

STEFANO BORSELLI

CONCERNING A DELNOCIAN PROPHECY

# THE DIVERGENCE OF '77

BAUDRILLARD-CAMATTE-COLLU VERSUS  
NEGRI-MIELI-FOUCAULT



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WHAT is commonly referred to as Del Noce's 'prophecy'<sup>1</sup> concerning the inevitable transformation of Marxism into a radical bourgeois movement is often understood as being attributed to *all* Marxism. For example, here is how Vittorio Messori summarises an interview with the philosopher, the italics are ours:

1 [Translators Note: For a useful overview see an article from 2019, by Carlo Lancellotti. The article quotes Augusto Del Noce from 1968: "a society [is created] that accepts all of Marxism's negations against contemplative thought, religion, and metaphysics; that accepts, therefore, the Marxist reduction of ideas to instruments of production. But which, on the other hand, rejects the revolutionary-messianic aspects of Marxism, and thus all the religious elements that remain within the revolutionary idea. In this regard, it truly represents the bourgeois spirit in its pure state, the bourgeois spirit triumphant over its two traditional adversaries, transcendent religion and revolutionary thought." Lancellotti concludes: "the Marxist dream of a revolutionary catharsis had transmogrified into a bourgeois utopia of liberation from sexual repression and the shackles of traditional morality."]

"It was very predictable", replied Del Noce to those who asked him about these "prophetic" virtues of his. "There was really no need to be a soothsayer: having lost the revolutionary utopia, the essence of religious substitution, along the road, only the fundamental aspect of *Marxism* remained: its existence as a product of the scientific Enlightenment, of a rationalism that replaces divine intervention with material inevitability. *Even* 'European' communism, therefore, has reversed into its opposite: it wanted to bury the bourgeoisie but has become one of its most steadfast and essential components."<sup>2</sup>

However, the reading of Del Nocian texts demonstrates that the philosopher, well aware of the multitude of Marxist interpretations, did not speak of Marxism *in its entirety*, but only referred to some of its modifiers and in particular to the so-called Grams-

2 Vittorio Messori, "Augusto Del Noce: la 'catastrofe' della modernità," in *Pensare la storia*, San Paolo, Milano 1992, p. 667.



cian one, essentially that of the *Partito Comunista Italiano* (PCI):

The outcome of *Gramscianism and Euro-communism* can only be that of transforming communism into a completely deconsecrated component of bourgeois society, or to enact its definitive desecration in alignment with the profound intention of the bourgeois spirit. It is not surprising, therefore, that *Italian communism* today appears to be the most appropriate force to maintain order in a world where any religion has disappeared; not only the Catholic religion, but all its forms, including immanent and secular ones; even faith in communism. *The sincere dissatisfaction of authentic revolutionaries is justified.* Certainly, *Gramscian communism* can succeed, but it can only achieve the exact opposite of what was proposed.<sup>3</sup>

We also note how in the passage Del Noce hints at a remnant of “authentic revolutionaries” dissatisfied with a drift that leads to the abandonment of class struggle in the name of the realization of the ancient project of the Surrealists: the alchemical wedding (via Nietzsche, and contra-nature) between Marx and Sade.

The avant-garde [the surrealists] became aware of what its true position should be... and did not even consider the communist proposal wrong, but only inadequate; Marxism had to be completed morally with Sade<sup>4</sup> and Freud...<sup>5</sup>

3 Augusto Del Noce, *Il Suicidio della Rivoluzione*, Rusconi, 1978, p. 321, pp. 333–334. Notes omitted. Our italics.

4 On this theme: Riccardo De Benedetti, *La chiesa di Sade. Una devozione moderna*, Medusa, Milano 2008.

5 Augusto Del Noce, ‘L’Erotismo alla Conquista della Società.’ in *Rivoluzione, Risorgimento, tradizione*, ed. Giuffrè, Milano 1993, p. 79.

