YOU’VE ALWAYS BEEN WRONG

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The Fils continua trêvé
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AN APPEAL TO CONSCIOUSNESS
You've always been wrong. I like me, like any man, you've let yourself slide down easy, futile slopes. Your mind has traveled only in dreams toward the truth. Compare your thought today with the things which stand in your way; your fondest theories vanish before the wall of appearances. That veil of colored shapes, sounds, and other perceptible qualities that is so easily termed illusion is solid, nevertheless. This is where you started, but you chose the wrong door. Or rather you thought you started; you fell asleep on the threshold and dreamed your beliefs about the world and the mind.

Today I'm waiting for you on the threshold. We'll take our first halting steps together. I'm asking you first to look around you, right now, with total candor. See what is before you. Above all, don't start to question the reality of this world. By what authority could you judge it? Do you know what absolute reality is? Whoever starts on a voyage must start from wherever he is; he mustn't think the destination is already reached just because he has an accurate and detailed itinerary in his hands; the line he has drawn on a map has no meaning unless he can pinpoint his present location. You as well, look at yourself. I mean: wake up, find yourself. The place where you are is where you have to begin: the present state of your consciousness, together with all that it contains. And all our speculations will never amount to more than the itinerary of a merely possible voyage.

Any metaphysics that is sufficient unto itself suggests the vain pleasure of a man who, while away the hours reading travel guides and timetables, tracing out routes on a map, and thinks that he is actually traveling. Up to now, philosophers seem to have done little more than this: or, if some of them have actually traveled, none has managed to make the act show through. And so all philosophies, even if it were once experienced by its creator as real, remains a sterile and useless game for mankind.

What I would like you to try to do with me can be summed up in two words: remain awake. I first asked you to awaken, to realize what you're conscious of right now. You are conscious of a continual
change. You moreover felt, in one way or another, a need to become something that you are not yet. But maybe you state, because you've misunderstood me, that you feel nothing of the sort. Even then you can realize that if you passively accept the conditions imposed on your consciousness, you're asleep. Awakening is not a state, it's an act. And people are much less often awake than their words would have us believe.

A man wakes up in the morning in bed. Scarcely on his feet, he's already asleep again. Kissing through all the automatic impulses which make his body get dressed, go out, walk, get to work, go through the prescribed daily routine, eat, chat, read a newspaper (as it's generally the body which takes care of all that by itself) — doing all that — he's sleeping. In order to wake up, he'd have to think. All that agitation is outside of me. He would need to perform an act of reflexion. But if that act triggers in him new automatic impulses, those of memory or of reason, his voice can continue to claim that he's still reflecting: but he has fallen back asleep. He can thus spend entire days without waking for a single moment. Just think about this when you're in public and you'd see yourself surrounded by a crowd of sleepwalkers. Man does not spend a third of his life, as they say, but nearly all his life sleeping in this true slumber of the mind. And it's easy for slumber, which is the mother of consciousness, to catch man in its trance, for man, being naturally and almost immediately lazy, might indeed be willing to awaken. But since the effort is repugnant to him, he would be like that effort once it is put forth to place him (and naively he thinks it is possible) in a permanent or at least lengthy waking state. Then wanting to rest while in his awakening, he falls asleep. Just as one cannot start oneself to sleep, since willing, in whatever form, is still an awakening, one can remain awakened only if one wills it at every moment.

And the only direct act which you can carry out is that of awakening, of becoming conscious of yourself. Look back on what you think you've done since the beginning of today: this is perhaps the first time you've really awakened. And it's only now that you're conscious of all you've done as a mechanical automaton. In most cases people never awaken even enough to realize that they have slept.
vides me with nothing more than an anticipation of what I can experience by seeing or grasping the pear, smelling it, tasting it, or by traveling to England. An "object" is the law by which certain sensations can come to me and be transformed within me one by one.

These traits are what the mind in quest of the real always finds at the beginning. The moment in thinking which they express— the empirical idealism of philosophers—is inevitable. Berkeley and the others, satisfied, stop here and fall asleep. But don’t let go of this slender Acadian’s thread, your own consciousness: you must now hold as real the very act which realizes a virtual cognition. By seeking it, you will break through this primordial moment of idealism which, put back in its place in the dialectical development of thought, remains now

Scientific knowledge itself sets up a general anticipatory framework for the active cognition of particular objects. The physicist does not experience, properly speaking, the law of falling bodies: he knows only that he can experience through cognition the fall of a particular body according to a general law. I say “the physicist” meaning “a physicist”, for another may take the law itself as an object of knowledge. And if the physicist himself succeeds in knowing it no longer only as a general relation but rather as the expression of a universal reality, at that moment he is more than a physicist. He is a metaphysician, not just because he “goes beyond the field of physics”, but in the fullest sense as well, provided that his science of science is real in the same sense in which I spoke previously about Metaphysics. Indeed, let us hold firmly to this principle: the knowledge of a reality as such can only be an act of cognition, an immediate act; and the only immediately performed act is that of awakening. Since the law is a general anticipatory framework for relationships between phenomena, knowing how to advance from the framework to the apprehension of a universal reality implies establishing the rules and conditions according to which the scientist’s thought can be actualized. The physicist who awakens to his science becomes a metaphysician.

The supreme science, which I name Metaphysics, will thus express the possibility of the perennial awakening of consciousness. And since the first awakening brings to me the whole field of my present perceptions, Metaphysics must give me mastery over all the concrete contents of my consciousness; and I must continually confront my consciousness with those contents.

Metaphysics, taken in itself, alone and as if it were self-justifying, becomes the subtlest subterfuge by which shams creeps up on us; for it expresses the possibility of an increasingly higher consciousness, it is only the possibility which it expresses. The possible as such is nothing, and to be content with the possible is to sleep. Hence, Metaphysics, to the extent that it is practiced for its own sake outside of any concrete criteria, is open to all criticisms.

Indeed, if we take any scientific theory in itself, whichever it may be, it will always appear as desirable, as indispensable and even as arduous as any metaphysical doctrine. For example, it would be enough just to cast doubt on the basic premises of science. The logical link entails that component parts exist no more than the possibility of truth. If there is widespread agreement over scientific theories, it is thanks to experimental proof. Metaphysical doctrines are no more, no less debatable in themselves than the theories of the sciences; the existence of an experimental method which could be applied to them would be enough to foist a shared agreement among minds over metaphysical truth. Now, Metaphysics, like the sciences, starts from the concrete. If it is then organized into a set of abstract and general postulates, it is because it expresses only virtual knowledge; and in so doing, it proceeds no differently from science. Scientific theories and metaphysical systems are built on the same foundations, that is, all the modifications which consciousness undergoes. So it is not at all obvious a priori that a metaphysical experiment is impossible.

If the points of departure and the raw materials of science and metaphysics are the same, it is true that the former is based on a particular, artificially isolated aspect of the concrete, whereas the latter starts from the totality of concrete reality as it subsists in consciousness. Science proceeds from given perceptions without questioning the act of consciousness which makes them appear; it thus does not call for man to awaken. The mystery of Metaphysics, as I have presented it, is the first act of awakening, an inner realization.
Any metaphysical experiment will therefore consist in an act of conscious ness, that is, in an effort repugnant in the highest degree to human laziness. And that is why it is preferred in general to regard such an experience as impossible.

Metaphysical speculation, in beginning to live a life of its own, has forgotten its origin in the immediate experience of consciousness. Because of this oblivion, the metaphysician can exempt himself from turning for understanding to this experience, that of awakening.

And, at one and the same time, metaphysics finds itself deprived of any criteria of truth. It tends toward forming logically ordered systems of relationships between abstract notions whose origin is no longer known. Such systems are always, necessarily, debatable and refutable. Since the point of departure of any speculation of this sort is an abstract notion, it will always be possible to deny the legitimacy of taking it as an origin and to demonstrate that it is not a primary notion, whether it is called Being, the One, God, Substance, or any other principle given as absolute. No one sees that the ideal form of a metaphysical system is that of the vicious circle. The point of departure is of little importance. All of human knowledge, if considered as valid in and of itself, is a gigantic vicious circle; as long as it is closed, the circle can be described starting at any point you like.

We can hope to reach the highest level of certainty possible for the human mind if, instead of trying to construct a metaphysical doctrine, or to establish discursive relationships between abstract notions, we rather take as the object of our science the metaphysical fact as such. No critique, no refutation has ever prevented man from practicing metaphysics. There is a metaphysical need, a metaphysical function of thinking; a science based on it is possible. If we stop taking metaphysical notions as givens and start trying to establish their meanings and their values on the basis of their experimental roots, no agreement on metaphysics conceived in this light may be reached among all those people who will voluntarily choose to remain awakened.
If now someone asks, 'Why this perpetual race toward awakening, why attempt to be always more conscious, why will oneself out of the human condition, what for?', tell him to look within himself with a clear gaze. If the answer, 'for such and such a reason', which the 'Why?' elicits doesn't come to him immediately, at least he will dearly see, if he really looks, the answer. He will necessarily want to deliver himself from the human state, because he will see that state as intolerable. He may well have understood that remaining awake is not a state in which it is enough simply to take his claim once and for all; that there is no middle ground between consciousness, an effort sustained in each instant, and absolute sleep, and therefore, if he doesn't want to see himself, he must go unceasingly forward. That reason, however clearly he may understand it, will be no more apt than any other abstract truth to make him want to go forward. The best reasons in the world will not get man going if nothing provokes him, even if a bit roughly, into taking the first step.

The vision of the intolerable is reason enough to establish for human consciousness the necessity to be transformed. This race is at first a flight. So I must first of all try to describe it as such. Then only will I be able to speak of the end, of its transformation's final goal as it is represented in awareness for the purpose of guiding the pursuit. This will be the particular object of Metaphysics, itself the forerunner of Self-Denial. Metaphysics would be no more than a closed system of abstractions, something 'up in the air' if it were not continuously and continuously connected to its concrete root and, from the outset, to the direct experience of the intolerable.

That experience, as thought, is the 'vision of the Absurd', as felt, it is suffering. And these are two orders of incomprehension to self-denial, injunctions addressed to man and saying, 'Rise up to an ever-renewed awakening or otherwise sleep in spiritual death.' I will strive to relive that first moment of the search, the one we often have to come back to. I will allow modes of feeling and thinking which I have long since successful in overcoming to unfold in me. I will even accept the true which, as new beginning, ever necessary, of these first steps imposes on my thought and speech, first steps which I want to take with you again and again.
The Vision of the Absurd

I will describe one by one the Absurd Evidence of the imputed self through the Revelation of Laughter; the Absurd Evidence of the perception of the world through Pathophysiology; and Absurd Evidence in human behavior as a principle of Reason. Then it will be possible for me to advance: the Vision of the Absurd as an example of the first type of metaphysical experience.

The Revelation of Laughter

There will be the revelation of laughter for every man, but there will be nothing joyful about it. In my state of affairs, the world's sheaths turn inside-out like the fingers of a glove: the obvious becomes absurd, light is a black veil, and a dazzling sun blurs opposite my eyes.

For everyone there will be the revelation that any form is absurd once taken seriously. I hear in all human gait a vocal mechanism speaking, rising up since adolescence; I hear it saying, in muffled echoes, slaming or whispering in all modes of discourse: 'I am a man!' Whether he addresses another, himself, or the deafness of space, his speech implies an unquestioned and therefore unconscious affirmation: 'I am a man!' He concentrates all his energy on the task of propping up the monument, the Monumental Monument of human Dignity which justifies its slightest acts, his most secret thoughts, his heart's most intimate throbs. 'It is a man's role,' says the Human Man, 'to be a Man and to act, to think, and to feel as do I, a Man like Me.' At every moment, tremendous forces are being expended in him, working ever more to assure him of an affirmation which I can easily conceive as completely arbitrary. As I witness this spectacle, my breathing cracks and shakes. From head to toe, 'I am a man,' Why not say, 'I am Mister So-and-So' or 'I am a merchant,' or 'French,' or 'the head of a household,' or 'a mammal,' or 'a philosopher,' or a rational animal? Yet they say: 'And it's all columns, capitals, pediments, towers, watchtowers, fireworks, and weather vanes.'
on the Monuments of Monuments of their Dignity. And it all adorns and uplifts the Actions, the Thoughts, and the Feelings of these men, shadows of men self-assured straight to the death-narrow of their bones rotting in pride: ha! What a laugh!

Here’s one getting on the bus. Nothing’s on his mind, and as you can well imagine, he’s not questioning his own existence any more than the reality or the dignity of the act he’s performing. You might just as well say that this event is the center of his being, that it is his very being; or rather it’s the shape of his nonbeing, the He’s mak- in’ reality. I’m sure most men perform their favorite or habitual acts with the same degree of seriousness and conviction. This one, right now, is eternally getting on the bus. But, of course, he’s not thinking about it since he’s asleep. And as long as he doesn’t wake up, each of his seeming acts, whatever they may appear to be, will always be nothing more than a way of not being. Making Art for Art’s sake is just another bus ride. Here’s a game who holds truth as an ideal just as simply as the other takes the bus. And this charitable old lady who’s just put her contribution in the poor box: she’s just as dead as the others. If we agree that the symbol box can signify we being, all these sleepwalkers differ one from the other as much as do the factors 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and so forth. There are an infinite number of ways of not being.

‘I am a man!’ They try it without amazement. . . . And Laughter tortures me still before the spectacle of human actions.

What one takes absolutely seriously, what one doubts in no way whatsoever can take on the name and Anything can be taken ser- riously. If I adopt the attitude of the gentleman who doesn’t laugh and I gaze upon the intense detail of forms, everything is god, each point to space, each instant of duration, each moment of conscious- ness is god. And there it is: absurd and absolute multiplicity.

In the beginning, the void was lighted by an immense burst of laughter.

The particular is absurd. I have seen— in conditions which it will describe shortly— geometrical figures and inconceivable movements.

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I saw all that with glaring clarity. Now I can see everything in that light. At the instant when I understand a mathematical proposition, it appears to me divinely arbitrary in its own light. I said it before; the world turns inside out before my eyes, my eyes turn back into the dark of my skull, the absurd is clear.

Then my gaze turns in me centuries clad in iron. I exist, and my ancestors had no choice but to live, and the price paid for it all was that logic which would, in an inhuman realm, seek in its own vein some reason for being. I’m sometimes nice enough to provide it with some reason; but my laughter killed it.

Yet it’s not enough to laugh. The perception of the arbitrary existence man’s fry and so revolt is inevitable. That formidable heredity of machine-builders is bent on making me believe that the world exists as it, clearly, seriously. Speaking with a bit of sincerity, I don’t really see it clearly at all. A flower? Why does it exist? And what does that mean? Why does anything exist? No, no, the age of ‘Why?’ is not a thing of the past. They tried to make me believe also that a multitude of consciousness existed; that I was conscious of myself at the same time you were all conscious of yourselves. No, as long as that belief doesn’t appear to you at least for an instant to be the most inessential of absurdities you will remain unable to take even one step toward yourselves, you will be shadows.

