solidarity. Symmetrical limbs from artistic canons, the continuous flesh of paintings, divisible silhouettes, etc, all this henceforth will enter the museums, places reserved for qualities.

Right up to permitting that no matter what quality or even the vanishing of every quality in coming to support what is irreplaceable in such a quality, necessary and sufficient cause of such elective pleasure. Sexuality is what allows anything whatever to incarnate the unsubstitutable. As Feuerbach's religion is the spirit of a world without spirit, as labor-power is the commodity that breaks the commodity-form, modern sexuality is the quality of a universe without qualities. Situated at the point of knotting between matter and the body, it is that by which pleasure subsists in the universe. From which we conclude synonymously that in the modern universe, there are only bodily and sexual pleasures. This comes back to saying that there are only market pleasures.

The Freudian Thing

Freud says nothing else. He departs from an axiom analogous to that of Lucretius: two bodies will never make one. But he adds a supplementary theorem: the body metaphorizes and metonymizes itself. Otherwise put, fetishism. Here unfolds the genealogy that allows the relating of all pleasure to its sexual legitimization. From this, every object can be an object of pleasure however little one of its qualities (softness, moistness, sweetness, scent, etc.) figures the qualities of a part of the sexuated body.

Yet—the gesture is decisive—because one thereby recuperates the world of good comfort, that is the whole store of commodities. Every parcel of matter is inscribed as possible sexual fetish in the same way that it is inscribed in the commodity form. Freudian fetishism overtly restitutes what Marx still dissimulates: the world of Capital as a world where several possible causes of a pleasure are revealed. The modern bourgeois as polymorphous fetishist.

One sees that the intermediary ring is a rhetoric: metaphor and metonymy. It is true that language always gets away with bypassing the barrier of the body. But with Freud, this goes much further. To the Lucretian impossibility of every atomic fusion, we will oppose the Freudian thesis on language: in language, it can happen that two become one (opposed meanings of primitive words, ambivalence, condensation, etc.). But if two can become one in language, then the real separation of sexuated bodies does not entail the impossibility of pleasure.

On one condition: that language becomes a means of pleasure. Otherwise put, there is only sexual pleasure through language.

That bodies can be treated by language, this bears a name: civilization in French, culture in all other languages. One can therefore summarize Freud: there is only culture through pleasures, there are only pleasures through culture. But also there is only bourgeois and market culture, there is therefore no pleasure except in what is bought and sold. Precisely because there are only bodily pleasures, there are only cultivated pleasures and, if one is fixed on separating it from culture, nature is the impossible of pleasure. The stenogram of this theorem is the cigar. Because it can be bought (and preferably dearly). Because it is an artifice torn from botany. Because it is a dangerous artifice and harmful for the body. Because it thus affirms the difference between modern nature and ancient *phusis*.

Henceforth, every modern doctrine of a pleasure will consist, insofar as it is modern, in unfolding the genealogy that relates it to the sexual and by deploying the means by which it is bought or sold. Reciprocally, the genealogy of modern sexuality consists in reconstituting the successive displacements of pleasure, in a space where commerce will progressively be constructed. Such was Foucault's program, explicitly responding to Freud and more secretly to *Capital*.

The returns of the great stratagem

The modern universe will therefore be summarized, regarding pleasure, by the alliance of commodities and sexuality, thanks to which qualities and without-qualities compromise mutually in order to solidify that network of relations called a society. One thus understands the destructive force of Lacan's *logion*: that there is no sexual relationship. Otherwise put: from sex no relation follows, and sexuality explodes; the transaction comes undone on principle; society loses its basis.

One would however lack precision if one maintained that the *logion* had been understood. Not that the moderns are satisfied with their own universe. Much to the contrary: one is badly reconciled to the fact that there is no beyond of commodities.

Moreover, the ancient world always reveals itself to have lost none of its charm. And particularly with minor philosophers, who, teetering between vicarages and gardens, imagine themselves to know the Greek alone and will always prefer the slave to the salaried. To shirk responsibility for the commodity form, the return to the great stratagem exerts some seduction upon them and their doubles. In its banal form, it is reduced to simple frugality: consent to commodities, but remain poor. This is the CFDTist solution [*Confederation Française Démocratique de Travail*, major French confederation of trade-unions]. But there is another form, less banal.

Sade's initial axiom is intrinsically modern. We can legitimately suppose that it derives from Descartes. In his universe, material things have lost all qualities. First conclusion (inverse of Lucretius and Epicurus): in such a universe, no matter can sustain a pleasure. Second conclusion: only a body can sustain the pleasure for an-

other body, on condition at least that it be an exception to matter. This is what we could call Sadean humanism.