And these “dissatisfied” “authentic revolutionaries” were not an abstract possibility, they actually existed. Del Noce knew them and listened to them carefully:

We can translate these theses [by the Marxist, Christian Riechers]<sup>6</sup> in different but equivalent terms: in reality, Gramscian communism effectively carries out the intentions of the bourgeoisie; It, therefore, has the historical function of facilitating the transition from one bourgeois stage to another, one that is marked by a more oppressive domination.<sup>7</sup>

Let us first listen to his opponent, Bordiga, who has repeatedly drawn attention to the fundamental error of having substituted fascism-antifascism for the opposition capitalism-proletariat. This error has created the myth of fascism as an evil in itself by raising it, as others have suggested, to a meta-historical category. In his last interview he said that

6 [TN: The historian, Christian Riechers, in books such as *Antonio Gramsci: Marxism in Italy* (1970), investigated how Gramsci, who became a cult figure in Italy in the 1960s, turned Italian Marxism toward allegiance to the Comintern (i.e., The Third International, 1919-1943, controlled by the Soviet Union). Gramsci even initiated the Comintern’s policy of national Marxism, against the opposition of internationalist left Marxists such as Amadeo Bordiga who were eventually marginalised to the extent that they only continued to exist weakly as “the theoretical conscience of revolutionary Marxism.” In 1924, long before the Comintern sanctioned the strategy of popular fronts against fascism (mid 1930’s), Gramsci attempted to organise a political/military block, including elements of the bourgeoisie, against Mussolini to restore parliamentary democracy, since he believed that a democratic situation was more favourable to proletarian revolution. This, according to Bordiga, was another of Gramsci’s errors. ¶ Reicher’s work appears unavailable in English, for part of his dissertation, from which I have quoted, see <https://libriincogniti.wordpress.com/2020/05/23/>]

7 Augusto Del Noce, *Il Suicidio...*, cit., p. 321.

antifascism had given “historical life to the poisonous monster of this huge edifice that includes all shades of capitalist exploitation and its beneficiaries, from the great plutocrats down to the ridiculous ranks of the middle-class, intellectuals and laity...”<sup>8</sup>



☞ THE DIVERGENCE OF 1977.

**A**ROUND 1977 both the tendencies identified by Del Noce, along with reflections on their relations to capital, came to maturity in Marxism. A real fault line was therefore created, a fracture that over time would divide the Marxist Pangaea into two increasingly distant continents.

• GOING FULL FOUCAULDIAN.

LET US take 1977 as the year of reference because it is the year in which Toni Negri was exiled to Paris - in a euphoria reminiscent of Madame Bovary’s<sup>9</sup> provincial exaltation - and forgetting his youthful *operaism*, installed himself in the *bobo* salons,<sup>10</sup> which

were Foucauldian at the time [, this is from his autobiography]:

I am increasingly moving the centre of my interests to Paris... I start to deepen my work by studying, this time continuously, both Deleuze (whom I begin to meet) and Foucault (I am in contact with many of his most direct students, from [François] Ewald to [Alessandro] Fontana).<sup>11</sup>

It will be those encounters that will give rise to the “amalgam of ideas”<sup>12</sup> that Barbara Carnevali has recently defined as “the *Theory*”:

A simulacrum of philosophy, the *Theory*, wanders around departments all over the world. We are not talking about the work of a particular author since many acclaimed theorists are fully-fledged in this thinking, nor of the authoritative philosophical school that has claimed the title of Critical Theory; but of that sort of postmodern scholasticism known to anyone teaching a humanistic subject at university: an amalgam of ideas and formulas of various disciplinary origins (mainly philosophy, psychoanalysis and sociology), extracted from a canon of disparate authors but which can be combined in a generic radical posture (Marx, Nietzsche, Lacan, Foucault, Deleuze, Bourdieu, Agamben, Said, Spivak, Butler, Žižek, the omnipresent Benjamin, the outgoing Derrida, the

<sup>10</sup> [TN: ‘bobo’ is a disparaging term referring to someone who leads a bourgeois lifestyle while espousing bohemian values.]

<sup>11</sup> Toni Negri, *Storia di un comunista*, edited by Girolamo De Michele, Ponte alle Grazie, Milano 2015, p. 587. [TN: for a fascinating history of Ewald and the trajectory of Foucauldian thought see: ‘Accidents Happen’ by Michael Behrent, 2010.]