The pan-optic is revolving. But I who watch you taking your revolt seriously can still laugh. Is there then nothing that can be done if everything is laughable? Of course: abandon that accidental but inevi- table fury and then take it back as an idol-breaking force, it will become another way of laughing that is, of negating; and while negating every- thing, if you break something— hearts, hopes, grey matter, palaces, trains, trains, trains—remember that what isn’t your lit- erature (otherwise there would be still reason to laugh!), and that the tears, the blood, and the cries are the necessary effects of a desperate race on an endless track, of a forward dash which denies the goal.

. . .

All will have to be negated, for the absurd will [sic] be. The act of negating will then become the only reality, and the negated object
will become the symbol of negation. Mind is active when it negates. A
affirmation, if not simply consent, acceptance without thought and de-
pendent upon animal reflexes, is merely ridiculous. Who are you?

I am Joe, your next-door neighbor. If whoever asks such a question
were to think about the meaning of the answer, he could not help
but burst out laughing. I think that affirmations are generally not
premeditated. What am I? Make a list of all the possible positive
predicates, and I'll always answer, 'That's not it.'

This refusal, wherever it is encountered, is first the great 
Laugh. It's the
most concrete approximation I can suggest of the distance act
which I request everyone to perform. By constantly making use of a
word such as 'negation,' whose original meaning may have been
more precise, I fear I might portray this operation as an abstract pa-
nomine of speech, an empty vocal pattern. And to make sure you don't
backslide into your philosophical 'knowledge,' I will say, rather,
when speaking of systematic doubt, 'sacasm' or 'scientific de-
sign.' Now there is scarcely reason for me to worry any longer that
you will confuse this Laugh with joy.

Here we approach the mystery of separation, of negation, of the
Laugh which I said was primeval, contemporaneous with the exis-
ting world.

... The act of negating separates, throws all appearances into the world
of forms, into manifestation. Man cannot perceive what he consents
to be. Any form is indeed somehow knowable, and thus is an object.
Now, an object is that which is not me. The objective world is thus
that which is thrown off as one progresses toward oneself. But since
the representation of the negated object conveys nothing other than
the act of negation within particular conditions, all that 'exists,' being
the self's reject, happens to be the symbol of spiritual progress.

To stop saying I am not my body is to sleep, from that point on,
ward, the body is no longer represented.

... It is unusual to read or hear anything other than foolishness, non-
sense, or rather pretentious flattery on the subject of sleep.

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Here I don't want to issue any 'personal opinions.' I'd rather con-
fess you, yes, I'm still talking with you -- confront you with what is,
and to persuade you to say, in simple terms, what is happening. It's
not up to me to describe what you see as long as you look purely and
simply. I can maybe, just maybe, prompt you to open your eyes.

Look, for example, at the pitiful spectacle of a psychologist search-
ing for consciousness. He says 'my consciousness' as if it were some-
thing he could possess. Who is he? Who is possessed? And who
possesses, if it isn't he who is conscious? These people's science is so
empty that even laughter runs out of breath. Just listen to them talk
out about the unconscious. Challenge them all the way, and they will
think they are expressing a thought, a clear thought, even an unques-
tionable truth, as they articulate always without laughing the sen-
tence, 'In deep sleep, I am unconscious.' Now ask them what the
word 'I' means in their postulate. Watch their jaws slacken.

Since consciousness is in no way representable but is only the act of
representing, what is meant when we speak of several conscious-
nesses? How do you distinguish one from the other? You can only
say that consciousness is grasped in various forms. I create all forms,
I evoke, rather, all forms through successive negations -- and I be-
come conscious of myself in each of these negations. Such is the only
possible point of departure for any self-searching. The absolute I'm
working toward can thus be determined only by negation.

Reflection is the daughter of scandal, scandal, the moment I open
my eyes; scandal, this consciousness, one and many, identical and
changing; immediate and mediate also -- when I think of the other.
What I know the most immediately, the most indisputably -- this
primal clarity comes forth through dazzling absurdities.

You didn't consent to fall back into sleep, provoked by this scan-
dal, you took up the challenge. You've begun to peep at the radi-
ments of this absurd clarity of consciousness: an act of renunciation,
of self-abnegation, through which the pure subject cognizes itself as
obstruct from what it denies that it is.

Reflection begins now, and distinctions take form. Let's linger for
the mind being, still bathed in the light of scandal, over a few canary images of the road to follow.

By the same act, the subject grasps itself free of any determinations, and at the same time the forms which it takes on are brought forth; the subject is distinct from its forms and yet tied to them as a word is to its meaning. Hence the absurdity of that very separation. Yet without it, no consciousness, no representations. To respond to this new challenge, which will be unceasingly renewed, it will be necessary to regain what has been separated without falling back into the primaeval slander.

Separating sulfur from mercury joined by nature as prima materia, purifying them both and then uniting them again is the enigma of the alchemists' Great Work. Sulfur, fire and male; that which impregnates without undergoing change, is individual consciousness shedding light on diversity; mercury is water and female; that which receives all forms, itself the universal form of all that consciousness desires. Human alchemy is one: no different; its basic method is the same.

At this juncture, the waiting starts for the second birth, the one spoken of in all the ancient wisdoms. Man will attain self-money and self-renewal, he will be what the Hindus call atman, twice-born. Immediately he must separate the finest dazzling point of unity: selfsame consciousness, absolute light, from its awkward cloak. It's only by stripping himself in this way that the cloak can become visible. That's why I said 'separate immortality.'

But my voice resounds in a chaotic desert. Argumentative answers arise: 'But, at least, we'd like to know what we're supposed to do.' I said immediately, with no techniques, no go-betweens, no deities, and especially - especially - without at the outset pondering the possibility of the act. Locking into the realm of the possible, you'd find yourself hemmed in and would quickly slide back into deep sleep. You will view your own remains only subsequent to each of your suicides. No one can die for you, no one can teach you by means of human speech the way to proceed, nor the goal, nor the means, and

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as I seem to be talking in a void, and yet can men not send out signs of life as a way of helping each other to avoid sleep?

Each man will thus put his own transformation to the test. Like the chrysalis: if at first it wanted to think 'I am'... suddenly in the momentum gathered as if by an eternally planted miracle it's now the butterfly thinking itself into a new wrapping, a more fragile yet still opaque cloak; and the thought crystallizes, 'I am, I am... But wasn't that me before? That's not the only surprise: wait till it goes up in smoke and ashes in a candle's flame. Could I have suspected this? Yet such is its allotted fate.

You can see I'm not being lyrical about what that crowd of phantoms calls 'life,' nor rather about its dissolution. Ah, yes, you still haven't finished dying from real life!

There's no step to take the first step, it simply must be done. Do I have to repeat the famous Crescendo-Quasi-absurdum? The absurd is the only believable thing. I go forth in the dark, the real night holding forth no hope for sunlight, for the infinitely distant goal is in the heart of darkness. I go forth, and my bump against the night lights up the path taken, where reason sprawls and is clad in surrogate light. Any one deed taken as is, at its most real and most conscious degree, is said to be absurd in the language of logic; but taken from within, it escapes its own ghostly empire. That is why, if I believe in what I know clearly, I believe only in the absurd.

Paraphysics

I have spoken of the Vision of the Absurd in self-discovery. But it must enlighten all representations of its cruel clarity and thus become a moment in the apprehension of the world.

I willingly name this moment of knowledge 'Paraphysics,' because for me it gives due recognition to Alred Jarry's book, Explode and Optimus of Victor Fournet, Paraphysicians. Some of the French chuckled upon reading this book. But rare indeed are those who have understood the real import of Jarry's humour.

Because - since I deem it necessary to return this first burst of con-
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This laughter is shaking for the body a blat of bones and muscles
not apart by the great wave of anguish and screaming love piercing
into the last inner intimates, and so what? And so, with that
deadly smash, there gopieces of pataphysicians jumping inside
the gut's skin and pouncing on the appalling lies lining indefinite roads
in space and springing at length toward chaos; the individual who
has cognized himself within the whole can well believe for a moment
that he will scatter like a dust so homogenous that it will spread like
a dust filling an absence of dust in no place, at no time; he explodes,
that flabby Earthling, but the all-too solid skin, the elastic sack holds
him together and puckers only at the most flexible parts of his face,
makes the corners of his mouth rise and his eyelids slant upwards,
and destined as far as can be, it all suddenly contracts and snaps
back on itself at the same time the lungs fill up with air and then
empti out, thus buries forth the rhythm of laughter, cognized and
sensed in oneself just as clearly as in the eyes of another laugher. Each
time he thinks he's going to burst once and for all, he laughter is held
back by his skin, I mean his jaw, by the bounds of his own particular
law of which form is the outer expression, by the absurd formula, the
irrational equation of his existence which he has never solved. He
constantly bounces back at that absolute star that pulls at him, never
getting to equipoise, and heating up from all the incessant impacts,
he turns maroon, then cherry-red, then white, and sooner off boiling
dusky copulates and bursting again even more violently, and his laughers
becomes the mad rage of wild planets, and the junk stops some-
thing, yanking it up like that.

Pataphysical laugh is the keen awareness of a duality both absurd
and unsuitable. In this sense it is the one human expression of the
identity of opposites (and, remarkably, in a universal language). Or
rather it signifies the subject's headlong rush toward its opposite ob-
ject and at the same time the submission of that act of love to an
inconsolable and cruelly felt law which prevents me from achieving
total and immediate self-realization—the submission, that is, to that
law of becoming according to which laughter is begotten in its di-
lectical forward march:

I am Universal; I burst;
I am Particular, I contract;
I become the Universal, I laugh.

And in turn, becoming appears as the most palpable form of the
abund and again I rush out against it screaming another guffaw and
with this dialectical rhythm which is the same as the parting of
laughter in the thorax, endlessly I laugh now and forever and this
rumbling down staircases goes on and on in my snivels and hiccups
above each other forward; the Pataphysician's laughter, whether
deep and mule or shallow and piercing, is also the sole human ex-
pression of despair.

And facing the facts most similar to mine, those of men, this despair
rises in on itself in one last spasm and, with my nails digging into
my palms, my fist closes so as to crush a phantom egg from which, if
I could bring myself to believe it, a desire to teach might spring. No, it
intended only to state what it was for those who knew it already,
those who already have laughed that laugh, just to let them know
now what I'm talking about.

You who have settled into this sea of madness, this impossibly real
flush of supreme lucidity, you can hear the great pataphysical voice of
Fontanel, and you can no longer believe that Jerry was a madcap
jokerster, nor that his Rabliansin wit and his Gelic saltiness... "Ho-
hee, ho bee," answers the abyssal echo of the Lying Bishop of the
Sea," that is the only response, the unanimous response such an insin-
uation would deserve.

The metaphysician has infiltrated the pores of the world and the
evolution of phenomena under the cover of body-grasping dialectics,
the prime mover of revolutions. Now, Paraphysics is the science of whatever resides metaphysically, it is in itself or outside itself, and extending as far beyond metaphysics as metaphysic extends beyond physics (1978).

Dialectics once galvanized matter. Now it’s Paraphysics’s turn to pounce on this living body and to consume it in its free. We must expect in the near future the birth of a new age and to see a new font spring up from the outermost ramifications of matter: varicolored thoughts, gluttonous, respecting nothing, demanding neither death, nor obedience to anyone, but brutal in its own clarity and scorn of logic, the universal Paraphysics’s thought which will all at once awaken in everyman, breaking his spine with convulsions and laughing and laughing and gagging ripping the guts out of the oh-so-smug eggheads, and what a hellish wailing in the mid-wed funeral vaults where we finally finish getting civilized!

I can give here only a few hasty forecasts of the predicament into which Paraphysics will plunge the various modes of thought, action and feeling of the lernaic heads—I almost said ‘men’!—I hope to reveal next, for example, the discovery I made of the Paraphysics of love and of a statistical method which allowed me to plot the curve of ‘normal man’, which is no mean feat of laughter. For now, please allow me simply to draw slightly aside some curtains in order to reveal to you the following horrors—they’re really a scream.

On Paraphysics in general: definition. — Paraphysics is the science of imaginary solutions; it attributes symbolically to contours alone the properties of objects described by the contours. (Jare).

It is the knowledge of the particular and the irredescible, thus the reverse of physics. Now, the existence of the irredescible is another aspect of my existence as a discrete being, a contradictory existence since I know myself to be part of the One. So I cannot know the irredescible except by becoming the All-in-One. Hence it can be glimpsed that Paraphysics discloses a mystery whose perspectives it discovers in a concrete form. These few words will require hundreds of volumes to be properly elaborated. I would point out nevertheless this revelation from Jare: ‘It will unified the laws which govern exceptions and will explain the universe parallel to this one.’ This ‘parallel universe’ is the same world where the dead and the dreamers go, according to primitive beliefs; it’s the hollow mold of this world, but this world in its mold, and nothing left, nothing hollow, nothing extruded, just one unified whole. Consider, if you will, this Joe Blow here and all the attributes by which he is circumscribed. From the complete knowledge of this Joe Blow, one could deduce the knowledge of all the rest of the universe by virtue of the principles of causality and reciprocal action. Similarly, remove in thought this Joe Blow from the world without changing anything else: you still imagine him right where he was, because from the knowledge of the universe minus the Joe Blow it is possible to deduce knowledge of the Joe Blow. Both relationships are universal and reciprocal, and you can thus weigh the Joe Blow against the rest of the universe. Getting this idea into your head will help you get a firm footing in Paraphysics. To know X is to know (Everything - X).  

Formal logic of Paraphysics. — Paraphysics proceeds by means of para-physical syllogisms. The type of syllogism used in Paraphysics is a proposition which brings into play syllogism in a nonconclusive mode, but which become conclusive as soon as certain terms are changed in a manner which, as a matter of fact, the mind grasps as quite obvious, this change leads immediately into a second change of the same definitions which again renders nonconclusive the modes of the syllogism being used, and so forth indefinitely. And the object of para-physical knowledge is none other than the very law governing these changes. Paraphysical thought processes, rather than progressing according to the relationships of syllogism between terms, are endowed with an instantaneous fluid reality for the actual comprehension of a conclusion; they are able to slide through that dimension of reasoning which everyday logic reductively conceives of as a single immobile point. The reality of thought moves along a string of abstractions, whose true to the great principle that whatever is self-evident clings itself in abstraction as its only means of perceptibility. Whence the humorous appearance of paraphysical reasoning, which at first glance seems ridiculous, then on closer examination seems to con
tain a hidden meaning, then at even closer range becomes indubitably ridiculous, then again even more profoundly true, and soon, as the clarity and the homogeneity of the proposition go on growing and mutually reinforcing each other insistently.