But then we discover that the body no longer has qualities. Or, more precisely, that the qualities are summed up by an ashy residue, and former will later be called sexuality. From this the Sadean spiritual exercise is born: insofar as it is modern, pleasure should be as disjoint as possible from qualities; it should therefore be disjoint from things and singularly from the market luxuries lavished by civilization; but, then, it rediscovers Spartan frugality. As with Rousseau, one escapes the market universe by returning to the ancients. Here this takes the form of sexual austerity.

The cancellation of the market is a compulsory moment of the process; just as Lycurgus had banished commerce from virtuous Sparta, in the same way the maximum of produce should be free in the Sadean chateaus (this is why what's essential passes among rich people: the dimension of salaries, of prices, of wages is to be eliminated). Purified of all attractiveness, removed from a matter that is not a body, the effect of pleasure should be related to sexual excitation pure and simple. Purified of all quality, the cause of pleasure only admits as quality the pure and simple experience of the difference between one body and another.

This experience of irreducible difference bears a name: use, from which modern pleasure draws its exclusive paradigm. Since there is only pleasure from one body to another, it's necessary to hold that every pleasure rests on the use of one body by another. Conclusion: the quality of a body is pertinent to pleasure only to the strict extent that it comes down to a use-value of this body. As quality, sexuality is therefore the use-value of a body and the use-value of a body always comes down to sexuality. Yet use-value is strictly speaking what is not exchanged. One concludes from this that Sadean sexuality doesn't give onto any exchange.

The division of bodies is from then on the irreducible axiom of pleasure, which is another way of saying that the axiom of pleasure is sexual; but how to be reassured that one has not infected pleasure with a parasite quality from the imagination, that is, from some resemblance? There must be a guarantor of passion, which is constraint and suffering. The bodily suffering of the other guarantees that it is another body, on the condition at least that I feel no compassion for it, but that, on the contrary, I extract some joy. Thus alone, I can affirm that the other is not a variant of the Same by the routes of resemblance or identification, but that it is the support of the Other as such. Only thus can I affirm that there is use, without the shadow of any exchange.¹³

In this jubilation that traverses the subject endowed with a body, discerning the physical suffering of another, we must recognize a transcendental passion: the

13. One is opposed to the doctrine, widespread today, that founds sadomasochism on resemblance and on what it is even necessary to call, in the strict sense, a compassion (from which it follows that every compassionate protocol is henceforth candidate for the status of sadomasochistic ritual and reciprocally). Of course, the question of knowing empirically if the roles are exchanged or not is of no pertinence.

strict analogue of Kantian respect with regard to the Law, which precisely is not in our image. The distance that is here supposed should confirm the distinction of bodies so that by venture, some pleasure is born in the universe of Descartes and Newton, far from the market.

But it then happens that homonymy makes its effects felt. This modern pleasure, we have said, merits being called pure: pure of commodities and pure of quality. Yet, by this, we rediscover, transported into a universe that denies it, the development of the *Symposium*. The deadly exercises accomplished upon the Sadean body relieved of what is nothing more than a sepulchre, a whimpering hardly distinguishable from spiritual sighs. Suffering inflicted is the sign of every flight. 'To a carcass' and 'The swan' are a same and single poem. *Teorema* and *Salò* are a same and single film. From Baudelaire to Pasolini, sadism reveals itself the only consequential form of Platonism in the modern universe. And, as according to certain persons, Platonism is the only consequential form of philosophy, we conclude from this that, according to them, modern philosophy always accomplishes itself in sadism. To those who don't admit the consequence, the only thing to do is to quit philosophy (antiphilosophy) or quit Platonism (materialism) or renounce the rule of logic (widespread philosophy).

VII: Bitter Quandaries...

Bitter quandaries. In the modern universe is the market therefore the key to bodily pleasure, the only possibility that a body's pleasure doesn't have as its major means the meticulous and detailed oppression of another body? Or does one only escape the market to head towards Sade? Or does one escape the dilemma only by love, that is, once more, by the outside-universe? Or by the Mallarméan fan-stroke, whose other name was 'revolution'?

I would willingly admit that Foucault never stopped traversing the stations of the labyrinth: from California, liberal supermarket of pleasures and bodies, to Iran, temporary figure, but affirmed, of revolution, in passing—secret homage to Plato—by way of the boutiques of S/M accessories. I will also propose that one can and must leave it. We only need a strategy.