<sup>12</sup> But we would also say this for people, careers and interests.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 322.

<sup>9</sup> This was discussed in *Covile* n° 886, February 2016.

new entry Latour...), merged into a single crucible and reduced to a narrow thematic agenda: power, bios, gender, desire and enjoyment, subject and multitudes, the dominant-dominated couple, capital and spectacle, etc.<sup>13</sup>



§ THE THREE MUSKETEERS: JEAN BAUDRILLARD, GIANNI COLLU, JACQUES CAMATTE.

IT seemed, then, a common destiny that *all* Marxism would take the direction prophesied by Del Noce, but the most acute and intuitive among the so-called “authentic revolutionaries” had already sufficiently and clearly understood the situation.

To our knowledge, the first to draw conclusions, as early as 1976, was Jean Baudrillard, with the succinct and dense pages of *Forget Foucault*:

Whether we discuss the liberation of productive forces, of energies, or of speaking about sex, it is the same struggle and the same advancement toward

an ever more powerful and differentiated socialization...<sup>14</sup>

The production channel leads from work to sex, but only by switching tracks: as we move from political to ‘libidinal’ economy (the last acquisition of ’68) we change from a violent and archaic model of socialisation (work) to a more subtle and fluid model which is at once more ‘psychic’ and more in touch with the body (the sexual and the libidinal). There is a metamorphosis and a veering away from labour power to drive (*pulsion*)...<sup>15</sup>

Nowadays, one no longer says: “You have a soul and you must save it,” but: “You’ve got a sexual nature and you must use it well.” § “You’ve got an unconscious, and you must learn how to liberate it.” § “You’ve got a body, and you must know how to enjoy it.” § “You’ve got a libido, and you must know how to spend it.” Etc., etc.

This compulsion toward liquidity, flow, and an accelerated circulation of what is psychic, sexual, or pertaining to the body is the exact replica of the force which rules market value: capital must circulate; gravity and any fixed points must disappear; the chain of investments and reinvestments must never stop; value must radiate endlessly and in every direction. This is the form itself which the current realization of value takes. It is the form of capital; and sexuality as a catchword and a model is the way it appears at the level of bodies.<sup>16</sup>

13 Barbara Carnevali, “Contro la *Theory*. Una provocazione,” in *Le parole e le cose*, 19 settembre 2016. [TN: “*Theory* is swift, voracious and cutting-edge...” enabling users to “find a collection of prêt-à-porter ideas with which to fill university papers quickly and superficially,” from the same article.]

14 Jean Baudrillard, *Forget Foucault*, 1977 (2007), Nicole Dufresne (trans.), Semiotexte p36.

15 Ibidem, p37.

16 Ibidem, pp39-40. [TN: this formulation, as we will see below in the remarks by Bifo, is the same as the Deleuzian concept of ‘desire,’ but operates in the reverse direction: for Baudrillard ‘desire’ is a function

Twenty years later, the French thinker scandalized the *gauche caviar*<sup>17</sup> (which since then isolated him like a plague)<sup>18</sup> with these intrepid words:

He who lives with the same will perish of the same. The impossibility of exchange, of reciprocity, of otherness, secretes this other invisible, diabolical, elusive otherness, this absolute Other that is the [AIDS] virus, itself made of simple elements and of an infinite recurrence. We are in an incestuous society. And the fact that AIDS first affected homosexual or drug-addicted environments relates to this incestuousness of groups that function in closed circuits.<sup>19</sup>

of the development of capital. Baudrillard continues: “This is the nature of desire and the unconscious: the trash heap of political economy and the psychic metaphor of capital. And sexual jurisdiction is the ideal means, in a fantastic extension of the jurisdiction governing private property, for assigning to each individual the management of a certain capital: psychic capital, libidinal capital, sexual capital, unconscious capital. And each individual will be accountable to himself [sic, et al] for his capital, under the sign of his own liberation.” *Forget Foucault*, p. 40.]

17 [TN: A derogatory French term roughly equivalent to ‘champagne socialist.’]