Mathematical Paraphysics. - Mathematical proofs conducted according to this logic will prove to be extraordinarily stimulating. There is no need for me to look for any better example than the magnificent calculation of the surface area of God at the end of Faustrell.

Paraphysics of Nature. - Paraphysics is a mockery of science more instructive than science. To my mind, the following tenets originated in the spirit of Paraphysics.

The theory of natural selection. ("This animal is it is because if it were not as it is, it couldn't exist!") This type of demonstration points forcefully to the irreducible nature of individual existence and traces the circuity of science through reduction ad absurdum, which is a specifically paraphysical device, even as it escapes from it. In summary: the irreducible is absurd; therefore let us reduce absurdity in order to prove that which is already clear.

The discovery of Jagadis Chandra Bose concerning the nervous system of plants: he made them simply by contemplating some vegetation and then he invented devices which were supposed to allow Western scientists, if at least they proceeded in good faith, to verify his discoveries.

The description of water offered by "Faustrell" smaller than "Faustrell" (Faustrell, Book 3, 9), etc., etc.

Paraphysics in the industrial arts. - Not to mention the fire-hole button and countless inventions of that ilk, the manifold peculiarities owing to purely human whim among manufactured objects are an inexhaustible wellspring for paraphysical discussion. Since Paraphysics as knowledge is the reverse, the exact mirror opposite, of physics, it can have a powerful effect against attempts to streamline work when applied to the flow of production. What about the influences governing the choice of such and such an attachment which no one will ever notice on a railroad car baggage rack, or of any other gratuitous detail of some everyday nondescript object? What will all these forces which remain randomly scattered among all kinds of workers be capable of producing some day if only they are coordinated and made conscious? Such considerations open vistas onto a tremendous future for economic and social Paraphysics.

In more general terms - since I can give only a very limited idea of the field open to this great laugh's derision - the stuff of Paraphysics is the irreducible. Now the irreducible is irreducible only because a reductive effort - that is, an attempt at synthesis in the immediate present - is presumed. The only attempt at imitable synthesis I can know directly is my own consciousness. So Paraphysics moves awareness from an abstract and universal insight to a particular individual consciousness in the present moment, that is, to a given potential for synthesis or to a particular level of the mind's absorption of the world. The irreducible thus appears finally as the imprint I, in my current state, leave on the world. And so Paraphysics will measure, in the various areas of knowledge, of action, of the arts, and of human societies, the extent to which everyone is stuck in the rut of individual existence. And it won't be just for the fun of measuring! For in this light, spaces will be shaken; and minds, tossed between these sophists' parallel surfaces from laughing to sobbing, will mirror each other infinitely. And suddenly despair will descend upon them. The way out will just have to be found.
REVOLT

The man who has always accepted everything is as though he were sleeping. Nothing is imprisoned in the sleep of a rock. But human sleep isn’t eternal; it is always on the brink of yielding. I say that the first step is to awaken absolutely so as to deserve to sleep like a rock, in a sleep transmuted into universal consciousness.

... Man will have to find himself dazzled in the fury of ‘Not’ and his throat swallowed up in the flames of ‘Why?’ This will be the awakening. Scales will fall from eyes which will then behold all tyrannies.

For the man thinking up storms of doubts, blasphemies, and ker-
osene for the temples, it is time to take up the song of the hammer and apply it to the blind face of reason, immemorial language raped; its expression ground to dust, words cast to the wind: ‘All is to be challenged.’ With all logic thrown off, why not believe in the irre-
sensible? Since any reason for believing is a waste, why not believe in insanity? Anything superstitious, anything magic will find fertile ground in this ravaged mind amid the ruins of that old Discourse. Marvelous dialectics will blossom, blooming from purely artificial seeds concocted arbitrarily from star to finish. On a throw of the dice, a metaphysics will be erected: a reason to be burned alive! Ah! at last the whole range of dementia cast to the thousand winds of doubt! ...

Man acts. For him, it’s time for the ravaging desire for liberty and guns aimed at the guardians of established order, arson and terror, and blood flowing faster than tears. Innocent as a volcano, all forms of violence unleashed at the slightest provocation. Each man be-
comes a hurricane, a marshroom of natural forces. Yet he’s lost con-
trol, but he’s waking up. All will be desperately lost in this sudden
bedlam. Man makes light as he strikes out in all directions – against the skulls of those who oppress his body, his heart, his mind; against the barracks, against the churches. He makes light, and so
what if you sit at me yet? He’s done with sinking into the sleep of popular consent. He turns around and inside out. He has said “No!” and he explodes.

Certainly revolt satisfies a need for violence that has simmered for too long under the iron bond of society. It will be said that revolt fulfills at least that goal and that the desire for liberation is a goal in itself, since there’s no stopping once you’ve warned. Stopping would mean getting wrapped up in new chains.

But the energy unleashed by revolt is not incontestable; the physiological phenomenon of fury is subject to the laws of fatigue and aging. If the rebel continues to live, if he manages to escape the clutches of established order — and also his own clutches, which, turned back against him by external duress, seek to deal his despair the final blow of suicide — a point will come when you see the vio- lence of his muscles die and the mask of wrath melt off his face. That’s where I lie waiting for him. There’s no way you can count on a man unless he gets to this point.

If he insistently stops and slides back into the status quo, he doesn’t interest me any more; he has just confirmed that his revolt was no stronger than his physical endurance. It’s perhaps not completely impossible later to see him once more break away from the new steady state in which he let himself become paralyzed; but if it’s only to spend the rest of his life going back and forth between fits and stops of revolt, he is scarcely any less dead in my eyes. Arriving at revolt’s critical point, man has reached the ceiling of “the social ani- mal”, the laws of organic life dictate that no one can live for an appreciable length of time in a state of insurrection against all organization. Between the violent destruction which he or others impose on his body and passive, spineless surrender, the third way of freedom is narrow indeed. If a man finds it, he will break through that ceiling where so many revolts come to die. Others, if the collision doesn’t break them — start, bounce back down like a toy balloon and go on floating back up and sunk down; and chances are, one day they will stay put on the ceiling or just and fall, painful pendulous slumberings. And you can sleep just as deeply stuck motionless on the ceiling as

PROVOCATIONS TO SELF-DENIAL: 37

lying in a heap on the ground. Whatever the case may be, the rebel who cannot get beyond this unstable point, this supreme absurdity, is finished, done man, wiped out in every sense of that tough term.

Ah, but then other one? What a miraculous strength he has, and what is it made of? . . . What concentrated force there is in its germinal essence! It has survived victorious through the derma, even after the visible revolt has vanished! For this force, the impulse to revolt was only a biological revolt at a particular moment, a specifically human moment.

He knows where it was in it for his own or for humanity’s pleasure, and for the satisfaction of any desire; he wasn’t going the au- topsy, nor for any heavens on earth; now he desires no paradise, no transhuman bliss; and all this sets him off from so many two-bit sib- urchins, who, weary, get their consolation from promises of heavenly re- ward. But now, pushed with no definite hope and no limit to his hope, he still continues on his way. It was only by accident that this hapless remnant — yes, he — had worn the mark of revolt from now on, he can appease however he wants. Having traveled by blind- sight the visible leg of his trajectory, on he goes, and we’re not sure whether we can see in his eyes that nearly invisible star shining off into infinity. His body has perhaps struck a balance with other bod- ies, but that’s not the point: why should the body concern him more than any other? He is no longer of this body which our thinking conceives as separate, individual, and alone.

I’ve outlined the path which links two opposite extremes and, as such, have taken a first step in the descriptive science of a prior forms of spiritual progress; we call this science Metaphysics. At first, we come to our own awarenesses of the universal Standa; consciousness, upon awakening, realizes that the Absolute is the one and only thing that is clear. Then, on behalf of that first intention of the ab- cords, we proceed via our acquired understanding to a critique of all our modes of knowledge. As concerns action, we go toward an atti- tude of absolute revolt against all the forces of ontological inertia, against all reflexes, customs, rules of conduct, and moral laws. This
attitude, once ripened, would lead to complete nihilism and unleash hosts of destructive forces; it must, I repeat, be proposed as an extreme case. The contradiction it conceals, like any idea taken as an absolute and removed from its correlates, would move any rebel straight to suicide. Yet no one can claim to be making any real progress if not capable of producing within himself that initial attitude: The man who wants to be must first sense within himself that violent backlash against the current of sleep and lethal human lethargy, that recoil from all his inclinations, be most ever have let his hands start to follow the stormy forces of destruction. This is a time, usually associated with adolescence, of total anarchy in every area: on the level of society, a penchant for nihilism and terrorism; on the level of physiology, a door open to all the destructive instincts, all forms and variations of the suicidal impulse — a penchant for self-inflicted mutilations, for the slow destruction of the body through drugs, for self-castration. All these inclinations, whose deepest roots give equal rise to their own opposites, as they are collectively tied to them by nature’s immanent dialectics, become exposed to the light of day and coordinated by revolt’s primal fact about face, which, while it loses, turns them into signs of quickening consciousness.

A man truly living his life to its fullest must sense as latent within himself all the great legendary and historical rebels, as a brother to the Sages, the Nativists, or the Rambaud of this world, he should claim as his ancestors the Avesta and Rabbinas, the Sophists, the Titans and the Giants, the rebellious angels and the Lucifer of Hindu, Buddhist, Greco-Roman, and Christian mythologies: he must be a budding Prometheus, Cain, Nimrod, or Satan, the rebel of all causes — all bearing the name of God in a nutshell — and who for some is also called Malthus in the mythology of our age. So it is that all these great names, worshipped and acrobated, are representations within the collective consciousness, which transforms metaphysics into mythology, of the dialectical moment of absolute revolt. Worshipped and acrobated they are; for revolt is awakening access to consciousness, sole Good of all goods, for which only the Good is good. That is, in the same time, it is an awakening to the Double, the Contradictory, the Abroad, consciousness containing the seed of its own death, a violent break with inert and spiritual death, but also with primal unity which shatters upon awakening, and the first act in an indeterminate series of perpetually regenerated contradictions; and a warning to man that he must necessarily renew his tremendous effort to awaken if he is to avoid falling into the void. For thus, by taking conscious possession of himself during the act of revolt, man passes the point of no return and, as long as he remains a man, will know henceforth and forever in his own present awareness the Distinction between Good and Evil, in the eternal present of that primal act, he now calls himself Prometheus and Lucifer...

The act of revolt, in essence, is negation; it sets in motion a dialectical process whose final term is the limit at which consciousness realizes its own status as absolute negation fully separate from the subject negated. But the Is which is thus posited with no determination other than the negation of all determinations can no longer be called individual. This moment of consciousness coincides with the God of the negative theology of Plotinus, that is, God considered from an exclusively transcendent angle, rigorously separate from anything to which a positive predicate can be attributed. That is why it is impossible to say that this body or that human individuality belongs to this or that particular consciousness, by renouncing its corporeal or social being, consciousness gives rise to the visible manifestation of revolt; once the spirit of revolt dies up, the same process of renunciation carries on, indefinite, invisible.

These two limit states — the unleashing within the individual person of all the destructive forces and a nonindividual, unmovable, absolute negation of everything — are two metaphysical poles serving as ultimate boundary markers for the future development of every revolt. The particular course of any given actual revolt can be inscribed on the line that runs from one to the other. On this trajectory in particular we can catch the spirit of revolt evolve into the revolutionary spirit. As we have seen, revolt in its primal state conceals contradictions which prevent it from being visible; the individual acting in an individual capacity who rises up...
against individual identity proceeds necessarily toward his own de-
struction. If he wants to escape contradiction, he must understand
that the things to be combatted are all those inclinations toward
death, all the forces of spiritual inertia; and that he must fight them
for the sake of something greater than his own individual identity.
If he doesn't want to fight against himself, he will find this system-
individuality in his own awareness of being human and, consequently,
in the awareness of humanity insofar as it is awakening. And since
this awakening, we said, corresponds to the uprising of the op-
pressed part of society, the rebel will have to give his individual re-
volt over to the revolutionary class of his era.

And that revolutionary struggle, which must not stop short of real-
izing its goals, will at all times have at its disposal the powers awak-
ened by the pretal act of revolt, but now tamed and channeled.

Such is the visible field of revolt and its social transtumulation. But
the act by which a man, in negating himself as an individual, be-
comes conscious of being human is an asetic self-destruction which
must be unwindingly repeated and pursued, leading consciousness ever
closer to its complete liberation from all forms in the Universal. Revo-
olutionary conviction is therefore only a moment in this asetic jour-
ney; yet a moment which can endure for an entire human lifetime.

And in so saying, I will insist that Metaphysics, the expectation of a
possible future, would be vain and sterile if concrete acts did not interve
serve to give it meaning and life.

Let's not forget the great negating Laugh hidden beneath all the suc-
cessive transformations of revolt. In the very absurdity of despair,
which at length kills itself with the weapons of anger and violence,
that cruel laugh is far from silence. It is the immensity behind every
seething act of revolt. As human appearances become colder, a sur-
doeic geste surfaces. No, nothing to the most furious or most coldly
derpionate deeds or in the most calculated revolt has ceased being seen
as absurd. We're not talking about joy here; there is also a length of
horror...

Self-discovery comes only through self-negation. Revolt is no more
than the more visible side of absolute negation; if it is to exist as a
particular moment of time, there's no getting around the fact that it
needs to be accomplished.

I always deny being what I think I am. If I'm no longer in any
danger of naively and unequivocally believing myself a human being,
my revolt is over. In a sense it passes over into an invisible other
world.

But watch out. These challenges put forth by the absurd and by
suffering have awakened you. You have rebelled. You conceive of
yourself as absolute negation, and all that exists is foreign to you. As
you rooted an indefinite number of times, you left behind one skin
after another in the extensive realm of nature. (Nature: whatever has
form, whatever is an object; whatever is in your mind as a form, such
as the forms of knowledge, is thus also part of that negated nature).

But what exists - why does it exist as such? Why isn't the world just
nonsense? Once I negate it away, it's incomprehensible. Why is
there still anything in particular, ah, why still such and such a flower
just so in all its details? I didn't will it that way, not me! Why is it all
so absurd? I found the absolute purity of my essence, of the Es-
rence. But this work! What is it? That Everett I've pushed away in
an absolute divorce, more than just an absurd and indifferent corpse,
is a terrifying and incomprehensible existence. It's the anguish of
being incapable of replacing everything with a pure apprehension of
my own self. Now Laughter is taking on more of madness.

Once again, suffering and the absurd? Do we have to start all over
again? Yes: the act of awakening must forever go on beginning. But
this moment of absolute separation is a first step. Like any moment
in spiritual evolution, it has two opposed faces: on one side, it is a
moment of consciousness, insofar as it is the apprehension of that
pure Essence which negates; on the other, it is sleep, so long as we
continue to mistake it for a definitive state, resting place. The path of
metaphysical experience is lined by one such Janus Bridge after the
other. The time has come to describe this shift.
METAPHYSICAL INTUITION IN HISTORY
I've spoken of a metaphysical function of human thought and of a need inherent to the human condition. It's only logical, even necessary, that one might find in the history of human reflection at least something hinting that there may have been attempts to come up with a Metaphysics that could be considered an absolute science.

But the history of spirit is not guided by the mere tendency to think, to awaken. If it were the case, we would recognize, over the centuries, a clear and uninterrupted progress on the part of consciousness, even if it meant we then had to admit that reflection had achieved its own perfect end. If, as we observe, progress abounds with regression, it's because antagonistic forces oppose the effort we make to become aware. At the very moment an impulse toward being springs forth, the tendency toward non-being appears as well.

In more precise terms, any effort man makes to provoke thought has as its immediate correlate an organized system of ways to avoid thinking. The doth in man's essence, that inertial tendency toward sleep, is an instrument which replaces, imitates, and kills thought at the slightest onset of awakening.

A man awakens, stands up, and proclaims that the only thing of real value is the act of becoming aware; his words will be repeated by a thousand imitating mouths; and the more violently these words prod the singular price which being exact, the easier they will stick dry on the lips as mechanical formulas, then to cradle minds in the deepening shadows of unconsciousness. Thus are all religions born only to smother through imitation the human awakening which is their origin, their 'revelations'.

A mathematician, through an act of real reflection, makes a discovery in the realm of numbers: right away he'll invent a formula which, once learned by one, will from then on be used to solve any number of problems without any need for thinking. So algebra kills arithmetic as religion kills revelation: both are instruments for avoiding thinking, dead substitutes for reflection. And furthermore, it is a recognized fact that the number of discoveries and scientific inventions made in any particular period of time is in inverse proportion to the current state of technical perfection.
Many other examples taken from the history of human intellectual endeavors could show thought giving rise to its own false semblances, the apparition of its own reality, and hence, each time it raises itself, giving strength to the incantations of self. Let's be careful, then, we who use words to express ourselves, not to confuse thought with its verbal manifestations. The history of human thinking is too intertwined with the history of philosophy, which studies almost exclusively the very specific manifestations of the successive moments of the awakening of consciousness in a few select individuals. If thought tends toward a Truth, that truth must be held as universally valid. And all men, without exception, must be seen as the possibility of that truth's being. No matter whether in their preoccupation with teaching some of them make public statements and become philosophers. I have no right to say that any human form a potential thought, a verbal being someday capable of manifesting in action. Furthermore, all human types are linked by social relationships. So it is necessary to anticipate the interpenetration of the history of thought and nonthought with the history of social groupings; and this a priori correlation is confirmed by observation.

Applied to human masses formed in society, not being includes the acceptance of fallacious, ready-made modes of acting, thinking, and feeling. This consent is also a loss of freedom. Because no freedom is possible for one who is asleep. Among all peoples, at all times, there are men who set themselves up as defenders of the oppressive power of all these falsifications of thought, dogmas, ideologies, traditions. Ready to profit, they impose these ways of not being on those subjected to their domination. But in so doing, they subjugate themselves as well with the same chains of sleep, and all the more since they have insured their greater security through their own exercise of power. Thus Power immediately turns back against those who impose it.

It turns back twice: security in sleep doubly binds the oppressor. You'll never see a dominant class awake to realize its decay, and reform the social order; it must constantly reinforce the beliefs which sustain its power. Scarcely able to feign, in order to rule, a faith which it could not have, at beinawashed itself even as it must.

Vanes its slaves, and thus binds itself ever more tightly. The oppressed class, thereby superior, is the one most likely to become aware. It has nothing to gain by feeding these forces of slavery; to material interest is first to shake off its economic servitude and consequently to go after whatever surrounds and maintains this slavery. Therefore, even as it regrets the sorpistic ideologies of its oppressors, the oppressed class, although motivated by economic persuasion, must encounter obstacles but necessarily its moment of awakening.

Another force which constrains and leads the masses to sleep is the uncontrolled, poorly exploited progress of the tool by machines of production. In times past, craftsmen still had some time to think. The master who, using his feet and his hands, kneads a lump of clay, gives it form, throws it, and fires it has a vast repertory of recipes, traditions of the craft, and necessary tricks of the trade at his disposal which, true enough, let him get around the need to think. But the mad he's working bakes; it has its own laws and properties which he must loyally respect and skillfully channel until the ultimate shape of the vase he wants to produce, the goal of his efforts, is realized. Matter thus continuously presents him with questions which his skill and habit cannot satisfactorily answer; now and then he has to think. Three days, rethinking the vagaries of what is called 'streamlining' in industry is no more than a cliché. It is commonly recognized that the rationalization of work takes away from man any need or opportunity to think. A worker no longer grapples hand-to-hand with matter. He just imparts the same movement over and over. A thousand times a day the 'line' puts the same part in front of him without knowing to know where it came from or where it's going, and a thousand times his hand makes the same gesture, precisely and automatically. Now a machine among machines, a worker has to put up with this slavery not just during his eight-hour shift. In the most modern factories in America and now even in Europe; you can see bosses, with the help of their own in-house police, keeping a closer and closer eye on his opinions, statements, and movements, regulating the use of his leisure time; pushing him toward ever more soporific forms of entertainment; choosing the books, newspapers, or magazines he should read, the films he should see; and checking the most private details of his life.
So the modern worker is often more enslaved than the craftsman of earlier times who worked twice as many hours. Streamlined efficiency, which substitutes mechanism for thought, could in fact free the worker's mind from concentration on his daily task and let him make intellectual progress. This is the rationale put forth in the name of would-be social reforms by certain so-called Workers’ Parties. But parties who, in league with technocrats serving the bourgeoisie, organize the worker's entire life on a mechanistic model. Just as a sensitive machine is geared, cleansed, and protected, so is judiciously assured the lowest level of material security needed to get him from the high-
est possible output, in such a way that capitalism can, by exploiting him, extract the highest possible profit. With this system's exploitation of the human being's productive, the bourgeoisie can cut back on the growing numbers of wage earners, who are now reduced to unemployment and poverty. Society recognizes and pays attention to these workers only to the extent that it fears the potential explosion of their anger. This is how it's possible to talk about the well-being and comfort enjoyed by workers in the United States—chain-lickers forged from gold, but weighing that much more heavily on bodies and dulled Minds than to sleep. Yet, even though the man-machine theme has become a commonplace topic, something is often left out of the discussion. Whereas in the era of craftsmen, producers remained less or more isolated from each other, now the mass oppression of workers, crushing individuals, lowering them to the level of cogs in the great economic machine, creates among them bonds which will become slowly but surely unbreakable. And once this human mass has clearly understood its class solidarity and its impetus toward freedom, its awakening and its definitive potential will be equal to the weight now crushing it.

The Allegory

In order to exercise his vision, his judgment, and his will, man needs to believe in an absolute which is real being and highest truth and supreme value all in one. Something points out a passivity in the street, the first to come along. His answers to a few questions show me he hasn't a clue that such a notion exists, because, as is the case for the majority of men, analyzing the way his mind works is the least of his worries. But whoever would contradict me by bringing up this everyday example proves that he also is defiled by language: the words 'absolute,' 'being,' 'truth,' 'value,' which he knows how to use, instill a sense of security in his organism, and the absence of anxiety when he pronounces such words makes him think he understands their meaning; in fact their mere mastery reassures him enough to spare him from thinking at all. But let's dig a bit further into the words or the silences of the uneducated man, into his judgments, his tastes, and his sympathies, however unpolished his way of expressing them may be. We'll find nascent systems, trial structures, and attempts to base all mental acts on a cognitive principle more or less clearly set forth as a singular absolute. Most often this common basis doesn't even have a name; if it does, it's sometimes expressed by one word, sometimes by another. But in every case, provided we start with judgments and preferences revealed by observable behavior and then study their variations by tracing their vectors, we will see that the lines converge more or less exactly on a common point. This point represents the being and the absolute value which is at once the end, the basis, and the summative driving force of all this man's mental acts. Generally, this point is not unique, and as concerns his aspirations, his choices, and his decisions, the individual obeys just a few more or less explicit percepts and rather haphazardly structured rules which are held, each in its turn, in supreme values and realities.

For my part, I name it nihilism whenever I cannot doubt even as I doubt everything, and whatever exacts complete sacrifices from me even as I sacrifice completely. To the questions 'What is it?' and 'What is it that matters?' it always makes me answer, 'It's nothing I can name.' The only principle which can be clearly thought of as unique and absolute is the supreme supremist principle, the perpetual refusal of consciousness to be anything in particular; it is self-denial absolutely established once and for all. Because, I repeat, nothing it and nothing has value except for consciousness as it sees, and in essence, that act is negation. More precisely, the only thing I can call absolute, the only thing worthy of the name, is the limit which is the goal of the pleasing effort made by masking consciousness.
You've always been wrong.

But in order to grasp this notion as a living truth and not just as a single abstract concept, one must effect in one's own mind the dynamics for which the absolute is the limit-term. This requires thinking. And the law of psychic inertia, which we have already noted, must instigate in opposition to this requirement of consciousness a countermovement toward unconsciousness. Man may well have understood, either truly through individual experience or indirectly through hearsay, the necessity and the worth of the concept of absolute love. But he forgets that necessity and work's going to consciousness in its dynamic actuality. And the more he insists on retaining in his mind the concept of the absolute, the more the inertial forces of his short-circuiting counterforces into play able to persuade him that he possesses the concept of the absolute simply by thinking it, with no need to perform the slightest act of consciousness. The most potent and unfulfilling of these forces is the use of a name, which, when repeated as often as necessary, takes the concept in question and replaces it with an acoustical facade. The name on one hand, and, on the other, a certain sense of assurance or visceral conviction were at first tied to the same concrete movement of consciousness toward the supreme moment of reality to which we attribute the name of absolute. The concept expires if consciousness doesn't recreate it, at each instant; but the vocal act of naming and the state of visceral satisfaction translated into thought as a feeling of certainty remain tied one to the other; a stable physiological relationship has formed between them and gives them the outer appearance of thought. And, of course, any word is able to play this role, be they the ones I've used or all the others.

Whenever you decide to talk about the Absolute, about Being, the Good, God, the Real, the True, try this experiment: Mark out all these words from the sentences you utter while imagining with all your might that you have no idea what they mean, that they no longer even exist, and that from now on there is no way of finding others that can replace them. It is likely you will often shuffle oneself or the unconscious chunk in your discourse, now wide open without self-verbal links. And the effort you make to fill in the void, thinking and recreating the slumbering concepts, is the same

Metaphysical intuition in history. It one that every man must demand of himself at all times if ever he wants to know and be something real.

And even then, what I'm saying in the preceding discussion presupposes a real thought as the starting point of all those phantom thoughts. Most often, the reality and the value of an absolute are affirmed only on the grounds of heuristics, i.e., right from the start, there's only a vague hint of knowledge. All manner of educational influences are brought to bear: family upbringing, school, catechism, reading (whether it's from books on philosophy, pious works or newspapers, for that matter), conversations, sermons, public speeches, theater, films. Under the influence of these media, the combined forces of deep inertia on the individual level and a tendency toward conservatism in society at large instill durable links within human organisms between certain words and certain physiological dispositions; completing and reinforcing the illusion, the words thought, unconscious, and religion, as well as phenomena, wind up linked with the indeterminate feelings which correspond to these organic conditions. These correlations are established in individual bodies by various means of collective education and social traditions, they are thus about the same for all individuals, allowing for variables such as family, religion, profession and so forth. In their totality, they form what we could call the 'collective ideology of society,' provided we remain extremely careful not to designate a thought by this expression, because, quite to the contrary, this system, built on the cadavers of thought, is what structures the conditions within which man can live without thinking. Rather, true collective thought would in fact be the violent negation of this death machine, necessarily in tandem with the destruction of the institutions which manifest collective ideology. This awakening can be nothing less than a reason for revolution.

The Word God

Physiology and sociology alone could disastrously in the majority of cases how the word God, as it is heard or pronounced by the human individual, induces a state of security, joy, rationalization, or fear; the actual concept doesn't even have to enter in. Furthermore, for anyone who hasn't had the real experience of the notion of an absolute, sev-
eral names can take its place and drive the cross-dimensional disposition which will be deceptively named "certainty," "truth," "sound," or "grace." In this way, a first series of counterparts of the absolute is set up: All these names are its direct substitutes, at first, they are meant to signify it, but they quickly replace and kill it. It would be easy to draw up a list of these names by choosing those which refer to the absolute considered:

as the highest form of existence: Being, Supreme Being, God;
as the highest nature: the Good; or, for some, Beauty, Truth;
as the highest moral act: Virtue, Sovereign Good;
as the highest aesthetic: the Lord, Divine Law;
as the highest power: the Almighty;
as the highest cause: the Creator;
as the highest end: Beatitude, Deliverance, Union;
as intelligibility; and, finally, as well, as admirable, as fine, as venerable, and so forth.

And let's not forget the very name "Absolute," which is the 'highest' in general. Moreover, it is always more or less consciously understood that the absolute referred to by one of these particular facets is absolute in any other sense as well. Such will no longer be the case for the second series of substitutes which we will now briefly consider.

It could name these new semblances as second-order substitutes, substitutes from degradation, or, better yet, substitutes from incomplete self-deny. Man continually goes beyond his own limits through successive negations. If he wants to remain conscious, he must negate at each step, each time as though it were the first, the individual form through which he apprehended himself the moment before; by so doing, he is forced to conceive the limit-nothing of a consciousness which absolutely negates all individuality.

The nature of language and, in essence, the form of philosophical discourse require me to present it in a general manner and in abstract terms something which has no actual, immediately perceivable reality except in a particular individual life. That is why the dialectics of 'self-deny' may appear to be a purely intellectual operation. I mean act which I denote (because I am hunting for a general and understand-
chains of French domination. But we also see the other side of the coin: in China, the sense of national identity and spiritual forces for awakening and liberation, became like everywhere else a tool of slumber and oppression. This historical law, one simple instance of the principle of correlation between the powers of awakening and slumber, suffices as exceptions.

Each one of these degradations of the absolute can thus correspond to an awakening of consciousness at a particular moment in time; once the moment is past, it becomes an inert force. But even then, for this to be true, each successive attribution of spiritual reality to wider and wider collectivities has to have been the fruit of real experiences. Most often, men recognize the reality of a particular collectivity as the absolute to which they must sacrifice everything because this is what has been imposed and repeated toward them; then all that remains in these illusory derivatives of the absolute is the capacity to conserve order and induce slumber. The oppressive power of a collective ideology is tied to social structures: society by itself manages to establish its inertial force in the form of institutions which allow it to maintain itself and, especially, to impose a phantom of the absolute on its members. The educational institutions, the papers, the Churches, the prevailing opinions, the official moral dogmas are just so many forms of a society's tendency to preserve in its own "not-being." A nation, for instance, sees itself up as a moral limit which individuals, in their self-sacrifice, must not overstep; if too great a number cross the line, the national reality is in great danger of perishing. Men can allow themselves lower limits, they can die for the honor of their family, their trade, their village; the nation has nothing to fear. But it is in great peril once a sizable number of individuals recognize some other collectivity as superior and more real—such as the class of oppressed humanity, for example.