18 As we will see below, Franco Berardi (Bifo), who prudently waited for his death to reveal his hidden sympathies, laid a veil of modesty over the matter, talking about “a sort of prohibition,” but it was a cowardly and violent lynching that accompanied Baudrillard to the end. In Italy, at that time, only *Il Covile* reported the funeral and the fact that the oration was given by Alain Finkielkraut. [TN: In the obituary from *Le Monde* Baudrillard was described as “an unclassifiable thinker, who has become suspect on the left.” An intelligent overview of responses to Baudrillard can be found in Madelena Gonzalez’s article, “The Reception and Perception of Jean Baudrillard in France,” *French Cultural Studies*, 19(3): 287–303, Sage, 2008.]

19 Jean Baudrillard, ‘Le Sida: virulence ou prophylaxie?’ in *Écran total*, 1997, Galilee, our translation. [TN: In the same article from 1987 Baudrillard writes: “If AIDS, terrorism, economic collapse and

But to the left of the fault line there was not only Baudrillard. Toni Negri tells of a certain opposition on the part of [Massimo] Cacciari and the Trontian *operaistas* prior to his Parisian flirtations.

The translations of Foucault’s great historical writings on prisons and madness were already circulating in Italy: but the transition to a reflection on the method of those researches and the ascension of Foucault as a political philosopher were still distant. There was, in that period, a very heavy and bitter attack on the part of Cacciari, [Alberto] Asor Rosa & Co., who rejected any reference to Foucauldian thought.<sup>20</sup>

More than that is not known.<sup>21</sup> Certainly, Negri’s resistance here is rather low-key, as if he was suffering a little bellyache [*malpancismo*] over political doubts.<sup>22</sup>

electronic viruses are concerns not just for the police, medecin, science and the expert, but for the entire collective imagination, this is because there is more to them than being mere episodic events in an irrational world. They embody the entire logic of our system, and are merely, so to speak, the points at which that logic crystallizes spectacularly. Their power is a power of irradiation and their effect, through the media, within the imagination, is itself a viral one.” J. Baudrillard, *Screened Out*, Chris Turner (trans.), Verso, 2002. p6 (first published as *Ecran total*, Editions Galilee, 2000.) This was written 33 years before the 2020 pandemic.]

20 Toni Negri, *Storia...*, cit. p. 522.

21 Massimo Cacciari, whom we asked for an interview for his version of that clash, kindly replied: “I do not understand the topic you wish to confront here.” The path, during this era, of the Althusserians Costanzo Preve and Gianfranco La Grassa might also be worth investigating.

22 It will be necessary to arrive at 2015 to read more explicit words by Mario Tronti: “The workers’ movement took the wrong road when it followed the Marx who was the apologist of the bourgeoisie, and guessed the correct road when it followed the Marx who was the critic of political economy. [...] Marx, who saw the terrible power of capital like no

Much more explicit (and in strong harmony with Baudrillard) there is Gianni Collu, who after having distanced himself from Giorgio Cesarano<sup>23</sup> and his Bataillan turn, in 1977 formulated the situationist offensive of the *Letters to Heretics*. The book is really hilarious. We quote a passage in which Collu imagines Enrico Berlinguer [General Secretary of the Italian Communist Party, 1972-84], an agent of Capital, writing to “Angelo Pezzana, bookseller, radical, founding member of FUORI (Italian Homosexual United Revolutionary Front), specialist in self-consciousness, awareness and the transition from the individual to the collective”:

I allude to the so-called sexual liberation of which so much is blathered-on about under the press of every flag, without there ever being taken into account that it progresses not because of the noise and the problematization surrounding it, but because it is an inevitable effect of the development of capital... All this being said, I can only regard favourably your struggle for sexual difference, and this approval is seconded by the orderly anthropomorphization of capitalism. As you well know, capitalism demands commodities that are always different and always new. And its voracity continues, today requiring up-to-date human merchandise, which means – in the domain that we have explored here – the introduction of new models of sexual commodity in the market of behaviour. ¶

other, did not see that the destiny of the Modern had now become indissolubly identified with the history of capital.” Mario Tronti, *Of the free spirit. Fragments of life and thought*, Il Saggiatore, 2015, pp. 18-20.