All the fallacious substitutes for the absolute and all the various forces of social oppression continually intensify. So, if the collective consciousness continues to consider the absolute which it names God as the highest reality, the ruling establishment, if it wants to maintain its prestige in the eyes of the people, must convince them of its equivalence with the divine principle. In primitive monarchies the king, at first, is God (as was the case for the Pharaohs of Egypt). Later, in so-called "divine right" monarchies, he is the direct and sole legitimate representative of the temporal power of God on earth. If then the people wake up, they will engage in a struggle against both faces of power: the powers of the crown and the spiritual authority of the Church. Once this revolutionary period is over, the forms which had driven the upheaval of popular consciousness will in their turn produce a new ideology, a new agent for slumber in the service of new oppressors: like the "immoral principles of '93," a living reality in the name of the Revolution which turned into the foundation of the patriotic bourgeoisie ideology of the "capitalist democracy" of France.

The study of these reciprocal influences, which I mention only in passing, will later form the basis of the science of social evolution. As it is plain to see, this will be a dialectic founded on the first metaphysical intuition: the act of conscious realization in tandem with a correlative tendency toward slumber. And the structure of this historic movement of thought will follow the scale of limit-values realized successively by the forward march of consciousness as it considers each limit one after the other as an absolute. Repeatedly freeing and bracketing itself, humanity could achieve liberation only in a society organized in such a way that no single ideology might be imposed without the unceasing supervision of all the people; a society consequently in which no man or no class of men could separate from the rest of society and thereby establish a dominant position by means of a counterfeit spirit. This postulate, this hypothetical (but necessarily conceived) limit cut eventually take us from the study of social data to the sociology which some probably will want to call "ideological." But rather than a knowledge of social ends, it will furnish a description of current facts and tendencies while necessarily keeping in sight implied yet clear-cut limits; the ends and means of social transformation will thus partake of the same description, thereby eliminating any suspicion of "truth" or of social "ideas." This science will gradually draw its own outlines when we have deleted by thought all forces of oppression and slumber. Once this negating
work is done, there will remain the task of noting and describing the surviving positive tendencies, and like mathematicians working on a functional variace, we will define its limits. The overall system of these limits will form the sole legitimate plan of what we can imagine as an optimal society—a veritable utopian ideal—because the limit-state of a coherent variation must be conceived as coherent. This plan, which will join and encompass that of the theoretical society which we postulated above, will be as far removed from utopia as the calculation of a finite value differs in algebraic analysis from some vague and sentimental anticipation.

It's the phenomenon of religion, by which I mean the phenomenon of mysticism, which has produced the purest and clearest forms of metaphysical intuition; by extension, it is this same phenomenon which has also given birth to the most fearsome forces for the belittling of thought and the enslavement of peoples. The awakening of consciousness, whether driven by a religious impulse or by any other factor, is always accompanied by a movement toward social liberation; but the absolute offered to human consciousness quickly degenerates into a hollow sham which becomes a tool and a symbol of slavery and death. We therefore have the best chance of finding the clearest expressions of metaphysical experiences in religions at their embryonic stage, in hierarchies, in formations of mystics; and also in any struggle against the roots of established religions, instituted as systems of social oppression. Among all peoples and in all ages, we will see the same relationship between the two contradictory functions of religious 'creations.'

A metaphysical teaching is faithful to real knowledge if it is rooted in the immediate act I called for at the beginning: any mind wanting to remain awake (that is, to be mind) must necessarily go beyond its own limits through an indefinite series of abstractions; it has an active essence of this progress by the very fact that it make it. Now, nothing being or value except in regard to an act of consciousness; what's more, a being or a value unbounded by a conscious act would simply be a mediated being or value—that is, abstract or virtual. (If you've been careful enough to empty your mind of its presc-
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bad; for thought, free in its origins, is subsequently smothered under lifeless dogma forced on the people to enhance priests' power, dogma of the same ilk as the superior origin of the Brahman caste. Because of this close tie between temporal and spiritual powers, the awakening of consciousness was in no way possible without a political and economic revolt against the ruling class.
In fact, when Hindu thought awakens from this dogmatic torpor, its expression again reaches the highest of pinnacles. And this reassurance is nearly always accompanied by an outward revolt against the authority of the priests and the Scriptures. In the Upanishads, there are numerous philosophical dialogues in which princes, Brahmins, and ascetics are brought face to face; and it is the prince who teaches, while the Brahman is portrayed as ignorant; sometimes he is mocked and ridiculed; or perhaps a wise hermit reveals his lore to the prince and sends the priest on his way.
In the Bhagavad Gita, the revolt against theological authority is even more clearly defined. Vishnu has taken bodily form as a Kshatriya for the purpose of instructing men. Going by the name of Krishna, he explicitly teaches Prince Arjuna to scorn the scriptures and the sterile discussion of theologians.

This book, in which Hindu thought again recovers all its initial purity and power, is the fruit of a revolt of the princely and military castes against the spiritual and temporal authority of the priests.

The revolt becomes even more well-defined and open in Jainism. It found its true fulfillment in Buddhism.

By rising up against the authority of the priest, he regained within himself all the concrete and universal conditions for self-determination. Since these conditions were the same for any man, since any man's reality was in the same private act of thinking, no spiritual obstacle could ever again separate individuals into castes.

But in their turn, the teachings of the Buddha became dogmas and were shrouded in theology. It's more that he never managed to prevail in his native land. If he had, the result could have been the replacement of Brahman domination by the type of princely and military
Metaphysical Intuition in History

By means of prayer wheels and beads and endless repetition of mechanical chants, the pitiés put individual awareness to sleep. Even if they teach in all good faith, they can in no way teach what cannot be taught but must be done: the act of thinking. And probably there still were—still are—priests and theoretic lords clever enough to use these techniques for the enslavement of their subjects.

This is how the type of tantric feudal system particular to Tibet was founded and is still conserved, with the person of the Dalai Lama as the eminent focal point of both forms of power. But the diabolical chain of rebirths and deaths of religious thought is endless. Throughout the social and religious history of Tibet there are those who come forward and, by rebelling against established authority, trigger awakenings of consciousness, whose the profusion of mystics, heretics, reformers, and sects which make the study of Lamaism so complex. But, in Tibet, the preponderance of religion is so strongly entrenched that any conscious solidarity among the oppressed masses remains all but nonexistent. Therefore, these exploitations of consciousness are usually the doing of a single individual, the most common example being a monk who breaks all ties with society, goes into the mountains, and meditates, perhaps later to teach. These awakenings of thought then often lead in a single bound to the breaths of the pure and simple revelations of ancient India.

India and Tibet

Throughout their histories, India and Tibet have experienced more than any other land a tremendous abundance of attempts to think. And more than in any other land, the priesthood has always found a way to appropriate all these manifestations of thought and turn them into vehicles for theocratic power. By now, this turmoil should be no surprise. But for whose goal is it to awaken must try to understand why these superhuman efforts on the part of consciousness failed; our findings may be quite instructive.

All thought is evolutionary; for, being the offspring of doubt, any thought threatens to undo oppressive ideologies. On the other hand, any expression of thought can in turn become one of these very ideologies, or at least be absorbed by those which already exist.
This will necessarily be the case whenever there exists an oppressive power threatened by the awakening of consciousness. Revolutionary thought will thus be unable to achieve its ends completely unless it is coupled with a material force capable of destroying the power of oppression. Now, in the histories of Brahmanism and Buddhism, the quickening of consciousness was always tied to two major forms of revolt: the individual revolt of the ascetic who denies society by 'withdrawing to the forest', or the revolt of the military and princely castes against the prior caste.

In the first case, the individual, from the perspective of subjective idealism, does indeed eliminate all social antagonists, since, being alone, he stops perceiving society. Of course I'm thinking of the more exemplary yogis, one who gets his food, clothing, and shelter (if he indeed has any) without the support of any other human, who even learns to meditate without the support of language, that eminent social instrument of expressions. But neither I nor you see from his point of view. No man living in society sees from his point of view, no man can any longer pass human judgment on this one who has renounced society, who is no longer quite the same social animal, who is no longer a man. He has committed social suicide. In this case, the problem persists for us, for that individual revolt, however absolute it may be, has changed nothing.

But Hindu Yoga teacher the truth that what appears as the best becomes the worst when it is sought by an individual as personal satisfaction and not in and for itself and for every man, universally. The ascetics are true to the minds of us social beings, those who have played a revolutionary role in history, leave their heritages and come back among men. Some are satisfied with teaching their 'revelations' to a few disciples; these 'revelations', if indeed they are real thoughts, can be nothing other than the sphere of a negation focusing on the oppressive dogmas of caste, of class, or of the dominant religion. But, once in the public domain, the expressions of such a thought will be stolen by those in power, who will appropriate them for their enslaving ideology. Or, as the other hand, the ascetic's teaching will remain within esoterics, in which case we don't know anything about it, we can't use it to benefit society, and there we are again, no farther along than if he had stayed absolutely and definitively alone. No matter if four or five or more of his disciples have also performed this subjective revolt - or, for that matter, just he alone. Even so, it is a tradition carried on in just such a manner which managed to play a true revolutionary role across the ages; I will talk about it in a little while.

For now, I'm considering the ascetic's revolt only from the point of view of its momentary social efficacy, an efficacy which is nonexistent as concerns the confirmed hermit. But it could occur that the ascetic might wish to pass on his living thought to his contemporaries. Such were the cases of Mahavira for Jainism and Sakya-muni for Buddhism. They claimed to be speaking to all men on behalf of all suffering beings. But without the support of a unified, conscious oppressed mass unavailable at that point in history, their rebellious thought could inspire only a disowned fraction of society. The caste of warriors and priests used this revolutionary force against theocratic authority and thus, once its power, pervaded it by turning it into a new dogma able to uphold their domination.

The social action of Buddha and Mahavira, founders of religions in one of themselves, comes down to the second form of revolt: the uprising of the Kshatrya against the Brahmins.

This type of revolt was supported by a concrete social force. But let's suppose for the time being, and for the sake of historical simplicity, that the military caste, in the name of a religious awakening, had broken Brahmanic dogmas and priestly constraints and had seized power. In Hindu society, Brahmins and Kshatriyas make up only the two most noble castes; there are six Vaisyas, the Sudras, in the secondary cases, the Vaishyas, and the outcastes. Even though the case - as we heard in ancient India - was less rigid than is commonly thought, these social formations were nevertheless much too distinct for the revolt of the Kshatriyas to succeed in uniting in one single revolutionary consciousness all the rest of society's oppressed classes against just the one class of Brahmins. The separation between the two highest castes was entirely absolute. On the other hand, there was an abyss separating the Kshatryyas (and even the highest three castes) from the lower social strata, which, already divided
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amongst themselves, often could be used as passive and doleful instruments in the hands of the rebellious princes and warlords. Once the military caste came to power, its foremost concern was to ensure its domination over the rest of society. It needed institutions and ideologies, those of the winner supplanting those of the loser. The power of small theocratic communities yielded to a military feudalism or even to a monarchy. Brahmanism is replaced, and because it remains a very strong dogma, is assimilated by the ideology which worked to break it and which becomes in its turn an official dogma and religion. Revolutionary thought derived from not having started up all of the oppressed.

Of course, the social history of ancient India is too complex for such a phenomenon to have taken place in its general and schematic a manner as this. However, the dialectic I have just sketched out can be used as a connecting thread to aid our understanding. It should never be forgotten that no struggle between the two highest castes was likely to result in a particularly bloody revolution, since the barriers separating them from each other paled in comparison to the ones which put both of them far above all the rest of society. We must also take into account the various invasions which were a major factor in India's political changes, especially in the establishment of the great monarchies. Keeping in mind these reservations, we can understand how the priestly monks who protected the two "great heresies" were able to supplant, thanks to their religious zeal, the old priestly power and gradually transform their small feudal states into powerful realms. This movement surely began, long before Buddhism, with the birth of the first Hindu feudal states, probably parallel with the anti-Brahman activity of some of the first masters of the Upanishads. The evolution carries on with the monarchs contemporary with Buddha and Māvāra; for example, in Māgadha, Rambirā, the friend and protector of the two preachers. Here, the adverb of Candragupta, founder of the Maurya empire (a consequence of foreign invasions), speeded up social and religious evolution, thereby making it some what more complex. But the success of his most famous successor, Aśoka, is without question due in large part to the active propaganda

that this sovereign put forth in favor of Buddhism. How priceless is the protection of princes, who can turn a loving thought into a reli gion of death and slavery? (And you — never forget this: for the protection of your oppressor, the bourgeois, this already rotten corpse is still a practicing vampire: with your life he wants to feed his continuous Death.)

This quick analysis explains well enough the fate of the awakenings of thought at first revolutionary, which gave rise to the Upan ishad, Jainism, and Buddhism; but it could give the impression that behind these spiritual and social upheavals there were individual intuitions working as initial causes. Nothing could be farther from the truth. To predict the fate of true thought, all that is necessary is to dig into the reasons behind prin cely uprisings against poorly authority. We started with an antagonism between two castes - castes taken as unquestioned facts. But the reality of castes, hidden under this or that social or religious appearance, is economic in the core. The Brahmans exercised power fully in early Vedic society with its patriarchal structure. The development of the means of production in the agricultural sector, leading to the need for new means of ex change and the beginnings of commercial centralization, increas ingly impelled the advent of a new form of political power. The Brahman, whose function was tied to the village community, was unable to break away in order to extend his power over a wider social group. He simply became an adviser to the prince who as sumed this political role. The Kshatriya's rise to power amounted to the sanctioning of a new economic regime brought about by the inevitable progress of the forces of production. Since priestly authority was upheld by dogma, the prince had to break down the dogma. Now, any question of a dogma is an awakening of thought. The eco nomic revolution thus furnished by necessity the opportunity for an awakening of consciousness. We have seen that such an awakening will usually create a darkening of equal proportions, in this case be cause the economic revolution was not radical and affected only one part of the Brahman population.

I'm neither an historian nor an economist. I don't think I've gone away from my resolve to follow single-mindedly the connecting
thread of Claims. I invite anyone who so desires to gather together documents on the history of any given Hindu kingdom of any given period. I know a priori that the guiding principle which I have just
proposed by analyzing a schematic example will always suffice to ex-
plain the history of social revolutions from the economic, political, and
religious points of view at a given time or place. But what's im-
portant for you to consider is this: the dialectical law according to
which consciousness, as it manifests itself, constrains the mechanism of
its own death in the law of all evolution. Herderians and Hegelians
proclaimed it to the world. About a century ago, it was applied with
vicious rigor to the social history of the peoples of the West by
Karl Marx. Only those who might well suffer from it will stubbornly
refuse to realize his claims. I mean all those who, one way or another,
take remorselessly advantage of their social position in the ranks of any
class of oppressors.

You see, thinking me now, listen closely: think back to where
you were when I started talking and how far you've come since, and
realize that I've done nothing to steer you astray. I asked you to open
your eyes to see clear evidence: the immediate reality of that act of
consciousness whose very expression brings about its own death. I
led you into what may be called a privileged land, where numerous
voices across the ages have always presented that same evidence.
You've witnessed the fate which kings, priests, and later the bour-
geoisie have always necessarily imposed on such words. You've wit-
nessed the mechanisms by which the producers of thought were used
to kill thought and to enslave bodies. I gave you the example of In-
dia, because that country has roused with thinkers for nearly three
millennia, thinkers whose voices, by their purity, have tempered and
still temper so many Westerners like you, wanting to think freely; also
because in that country, the products of the act of consciousness of
thinkers in revolt have given rise to the very worst monuments of
spiritual and material slavery. So you see: as long as there are men
who exploit other men in the society where you live — that's what
they'll do to your thought.

[Here ends the part of the manuscript which was rewritten, re-
vised and corrected by Rene Daumal (cf. p. 55).] 16
thought to the totality of the material forces of revolution; the first, therefore, to have written a work which, in a necessary, absolute sense, cannot lend itself to appropriative interpretation for the bene-
fit of the ruling class. A social democrat of today who supports the use of power in a capitalist regime cannot lay any claim to Marx without looking ridiculous. Whoever claims to be a Marxist has no choice but to think on behalf of the international revolutionary pro-
létariat; otherwise he commits a deception so infamous that he sinks into the most grotesque form of shame.

Even Hegel, who revived in our time the old, dialectical method used by all revolutionary thinkers, was not only robbed by the entire Hegelian right wing, but was betrayed as well by himself (or rather by the bourgeois Prussian who lived inside the same skin) to the benefit of a status quo imperialism. Marx, who condemned dialectics in the Hegelian school, seemed nothing more than to avenge the living Hegel against the bourgeois Hegel when he attacked the latter and damned, with Engels, to ‘put back on its feet’ the master’s dialectic.

So I haven’t led you astray. I could have let you pursue an increas-
ingly conscious ‘pure consciousness’ in an individual and sterile metaphysical search. All living thought negates that which is individ-
ual. I didn’t want to let you fall asleep in a pleasant intellectual pas-
time. Reality is harder. You have to search, not for yourself, but for all men: under this condition your thought will be real. But right away, you realize the existence of a social class of oppressors who are ready to pounce on the first word out of your mouth; and no sooner do they suspect the existence of a thought in those words than they take over your language and freeze it among their dogmas-corpuses.

This bourgeois has a favorite dogma: a so-called ‘freedom of thought’. You have to realize when coping with this hypocrisy, this lie, that so long as there are class antagonists, the only thought which deserves to be called ‘free’ is the one which, on behalf of the oppressed class, pursues the radical destruction of this master class.

Free thought is also true thought. I will call a true thought any thought which is unquestionable and irrefutable, that is, a thought whose expression will never, in any case, in any way, lend itself to being used by the ruling class against the oppressed class. Thus, in the

spiritual and social history of ancient India, which we have been briefly discussing as one possible example, so many different social strata either coexisted or went by in succession, so many revolu-
tions were spawned or aborted, that it is legitimate to attempt to track down in the traditions of its past few vestiges of true thought; we will find them by seeking out the quality of imperishability which I just defined.

At this point I don’t want to dig out the living yet hidden core of the thought expressed by the philosophical literature of India; we are not in India, and since an effort of this sort can not be applied to immediate social needs, it’s only outcomes would be a useless – and therefore wrong, false, and dead – system. Over the course of our search for imperishability, we may encounter moments and pro-
ces of thinking which were put forth by the sages of India; only then will we sometimes let these unknown men who spoke out in the past speak out again, better than we are able to, on what we have to say today. For example, we can find, starting now, precious illus-
trations in Hindu philosophies of the principles which have all along been informing our discussions.

The Sages of India

Something else helped to spread powerful truths in the vast philo-
osophical and mystical literature of India, truths which were the fruit of ancient revolts and the seeds of future revolutions. The theologi-
cal books themselves are undermined and poisoned by truths which negate them. I have ignored as irrelevant to the social history of the period the role of the ascetics, who, after one year of solitary medita-
tion, would pass on their teachings to a few rare disciples. There is no way we can know anything about the level or kind of knowledge to which these men had attained. But I venture to advance the fol-
lowing concept which is up to you to test through a dialectical study of the history of Hindu thought. We can extend our trust at least far enough to affirm that many of these ascetics were in fact truly great thinkers. And so they were great.

Anusmrti. They denied all dogmes, because they recognized their power to oppress. Furthermore, they were incapable of seeking.
truth without desiring it for all of humanity. Some of them thus came back to society to teach men the doctrine of freedom; such were the cases of Mahavira and Buddha. Others went further ahead in their thinking. They remembered similar attempts and how they failed. And they wondered why. As I say this, I cannot believe these invertebrate seekers were blind, but to that extent whose clarity dazzles me—and I have lived such a short time and studied men and society so little that the emerald ruling class appropriates as its own benefit (and thereby guarantees) all manifestations of time and evolutionary thought. They knew that any public expression of their thought would have provided new instruments of oppression to new pawns, to new tyrants ... They didn't have a proleotarian which could materialize their thought in the social arena. Some of them, probably, partly and simply dropped out, and, holding the 'saviors' of the world in contempt, died from the sublime thought: 'The truth is, and nothing else matters.' And then there were those who realized: The body? Society? Illusion. Maybe. But the pain, the ignorance, the slavery which the body and society make millions of men on earth suffer! Real, real, real! I have found the path of deliverance. But if I teach the method, men will turn it into a doctrine which will do nothing but reinforce their enslavement. And yet the method is a good one, the right one. Over the course of the ages, there will be privileged times when human misery attains its most bitter, most conscious, and thus most powerful form and demands a method by which to break its chains. Men, for the ages to come, perpetuate the knowledge which I have had the good fortune to acquire. Then there will be men who will know how to derive from this wherewithal of universal deliverance the right method for their historical time.' The archetypical teacher seeks out disciples. He puts their bodies, their minds, their passion, their wills to a thousand various tests over a long period of initiation; that is, of beginning and of preparation. Most of them do not withstand these tests. With kind irony, he sends them back into the world filled with useless knowledge, sure of themselves. For what he wants to test is each one's scientific propen-
tion, is a synthesis of two doctrines: Sanatkada, an absolute material-ism or dialectics of universal evolution; and Yoga, a technique for individual development, a kind of scientific mysticism. Sanatkada has certainly prepared a number of Hindu minds in a dialectic science of social evolution; and Yoga encompasses a certain number of meth-ods whose effectiveness has been borne out by centuries of experi-ence and which could be put to good use as a means of revolutionary education.

It matters little whether we admit or not the scarcely verifiable existence of a revolutionary communism passed down by this oral tra-tition. In all ages, there were always revolutionary dialecticarians. They were usually not understood and were thought of as hermetic authors. Heraclitus came up with the fundamental principles of the Hegelian dialectic; but it seems his philosophy remained purely phi-losoophy, since it encountered at the time no economic forces capable of putting it into practice. You could say that Heraclitus thought not so much for his age as for ours. Starting in the most ancient times, dialectics has been awaiting its appointed time. The bell has rung.

So I have cited Yoga, which teaches that whatever can be a good for mankind becomes an evil if it is sought exclusively by and for the individual. For example, it is possible to speak of man's spiritual forward march; but whenever this progress solely for individual satisfaction will be truly regressing.

The school of Advaita (which means 'negating dualism') in Ve-dantic philosophy has preserved the trace of several spontaneously forged truths brooded in centuries of revolt and religious fermenta-tion and tempered in the fires of social antagonists. The expression Advaita itself, often translated in the West as 'nomism', contains a verity; it signifies: 'the negation of dualism is true.' History has shown that philosophical dualism has been a masterly servant for the forces of religious enslavement. Any religion, insofar as it is a means of social oppression in the hands of a ruling class, takes on a dialectic form no matter what its particular circumstances may be. It can be, for instance, the matter/spirit dualism of Christianity: matter is 'controllable'; the masses must therefore resign themselves to suffer 'mysteriously'; their 'mystifications' will greatly edify their 'spirit'.

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In the meantime, naive faith, the Christian resignation of the self, allows the feudal lord and the priest to fill up the 'mysteri-al' bellies. Yet on the other hand, proclaiming the truth of 'monism' is insuffi-cient. A philosophical monism could still readily be twisted into play-ing the same role as dualism. When Pikhivanov declares that the Marxist dialectic is monistic, it is rather in a sense which implies active squaring of duality. And so for the Hindu Advaita. It is not a matter of post-poning pure away, but rather of squaring the dualism which threatens to enshroud our minds and spirit and, of course, our bodies as well. Since dualism is a force for the preservation of the bourgeois, neodualism can only be a mode of thought as lively as it is revolutionary. The central postulate of Advaita also puts forth a verity: 'all things are in the self, but the self is in no-one thing.' This formulation in all its simplicity, as we can see, condenses pantheism, which in the West serves as a common vehicle for a so-called 'Hindu mode of thought.' By adding to it the principle that the 'self' (Atman) has no value unless it is understood as belonging to any thinking man and not to one particular individual consciousness, we condemn in the same stroke subjective idealism, another Western version of 'true Hindu thought.' These two condemnations lead finally to a positive out-come: things, since they do not contain any 'self' or 'consciousness,' can be seen as subject only to a determinism which is neither inside nor outside of them but whose necessity is at one with their very movement.

This in fact is the direction Hegel took in his interpretation of Hindu thought; he even managed to be authoritative in spite of the scarcity and the vagueness of the translated texts available during his period. One must admit that thanks to a few crude tricks of transla-tion and improper systematization used as a basis, it has been possi-ble since then to establish in the West the most egregious fabrications of Vedantic doctrine, from the form of intellectual eschewal determined by who-knows-what miasma of stupidity and 'Intelli-gence Service' characteristic of Theosophy to the intelligent and strictly authoritative commentaries of M. Rene Guenon, who
I want my voice like a stone out everywhere
straight out and away anywhere you're not
I can my stone out into space, but, God,
in my place do you have ears

God, God, God, good old damn Deus,
beardless, hairless,
with nary a breeze,
You're not good, you're old, damn old,
damn old God, I'm not swearing,
old and ageless, deaf and careless,
I neither even less.
You don't have the eye of God, God,
not the arm of God, God,
not a God foot, not a God belly,
not a God skin, God,
God without man
God without devil
God without God.

God, damn Deus in four letters
D as in Desire
E as in Enlighten
U as in Universe
S as in Stupidity

name of the name
no of name
boly no of name of not God
enough footing around, louse!
here comes rager up red through my teeth
here's one looking, into the void, marching
in eye, here's my voice marching
in ear, here's my snare bullets, zing!
and zing squaring at a real schrout,
at a ripe smacker far and purple
or at a rotten lemon yap
or a smile like a pair of piers, Someone.
Here he comes, he talking to you, God,
his praising to you, God, he's talking about God
he's putting bicorns on your inexistence,
he's sticking fake ears on your inexistence,
and he's putting long white hairs on,
hairs everywhere all around your emptiness.
God, damn Deus in four letters,
there's no way left to understand
he's holiering, the skunk, he's holiering: God, God,
here he comes the padre, yelling your damn four-letter name,
here he comes with his damn yap
and his Desire to Enlighten the Universe with Stupidity.
Poor damn old nothing God!
it's not your fruit you've got that dirty hairy face
white and pink and harmlessly smile,
it's that bastard who slapped on the pam,
that padre who stuck you up in heaven
with his Desire to Enlighten the Universe with Stupidity,
he's the one that6 creased paint on that serene face
in his image, that sneaky old bastard,
bechelling and bashing hard-headed men
per omens saccula sacculorum.
As for me, priest, I spit in your face in the name of God,
it's for my own health,
and it's a ritual gesture—and
and I'm talking to that dead man
that tiny little dead man
you can't see him: you fool, he's right there in your hand,
you nailed him in two pieces of wood—

METAPHYSICAL INTUITION IN HISTORY

Dead man my good old brother
A thousand and one times dead man,
As all lands a thousand and one times murdered
by that swarming race of rats who talk to God,
You had eyes, my good old brother, eyes that could see!
you had a voice that could wake the thousand year-old living dead
that could awaken a violent vitality in the hearts of slaves,
you had all the same stuff a man carries around,
you gave away everything,
your eyes, your mouth, and all the rest,
to your brothers so they could make themselves a God
from your worn-out human remains.
You gave it all.
The man you had been was no more.
And all of a sudden you were standing face to face
with the Emptiness of God.
That evening, on the Mount of Olives,
you, the man denying your humanity,
you, by yourself, already sacrificed right to the quick of the soul,
you saw the emptiness of your own face
facing you
face to empty face, you saw God,
Ah, yes right at that instant, what a flash
what a pillar of thunder over the earth
between your human emptiness and the emptiness of God
you had killed your human past
you had killed your hope for a divine future
Then, oh yes! then only was there the sole presence, one to one,
of Man, of God,
of Man identical to God in his emptiness
Identical for no more than a moment, a single moment,
Christ, emptiness of man on the Mount of Olives,
Christ, emptiness of God on the Mount of Olives,
"YOU’VE ALWAYS BEEN WRONG"

you saw yourself, you saw God, God saw you
in the dazzling and formless mirror . . .

now, you scream— you can scream:
right through your casque, my fingers
are already squeezing your rotting heart,
and age-old legions of slaves,
your visitors, my brothers, my gods,
are the strength of my arms, so—
so you know you’re going to pop like a flea
between my fingers. - Ain’t no good god ain’t no good god;
scream, ain’t no good god’s arms’ human rambles,
and you took my good old brother—
no way he could avoid getting killed
once that life blew open there on the Mount—
you devoured his human face,
you insulted him with the same king
you nailed him up on that yard and that mast
you put in his mouth your lying words
and you blew your plaque wind at his back

And, padre, you took the helm of this Ship,
hauled along by the throbbing sails of human flesh,
across the ages,
and this Ship— you heard me: this Ship—
this tremendous Ship
put together for the duration by you, padre,
the Ship called Christendom
hauled along by throbbing legions of slaves
across Christian ages,
you lured out this Ship (in return for perfectly honourable
munitions, right, Pope?)
to kings, they brought you their galley slaves,
and then to the flies feeding on royal carrion—
for that bourgeoisie also furnishes galleys slaves

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(but be careful, my little padre! I think the latest batch isn’t
gonna swallow your line for much longer.)
And across Christian ages
your lying word, from four evangelistic mouths
swallowed from the Desire to Enlighten the Universe with
Friedman,
has betrayed the motionless flesh of my good old brother,
nailed up on that yard and that mast,
not responsible for your Ship, you jackal,
he who made the Empires of God from Human Emperors
yes . . . but he also who flows in legions of human flesh
in the veins of my tightening fingers
and here, take this, your rotten heart as it pops,
crack like a nut.