<sup>23</sup> [TN: Collu, Cesarano, and, of course, Jacques Camatte, were associated with the journal *Invariance* in the 1960s and ‘70s.]

Yes to the valorization of deviancy – any and all deviancy. ¶ Yes to the unremitting creation of new deviancies. ¶ Continue, comrades, but vigorously.<sup>24</sup>

A few months later (February 1978) Jacques Camatte wrote *Love or Sexual Combinatorics*, breaking with Mario Mieli<sup>25</sup> and what we today call gender theory:

In the same way, what makes me uncomfortable is not so much the going beyond the man-woman dyad, and through this, its destruction. What I fear and what troubles me is the fact that Mr. Mieli’s theorization could be an element in founding at this moment the undifferentiation that capital reserves for us and which leads to the negation of the human... The genders are exterior to beings, so too are the modalities for uniting them... After all, it is not only something unique to humans, it is the same for animals. Gender and instructions for use with their multiple variations are available to women and men in the hypermarket of love realised by capital. So the buyer only has to program his or her combinatorics... However, the greatest producer of possibilities is capital itself, whose motto could be: everything is possible! [...] But how can not procreating, giving birth or

<sup>24</sup> (Fake author) Enrico Berlinguer, *Letters to Heretics, Correspondence with the leaders of the new Italian left*, (fake publisher) Einaudi, 1977. The text [TN: a satirical work first attributed to the head of the PCI, Berlinguer] was then attributed to Pier Franco Ghisleni. The thesis, which convinces us, of Collu’s decisive involvement, was put forward by his closest friends and collaborators. [TN: *Letters to Heretics* can be found on the *NOT BORED!* website. The translation here of the quotes is modified with use of the *NOT BORED!* translation.]

<sup>25</sup> [TN: Mieli and Pezzana were both involved in the founding of FUORI.]

breastfeeding be a positive manifestation? This liberation/emancipation is a stripping away, a reduction of the human being to a support for various functions that can be grafted on or manipulated externally...<sup>26</sup>



☞ TIME BEGINS TO DO JUSTICE: THE TESTIMONY OF BIFO:

In those far off years when I lived in Paris we were separated by our belonging to different cultural environments. Among the people I frequented at the time, for example in the Centre Initiatives Nouveaux Espaces de Liberté, founded and animated by Felix Guattari and Giselle Donnard, Baudrillard was the object of a sort of prohibition of a political and philosophical nature. ¶ “It is enough to leaf through his booklet entitled *Forget Foucault*, published in the mid 70s, to understand the meaning of that separation. Foucauldian research had revealed the emergence of the intimately disciplinary character of modern social institutions. On the other hand, the philosophical gesture proposed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Œdipus*

affirmed that desire<sup>27</sup> is the driving force of the real movement that runs through society no less than the journey of singularity.<sup>28</sup>

With an equally radical gesture, but of the opposite sign, in his works of those years (*The System of Objects*, *The Consumer Society*, *Requiem for the Media*, and, finally, *Forget Foucault*) Baudrillard had argued that desire is

27 [TN: “Desire’ is one of the central terms in Deleuze’s philosophical lexicon. In his work with Guattari, Deleuze develops a definition of desire as positive and productive that supports the conception of life as material flows.” Alison Ross, ‘Desire,’ in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, Revised Edition, Adrian Parr (ed.), Edinburgh University Press, 2010, p 66. Bifo elaborates: “Desire is not a force but a field. It is the force where an intense struggle takes place or, better, an entangled network of different and conflicting forces. Desire is not a good boy, nor the positive force of history. Desire is the psychological field where imaginary flows, ideologies and economic interests are clashing. To give an example, there is a Nazi form of desire. ¶ “The field of desire is central in history, since within such a field forces that are crucial for the formation of the collective mind, and therefore for the main axes of social progress, meet through juxtaposition and conflict.” Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, *The Soul at Work*, 2009, F. Cadel and G. Mecchia (trans.), Semiotext(e), p. 118. ¶ Compare with this from Baudrillard: “Only the subject desires; only the object seduces... Everything comes from the object and everything returns to it, just as everything started with seduction, not with desire. The immemorial privilege of the subject is overthrown. For the subject is fragile and can only desire, whereas the object gets on very well even when desire is absent; the object seduces through the absence of desire; it plays on the other with the effect of desire, provoking or annulling it, exalting and deceiving it – precisely the power that we’ve wanted or preferred to forget.” Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, (1983) 2008, P. Beitchman and W.G.J. Niesluchowski (tans.), Semiotext(e), pp. 141-2.]