But wait, it’s not over so easily;
one kicks off and a thousand regenerate:
stay clear, church vermin!

The sail of throbbing flesh curtesies on,
my good old brother’s corpse, deaf and blind,
still hauling the Ship,
the Good Ship Christendom through the hedges.
He hadn’t planned on that . . . But
but after all this corpse is a corpse,
even though I love you from the depths of despair,
my good old brother, you’re just a piece of carrion.
Your numbed body, which you threw to us as fodder,
strips just like my human corpse will stink,
it’s chewed up by millions of worms, by
Roman Catholic worms, by
Orthodox worms, by
Protestant worms, by worms
each one can growling the next
each one more faithful than the next
to the true and authentic purity.
8: you’ve always been wrong of the great Christian pestilence, and everywhere, in the East under various names, Krishna, Buddha, Io — all of them the same carrion, everywhere my good old brother under thirteen different names you’re chewed up by millions of worms each one out-growing the next each one more faithful than the next to the true and authentic purity of the great Brahman pestilence of the great Buddhist pestilence of the great Lamaist pestilence of the great Taosist pestilence of the great universal pestilence: the stinking odor of sacrilege. Consummated carrion, making the cemeteries bloom; your life, good old brother, has left the Ship, your life already shared among us all shortly before that business with the cross, up there on the mountains with the ever trees where you sacrificed Man and God in the same Emptiness. Your life is no longer this cross-bonded corpse; your life has vomited out the Ship and the entire race of cockroaches who talk about God under the four-fold protection of the holy evangelists. Yea. Your life has multiplied in inanimate throughs in legions of bleeding men, always tormented by the same tormentors, always under the holy protection of the same priesthood per omnia saecula saeculorum in the cemeteries of divine right Royalty, in the cemeteries of divine right bourgeoisie, per omnia saecula saeculorum. For the Emptiness of God was Some Thing at that time when he negated himself in Man. Then God you are chaste, the black flesh which those fictitious missionaries help to die as Christians — dozens of them for every kilometer of railway for the greater glory of Christian civilization, to build the Good Ship Christendom, Serpentize God with millions of black heads sliding in pain across Africa, in your my good old brother’s vengeance is ripening and weighing itself in anticipated pleasure, and you, Serpentize God with billions of yellow heads burning under hairs of cotton, under bombs dropped from airplanes blessed on departure by a Christian hand, living God, guillotines are being worn out on the self-regenerating swarms of your heads, the good old brother’s blood flows in your veins too, while plotting and anticipating the pleasure of his Emptiness through also the black and white God who travels all through America, through the God with a million pale heads, with black hands, but, but soon red, but but sorry good old brother, sorry to have sullied you by calling you God. It’s your blood which swells these steamboats called men, ain’t no good, ain’t no good, your blood-red oceans where you’ll drown finally, ain’t no good god, a billion padres vicariously, ambulators, bastards, ain’t no good god, your turn, your turn for the Word your turn, human Emptiness of God.
You've always been wrong

Once the five fingers of your red hand
Have wiped the world's face,
Then, set up in front of yourself humankind's past
And alone, having purified the world's face
With the fires of the good old brothers' vengeance,
Purified the world's face of all vermin, all that vermin
Which already suspects and fears you
As the Antichrist,
Alone, with pale, yellow, and black heads,
Alone, yes, a terrible Antichrist,

— Antichrist to make that Christian vermin tremble,
All that vermin, Buddhist, Brahmanic,
Lamaist, Taoist vermin —
Alone in this instant and delivered
From lies past or future,
You'll get the great miracle moving again
— But this time, by the fire of the good old brother's vengeance, don't let the vermin regenerate
— Alone facing off with the Empress of God,
In this brotherly
And dazzling
Mirror,
You'll know

Reality

Christ on the Mount of Olives

Moreover, the Marxist school of thought has treated with due condition the issue of Christianity's being a factor for social slumber
And enslavement. Since at this juncture I'm especially concerned with propounding the critical moment of the awakening of consciousness
Which proceeds the stifling influence of religion. I must emphasize
The climate which occurred in the thinking of the 'Gallican agitator': until the Mount of Olives, Jesus hardly attacked anything more
Than the religious forms of the Jews of his time; on the Mount, as far
As we can make out through the vestige or the hypocrisy or the naiveté of the apostles' reports, something phenomenal happened.
What could it have been if not that 'revelation' or, rather, that awakening to the truth which, in man's case, amounts to the negation of
The personal God? After that much-awaited night, right up to his
death on the cross, the Christ, either dumfounded or watching out
For his disciples, seems to behave like a robot doing 'as it was written'.
This is how Nerval sees it, and he saw it magnificently in his
'Christ on the Mount of Olives'.

He turned to them who, awaiting him below,
Were dreaming they were kings, wise men, prophets...
But killed, lost in animal sleep,
And he cried out, 'God is not! No!'
They slept. 'The sun, my friends, do you know?
My brow has touched the eternal vault;
I am bleeding and broken, and must suffer for days!

Brothers, I was wrong! A-story! A-story! A-story!
There is no god at the altar where I am sacrificed...
God is not! God is no more!' But still they slept!

... searching for the eye of God, I found only a socket —
Vast, black, bottomless — and from this dwelling, night,
Radiating, thickening ever outward over all the world...
...you've always been wrong...

I suspect that at that very moment—a moment which could by all rights be called `now' if present times were only ripe for a revolution of words, which is doubtful at that very moment Jesus, not altogether conscious as yet of his revolutionary role, in sacrificing himself, his individuality, for suffering humanity and in detaching the personal God, realized through an unspeakable torment the negation of duality, the Advaita of the Ebdas.

...And still you'd go on about freedom of thought! Even when the tract, the liveliest words of the Upanishads, of Buddha, of Jesus—if they were pronounced as I presume to reconstitute them just to make it easy on you—when all these words of liberating revolt have become shackles, dogmas, prisons. Today you can't be sure to speak freely and truly unless you attack the bourgeoisie on behalf of the proletariat. You can't hope to express yourself without fear of being robbed and betrayed unless it is in a society without oppression watching over your every word. This is the goal the revolutionary proletariat seeks, but it can do so only by means of a violent overthrow of power. This mechanism which Marx clarified is so simple, so merciless, so irrefutable; as I said, it's only those who sense themselves as its future victims that tremble. Let's now suppose—not even a perfectly共产istic social state, which itself is a limit-state analogous to a mathematical limit and as such is brought up as it is to affirm as real—let's just suppose the existence of a society constantly moving toward communism under the direction of an already enormous proletariat majority; there is really nothing unproven about such a society. The proletariat has come to power by becoming fully aware of its historical role. It needs no hypothetical dogmas, no ethos or official religion in order to govern itself and to finish the job of eliminating the residual traces of whatever has survived of the bourgeoisie. It proclaims loud and clear its conscious and precise goal. If living thoughts well up in us because it will not stifle them or use them as ideological masks. It will let them go to fulfillment like the unlettered activity of thinking humanity. Having learned from its age-old experience, it can and must take henceforth the most thorough precautions so that these renewed thoughts will not crystallize into dogmas, not be set up as religions. With its awareness bolstering its confidence, it will not lack the means to remain vigilant.

Above all, the best possible antireligious educational system will have to be organized. During the revolutionary period, when religion appears as an old enemy, the antireligious and antireligious struggle, clearly and purely negative, is all that is needed. In a communist state, men will have the leisure time to reflect on humanity's past experiences. They will remember the underdogged power by which the ruling classes set up religious ideologies by cleverly using the remains of real thinkers. Now, we may well hope that the members of the proletariat will spend a good part of their leisure time striving to think about themselves and to become conscious of what they are, but they will have to be careful that their words do not stiffen their thoughts into dogma. Truce, the danger wouldn't be the same as it would be in a society based on class antagonism; there would be no oppressive class capable of turning the proletariat's expressed thought into a religion or some other form of oppression. In the limit-state of perfect communism, there would be nothing left to fear: man would think freely and these two words which adorn the bourgeois basis of today would finally have a real meaning. But we can rightfully suppose no more than a society actively on the move toward a limit-communism. In which case, any expression of thought could become, no doubt with increasing difficulty, a force for regeneration, a brake applied to that evolution.

Dystopian Institutes

The remedy is always located next to the problem. Neither 'Nature' nor 'Providence' set it up this way, but rather the dialectical law which states that all things call for their own opposite. We can find the very force which can nip any threatening dogma in the bud quite clearly manifested throughout the history of dogmas and religions. We will have to extract from the thinking activity of great heroes, of destroyers of religions (founders, in spite of themselves, of new religions), of numerous mystics, the idea which could found a new dogma or a general theosophy just as pernicious as this or that...
You've Always Been Wrong

We all make mistakes in judgment. We all have our own biases and blind spots. It's part of being human. But sometimes we make mistakes that are so fundamental that they change the course of history.

I've been wrong about many things in my life. I've made decisions that have had unforeseen consequences. I've underestimated the power of the forces that align against me. But I've learned from these mistakes, and I've grown as a result.

And yet, despite my best efforts, I continue to make mistakes. My ideas are imperfect. My theories are flawed. I'm not infallible.

But I'm committed to learning from my mistakes, to correcting my course when necessary. I'm open to new information and new perspectives. And I'm willing to admit when I'm wrong.

Because I believe in the power of truth and the importance of accuracy. And I know that只有通过不断修正我们的错误，我们才能真正进步。
aside so as to start all over the job of thinking by attempting to de-
cribe what happen so exactly as possible.

I didn't start from an 'idealite' position. I noted that the only thing
I can grasp through immediate active intuition is consciousness.

Whether he affirms or denies the 'reality' of things, whether he
claims to be a 'materialist' or an 'idealist,' no man can refine me. If
later I note that this consciousness has contents and represents vari-
ous changing objects to itself, I would still add nothing to this de-
scription by stating that these contents are 'dissolved' or 'real.' But my
thinking really progresses as soon as I perceive the irreversibility of
this relationship of contents to container; for consciousness, which,
rather more than just a 'content,' is the very means by which objects
are represented, can not be thought of, except by means of a hollow
abstraction, as contained by things. Since it grasps itself, conscious-
ness necessarily sets itself off from the existence of such as things.
Later, you and I will try to see how consciousness gets localized as
things in the form of a dialectical necessity. Such an attitude is very
difficult to maintain. It is the same as that of Hegel's *absolute idealism.*

Consciousness can maintain such an attitude only if it remains rigor-
sously oriented toward the universal, if it is sought out, not for any
particular individual, but for all men; and, in a corollary, it must not
stop noting the obvious constant of things as such. Indeed, as you've
seen, if you want to think for all men, you must find an incorruptible
mode of expression; and you can't unless you take the economic
structure of society into account. There is no reason to be concerned
about the free expression of thought in the case of subjective idealists
or, more simply, the case of an individual thinking only for himself. In
this case, thought seems to become much easier to exercise and to ex-
press; but, in fact, as soon as this occurs, thought dies. In his *Philo-
sophy of Right,* Hegel sets about thinking for himself; he is only too
happy to apply his system to justify the existing social status quo; the
dialectician of change, the successor of Heraclitus suddenly stops at a
particular moment in social evolution, and against all expectations,
seems to conceive of it as being a 'good' and definitive state! As such
prints, Hegel is no longer an 'absolute idealist.' He's just an 'idealist.'

He becomes an individualistic thinker. Next to the real Hegel, who

**Metaphysical Intuition in History**

is and always will be the 'Titan of the human spirit,' as Villers de
l'Isle-Adam calls him, another Hegel appears, a clever philosopher
able to serve the imperialism of his country with the mortal remains
of his thought. As for the master's disciples, they all fell completely
back into individualistic philosophical pursuits, into the 'idealism'
which only Karl Marx ever condemned. Due to its blindness in the
face of social antagonism, this philosophical 'idealism,' whether it
was declared to be 'left-wing' or 'right-wing,' in time became power-
less in the struggle for the social liberation of thought. In reaction,
Marx had no choice but to declare himself a *materialist,* even as he
retained Hegel's dialectical method and antidualistic attitude. This is
how dialectics could be said to be 'set back on its feet.'

'Materialism,' first and foremost a fighting word, expresses the con-
demnation of everyday idealism and of all individualistic philosophi-
cal pursuits; it equally condemns all dualism, even if this dualism
claims to be 'materialism.' Mr. Le Dantec is a materialist, or so he
says, but his 'materialism' is only one half of a dualist doctrine. He
implicitly admits the duality of mind and matter, but through igno-
rance of the dialectical method, and in order to obviate the contra-
diction inherent to such a system, he prefers simply to omit mind.

This is why Mr. Le Dantec as a 'materialist' is an admitted reaction-
ary. But Marx's doctrine is set forth as a 'dialectical materialism,' and
that expression doesn't lend itself to confusion. Marx got it right the
first time: it is henceforth impossible to construct a materialist dia-
lectics of social history which is not Marxian, just as it is impossible to
construct a geometry of experiential space which is not Euclidian.

Heuristic Hegelian 'idealists' which Kautsky attacked aimed to con-
struct historical dialectics on idealist premises; the dialectical soci-
ology of Hegel was simply a part of an idealist philosophical system.

On the contrary, when I asked you to give me a try, I wanted to prove
to you that it is impossible to think really if you refuse to think for all
men; and that you can't think for all minds without running up
against the obvious existence of a dialectical determinism of social
antagonism. To realize that, there's no need to bring in some ab-
strat system to represent the world; in fact, it's essential to clear out
all philosophical biases.
A 'free thought' is not a thought free from the 'choice' of this or that form of expression, as though indifference were any guarantee of freedom. We've seen that if a thought is really alive, the form of its expression is determined by the necessity incumbent upon it to escape the enslavement which the ruling class threatens to impose upon it. In the final analysis, the means of expression of thought is determined, on one hand, by the biological conditions of language and its state of historical evolution (which simply provide the possibility of expression), and, on the other hand, by the economic con-tradictions of society, which determine the existence of this or that form of expression. This is the price that language, if it recognizes this determination, pays to be fully conscious, to understand the necessity of its own manifestation; only in this sense is it free or, rather, freed, also in this sense only the 'materialist' thinker is free. There is no other freedom but this. 'Free will,' the 'freedom of indifference,' is only a phantasm of liberty. It is of the essence of thought to think all things as determined: the language of the thinker just as any other object. Now, thought itself is not an object of knowledge; real thought is defined as that which recognizes the process of determining, the determined is not the conscious 'I,' but rather the forms through which it apprehends itself. A materialist which sought to determine — if these words could in fact have any meaning — the knowing 'I' would only add to the known world a new material principle, one so far unheard of, a 'thought' which would be a thing, this materialism would be false, for conscious thought can not be said to exist in the material world. It thinks, on the contrary, the necessity of the world. Thus, the true materialist is he who recognizes himself as the sole thinker who is really free. Only from the moment when he has clearly recognized himself as this real thinker can a man begin the true pursuit of being 'ever more conscious,' not for himself personally, but generally, for every mind in actual operation.