26 Jacques Camatte, ‘Amour ou combinatoire sexuelle,’ on the site *Revue Invariance*.

28 [TN: Singularity, in Deleuze’s terms, is difficult to define absolutely: it is an event; a rupture; a

the driving force of the development of capital, and had opened a discourse on the imaginary consistency of the real, on the relationship between the real and its imagination.<sup>29</sup>



## ☞ A Paradox Funeral: Jean Baudrillard's funeral did not take place.

BY ALIETTE GUIBERT-CERTHOUX

From *Il Covile* N°380, March 2007. Excerpts from: *La Revue des Ressources*, March, 2007.



FROM now on, Mr Finkielkraut<sup>30</sup> has my full respect. I have always wondered about the intellectual singularity of Alain Finkielkraut, a progressive philosopher who became a reactionary media personality in the expression of his tastes and the orderly solutions he proposes on the waves of Radio France or in the press. But at the same time, he invited Baudrillard onto his radio show to defend himself when the latter was wrongly

concept; an fluid insularity; a moment when the infinite and infinitesimal is mirrored in, for example perhaps, a grain of sand. It is also always a starting point, from the Dictionary again: "singularity shifts and bears different inflections in different contexts but is always related to perception, subjectivity, affectivity and creation," Tom Conley, p. 256.]

<sup>29</sup> Bifo (Franco Berardi), *In memoria di Jean Baudrillard*, 19 marzo 2007.

<sup>30</sup> A reactionary *bête noire* for the *bobos*.

accused of anti-Semitism, a malicious interpretation derived from his reversible theses on Islam. I thought to myself that he must have been particularly masochistic because anyone who knows Jean Baudrillard at all, or his works, knows that his thought cannot be tamed, but only defended or rejected.

In short, I didn't really know what to think of Alain Finkielkraut, nor what the purpose of his public philosophising is... Now I do: Alain Finkielkraut is an indispensable man. Here are the circumstances and the facts.

The tomb of Jean Baudrillard is in the 8th division of the Montparnasse cemetery, the name of the district of Paris where he lived. He was buried on Tuesday 13 March in a most stripped-down ceremony; which would have been no surprise to him and was not so for his wife who, at the end of her strength, made sure that no condolences would be offered - so "Baudrillard's funeral did not take place!" aptly remarked the philosopher René Schérer, turning to the filmmaker Vincent Dieutre, who was among the audience who had come to pay their last respects, and adding, "... And so much the better. Now he will live".

Of Jean Baudrillard, his mischievous and serious radiance illuminated the day through the numerous presence of his faithful friends, his respectful fans (in far greater numbers than one might have expected), intellectuals with whom he had no special relations, old students of Nanterre with greyed hair, young men and young women, and also numerous personalities, all there to pay homage. Among them the Minister of Culture, Renaud Donnedieu de Vabres, caught off guard by so much international attention for a delocalised French philosopher (who had not passed through the Collège de France), as suddenly revealed to the official



eyes of the nation by the noise of tributes in the foreign press.

A sincere minister when he confessed his personal dismay at never having met him and even more... doubly lacking according to his own admission, in concluding his short speech (which had mainly consisted of a distraught incantation calling for the return of the avant-garde), with: "I would have liked to speak with Jean Baudrillard... Now I have to read him."

Not only had he not met him, but he hadn't read anything. It was proof that the Minister of Culture felt he was in an understanding environment, being able to confide such a thing without being resented (because he was given no importance – which he sensed correctly).

This is not the only paradox of the truths unveiled for the public by this ceremony, for suddenly we were listening to Alain Finkielkraut (we were surprised that he was there, but what he said allowed us to understand afterwards that it was the Gods who had sent him). He declared that not a day went by without reading a passage by Jean Baudrillard, of whom he always kept an open book on his desk... But on the other hand (suddenly adopting an impatient and then excited tone), frequenting Jean Baudrillard's thoughts posed a serious personal problem for him, because... "The system of objects, America, the suburban uprisings, September 11th, Islam ablaze, our cities infested with graffiti... NO!"

Which adds up to a lot and makes Finkielkraut's attraction for Baudrillard all the more unfathomable.

Then spoke Jacques Donzelot who, together with Baudrillard, was an accomplice in activism at the University of Nanterre during the March 22nd movement in 1968. He declared, in order to bring the devil out of

the holy font (as they used to say in the French countryside), that during a recent conversation about democracy between himself, Jean and Jean's wife [Marine], (herself a former student in Nanterre), Jean's wife asked a question... as Donzelot was not speaking very loudly, I did not hear all the story clearly, but what I did hear (and there are several of us who heard it), was this: "Jean, are you a democrat?" To which the latter replied, "That's not a question you ask a man you love."

What was she thinking, Marine, on that dreamy day, to forget *America*<sup>31</sup>, she who knows the work so well (and which never seemed to take her by surprise)? Or perhaps, in the mutual space their love occupied she rediscovered the world of her enigmatic companion anew each day, until the last breath.

Although Jacques Donzelot succeeded in drawing us out of the general sadness, the fact remains that it was Alain Finkielkraut who reminded us of Jean Baudrillard's solidarity with those in revolt and the fact that, following the failure of the revolutionary project, he never abandoned the sharing with us of his concept of critical reversibility.<sup>32</sup> Well, that's it, it was the reactionary Alain Finkielkraut who said it. Thanks to him, the Baudrillard who takes a stand against oppression in all its forms emerges forever from the

31 [TN: From *America*: "This is the surprise democracy had in store for us: equality is at the beginning, not at the end. That is the difference between egalitarianism and democracy: democracy presupposes equality at the outset, egalitarianism presupposes it at the end. [Quoting the American humourist, Roger Price:] 'Democracy demands that all of its citizens begin the race even. Egalitarianism insists that they all finish even.'" Jean Baudrillard, *America*, trans. Chris Turner [trans.], Verso, 1988, p. 91.]

32 [TN: For an exploration of Baudrillard's concept of reversibility see Jerry Coulter's article in the *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*.]



shadows, all ambiguity is removed. Thank you. (How true that it takes all sorts to make a world!)

A little further on, at the entrance to the cemetery, towards the Avenue Edgar Quinet, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir watch over from one side with Roland Topor<sup>33</sup> on the other, among the tombs that are at the heart of our elective modernity and post-modernity, including that of Charles Baudelaire.

Curiously, it was one of the most polluted days of the season in Paris, though it was mild and sunny, and there was a prohibition on using motor vehicles during working hours, but parking had been declared free throughout the city. So, after the ceremony no one could help but linger at the pavement cafes, evoking memories... There were those who anticipated their lunch with a glass of wine and those who completed their inter-

rupted breakfasts with toast and a tea, since the burial had taken place at 10 a.m. sharp, which was early for those who had come a long way.

When I returned home after the friendly reunion around Jean's burial a malevolent feedback put a strain on my energy. Rather than dozing off in front of my computer screen, I lay on my bed, rattled, exhausted, unable to sleep at all, remaining under the effect of a waking dream, until night...

It's over - but it all begins.

Jean Baudrillard's funeral was a pataphysical event. He would have liked that.

At least he will live on with his work, so many important people have not yet read it, and the others, who reread without interruption, still have to be content to have their understanding postponed. Jean, our brilliant and strange friend. Harsh and gentle.

ALIETTE GUIBERT-CERTHOUX

<sup>33</sup> [TN: Roland Topor was a French humourist known for works in different media of a macabre and post-surrealist nature.]