The same dialectic which determines the history of religions must be found at the basis of all manifestations of human thought: art, ethics, philosophy. The history of science will be more complex; scientific thought is in fact a continnal compromise between two types of inscription: the technical improvement compelled by the latest necessities of the ever-evolving means of production and trade; and the purely speculative tendency which makes the scientist become now and then a philosopher and awaken from his technical work to check its direction, like the tailor who must become an astronomer to verify his course.

In all these areas, we will find the same 'ignominious' law: all thought springs from the negation of a nonexistence, of an established dogma, and the forces of social oppression construct their dogmas using the dead expressions of true thoughts.

The history of ethical ideologies is no more than an extension of the history of religions. After a certain number of centuries of struggle between human thought and religions, despite the ability of that Protean called religion to take on a thousand various forms, the numerous blows landed on him can sometimes weaken his resistance. This happened in Europe in the modern era. The quick succession and the coexistence of various antagonistic sects, all laying equal claims to God, gradually generates, however, a certain skepticism concerning them in the minds of a growing number of individuals. The moment a large enough number of men stop acknowledging religious values as absolute, it becomes dangerous for the ruling class to shore itself up on these shaky dogmas. Its death for State Religion and the beginning of the separation of Church and State.

For a long time, all the attacks aimed against religions were launched in the name of God. So in any transition period, you'll see enemies of the ruling class, enemies of all religion, still invoking God as their authority, whence Robespierre's dictum, 'whence the cult of the Supreme Being.' But such an ideology didn't connect with the force of large revolutionary masses; it couldn't last. As it went about setting itself up as a dominant class, the bourgeoisie developed a new ideology which was supposed to replace State Religion; an ideology nevertheless flexible enough to encompass the still very powerful current of religion which it could also frequently exploit — which explains the bourgeoisie's need to give precedence to its ethical values and the freedom of thought. The 'secular ethics' which was thus established can be divided up, roughly, into two levels. On the
first, there are principles of theoretical ethics, borrowed mainly from the thinkers of the eighteenth century and summed up by a few famous words—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, Republic, etc.—which quickly took on a sacred aura and the intense ‘taboo’ by which any social order protects itself. These principles were crystallized into the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen, and their great merit resides in their still semisensual emotional power which in turn is related to the great flexibility with which they are applied; likewise, the bourgeoisie is able to justify or condemn whatever it pleases in the name of a Justice which is no less abstract, metaphysical, and unverifiable than monarchy’s God. The second level of official bourgeois ethics consists of precepts, rules, and duties which are more precise, more practical, and better adapted to the social order to the extent that they stem directly from the economic structure of the nation and the conditions under which it developed. From this we get the duties and all the biases revolving around individual property and the family; finally and especially, the internal and external political conditions which allowed the birth and growth of the Republic clustered around the word Patrie, our native land, and created a focal point of sentimental forces which allowed the ruling capitalists to send millions of men to slaughter on the battlefields and to line their pockets from these massacres.

I don’t claim to be able to sum up in these few words the enormous mesh of infectious dogmas cast over the people by the so-called democracy of the bourgeoisie. I simply want to put out a reminder that the ideology of a class in power can quite easily not present itself as a religion, can even claim to be independent of any religion; but this is just an indigeneous smoke screen, and, in reality, ‘secular ethics’ plays the same role in the French Republic as religious instruction. In general, schoolteachers, tutors to their own people, lay waste to children’s minds with the sacred words of Native Land, Duty, Justice, Field of Honor, as priests do in like fashions with their own equivalents: God, Sin, Providence, and Paradise. Even so, it appears that in the wake of the most recent carnage, a certain small but growing number of educators has become aware of the abhorrent hypocrisies of these words and has sensed its solidarity with the masses, the only people capable of cutting down the class of pilgiers which defends its treasures with the weapon it calls the ‘secular republican ethic.’

So where is that bourgeois ideology car we find what is eternally alive and revolutionary, that real value which we necessarily encounter in the wake of any negation of an oppressive dogma? If you have that much trouble finding it, it’s because you’ve forgotten this: the French Revolution was the political sanctification of an economic revolution begun a long time before it, with the introduction of machines and factories for the production of goods. The ideological Revolution had also preceded the political Revolution. In the effort toward destruction and liberation, in the destructive and critical powers of the great writers of the eighteenth century—that’s where you’ll find that real value. But watch out, these are nonetheless Janus-faced figures: they’re strong and tall as they attack the old social order and political and religious authority, but there on the ruins of the ancien régime, they already all too often let the future bourgeoisie take root. And so it has to be; for, not detecting the goal of the proletariats among the people, they couldn’t know that men could later be oppressed by their liberating ideas.

We had to wait for Marx and his successors before we could find men conscious of the oppressive power of any ideology controlled by a ruling class; the positive result of their destructive and revolutionary work was not a new ideology, but a method: in science, it is called dialectics, and in social action, class struggle.

Why Write a Book?
—Okay, but when do we get to the experimental metaphysics?
—My, but you’re in a hurry. You still haven’t figured out that we have no start from the beginning! I would have led you astray if I had let you believe in the possibility of a ‘free’ thought independent of social problems. You’re seeking something I’m seeking too. We still don’t know what that thing is, nor even if finding it is possible. But if after that dark picture of our economic slavery you keep on seeking, your aiment is reasonable. I see that the only thing I have any right to say to you is: I don’t know whether you’ll find anything, but I
know your search will be in vain and even harmful to humanity as long as one class of men exploits another.

- Fine. But you've talked about up to now is religions or their substitute, class ethics. Religion is a social phenomenon, so it's not surprising that it's tied to the economic forces which govern human life. Religion can't be between you and me. If we pursue our search privately, there's no need to fear that it will be turned against human freedom.

- You're right. But you, you're talking to, I'd like you to be multiple, as many of you as possible. I'm writing a book, and I think I'm responsible for whatever good or bad it might do. If men used it contrary to my intention, I could only excuse myself of having written an ambiguous work subject to misinterpretation.

- Okay, but why write a book?

- First, formally, your question is lame and is subject to a refutation ad absurdum. If the fact of writing or not writing a book were contingent, you'd have to be in a position to ask me one or the other of the following questions. Why do you write? And why don't you write? Now, if I hadn't written this book, you wouldn't have read my words, and you couldn't ask me that first question. The only one you can ask me is: Why do you write? So, by asking that question, you admit that I needed to write this book. (I'm developing this argument, which appears to be purely formal, just to get used to thinking of what exists from the angle of its necessity.)

Next, all individual speculations quickly encounter a ceiling, provided it doesn't explode so it can pursue its own ends in the universe. Or, just to start again back at the beginning of things. I become aware of myself by negating myself. I know myself in the end as 'pure I,' as the essence of what constitutes my individuality. And in spirit of that, I keep on perceiving the world from a particular point of view. Henceforth, I'm shut up in a subjective idealism which I can no longer leave, unless I perform another negation. The only thing left for me to negate is myself as an individual. Then, the realization becomes a universal value, and a new progress is possible. But I must know that it is possible for any and all men. Starting then, I am determined to devote all my energy to provoking other men to an awak...
You've always been wrong.

- No, I told you, at the beginning, that a positive cognition had reality and value only in as far as it was the anticipation of an act of consciousness. Thus, a scientific law is true and valid as far as it posits the conditions in which it can come to fruition, by giving a phenomenon. The philosophy of science, an anticipation of that anticipation, can thus constitute a science—a potential one, indeed, but also a valid one as well. As for metaphysics, it is valid as long as it postulates the conditions necessary for a concrete experience of consciousness itself. In these conditions, philosophy can construct and remain a valid form of knowledge.

- So let's get moving! What about that knowledge?

- What? You think we're not already there? Didn't I clearly establish for you the necessity of leaving behind the individualistic quest as a primary condition for an awakening of consciousness? And another condition: taking sides with the oppressed class and in no way blocking its revolutionary function?

- That's not fair. You stated the conditions. I'm expecting the expectations.

- Watch out. Wanting to win everything without being aware of all the conditions, you just might lose everything. Because there are other conditions. And the very ones I pointed out to you are quite difficult to realize. One day when I sketch out the overview of the anticipations of the progressive awakening of consciousness (if this task proves possible), at each word I utter, I will risk being misinterpreted, robbed, and taken over, all for the benefit of a dogma of slumber and slavery. So I must take as many preliminary precautions as possible. And I tirelessly repeat: The experience of the consciousness which I attempt to anticipate will never be possible for whoever hasn't first realized certain conditions; in particular, for whoever hasn't done everything he feels capable of doing for the true revolutionary liberation of spirits; this metaphysical cognition, today, will therefore not be valid except for a small number of true, exclusively for those whose revolutionary force is will in no way weakened; it will not be valid for humanity as long as humanity is divided into antagonistic classes.

Metaphysical intuition in history.

- So you admit that your 'metaphysics' could weaken in many men's hearts the potential for revolutionary action?

- If I were even the slightest bit worried about it, I'd stop writing now. I'm committed to expressing myself in a language such that men incapable of grasping the revolutionary essence of my thought can neither comprehend nor use it in any way; for them, it will simply be useless. But knowing that it can awaken the thought of a few others, I don't want to backtrack from this farcical responsibility.

- So... some sort of irredentism after all?

- If you wish, but an overt, self-diagnosed metaphysics, one that doesn't hide a truth for being 'dangerous' (just how can a truth be dangerous?), but which on the contrary protects truth by expelling it in precisely chosen terms; one which would pretend that truth not be grabbed by those incapable of grasping it, rather than letting the opposite of truth be read into the words which express it.

- You were talking about the recognition of the necessity of revolution as one of the conditions of spiritual progress. What are the others?

- One thing at a time. But just in case you still don't mind meditating on this obvious truth, which is much less banal than is usually thought: The conditions under which man, the 'social animal,' shows that he's thinking are of two categories: social and biological. Thinking man is linked to two types of natural mechanisms: the body's biological mechanism and society's economic mechanism.

- So finally who are your anticipations of self-denial meant for?

- For those who will be born in a future society, saved from class bonds, for those we'll never see. They too will have unforeseeable struggles to confront; new conditions will be stipulated for the progress of their consciousness. But what I can predict is that they will have one particular condition of existence in common with us: the human body. And with nothing more thus that machine, they'll have their work cut out. Our anticipations won't be enough for them; but, sought after by us according to the principles we have just set forth, they will be universally valid and, I hope, useful.

- So you admit you're a philosopher, but you try to be one in the best sense of the term. And what's left of the philosophers we're fa-
sider with, the ones who've thought and written since the begin-
ning of history. Is it possible to find positive and eternally valid re-
results in their work, insofar as it negates dogma or anticipates con-
ccrete experiences?

- Yes, but only if you study their work in depth at those points
where it brings forth instances of thought meaning nothing except
as relevant to previous instances. You know, once a truth is ex-
presed, its expression can be used to kill any truth. And also, any
truth can be stated by two successive philosophers in two ways which
are contradictory yet equivalent in relation to that basic realization
which brought it up in the first place.

- But then, how are we supposed to derive some one point and
positive doctrine from all these contradictory expressions?

- You're impossible! It's still human thinking talking out of your
mouth. You want par truth written once and for all in a few conven-
ient books? So that those who own these books might be the wise
ones and not the others? Who won't adopt right away the prayer-wheel
system?

- No, because truth is an act. Truth is made. You don't think the
truth, you think truly.

And besides, you know all about the miserable results any at-
ttempts at eclectic philosophy have always had. It's not a matter of
choosing among doctrines. That choice would always be more or
less arbitrary.

But here's what we can do:

You've no doubt suspected and infer you'll have a clear demonstra-
tion that the immoral development of philosophies reproduces a
general reflection of individual speculation. If you wish, it's an in-
 tellectual corollary of Huckle's anti-philosophic view. As our
thought unfolds into our own research, we'll come back to certain
spiritual moments which theorize that philosopher dedicated himself
to expressing. The history of philosophy will be revived so as to feed
our own thought's self-expression.

- But, at any rate, you're going to set up a doctrine; you know, a
thesaurus of thought.

- No. When I try to find out how these philosophers expressed

this or that living instance of thought, I'll always find several seem-
ingly contradictory doctrines. I'll show that it was like this because,
until spiritual reality always comes out of negation, this philosopher
awakened while negating that dogma, just as this other one negated
that other dogma, all according to the times in which they thought.
Philosophy's real meaning will be born out of the clear presentation
of these contradictions.

Metaphysics
No philosophy can prove what a man will think, and so can't deter-
mine what a man must think. Each man will think whatever is before
him, and that is unpredictable. All that can be done is to set forth the
conditions without which a man cannot think and especially the con-
ditions within which he cannot think.

It's up to each one of us to know what must be thought. That war,
no dogma can replace what really will be for us at any particular
moment in time. No dogma to blind us. I can hope only to suggest
methods for fighting against the inertia of sleep. There's no war to
give each man a preview of his way toward liberation; but I'd hope
to shake him off as many ways as I can, he'll bash into all the
door leading to slavery, slavery, and spiritual death. Thanks to this
sort of demonstration of abandon, he'll have to see the only un-
closed door. I can't tell him where it will take him, or even if it will
take him somewhere. But he'll at least know that everywhere else
there's death and that if he doesn't move there's also death.

In fact, I've already pointed a first positive and clear condition
without which any metaphysical quest would be in vain in the final
analysis. I'm talking about a complete adhesion to the revolutionary
will of the proletariat.

- Yes, but that's an outer, foreign condition to the essence of
thought. After all, the class struggle is not metaphysics.

- Not metaphysics? What do you mean? We're men. We each have
a body and an existence linked to the existence of other bodies by
economic relationships. Any man who awakens realizes the existence
of the body and of society. Now, this first awakening is the first meta-
physical act. If metaphysics, as the anticipated progress of conscious-
ness, doesn't take the clear and distinct discernment of that double
necessity as the point of departure, then it has no metaphysics.
- If you're sincere, you must indeed be saying, "To hell with metaphysics!" You must admit you've giving back to this word a value it had lost.

- Probably. But I think I've done it explicitly enough. Spirit no longer has any language by which to express itself. All the religious and all the dogmas serving our oppressors have for a long time turned the language of truth inside out. They have stained and murdered words, leaving behind nothing but empty carcasses which can be used for any end. Since these empty words are of the same class as the emptyers of humanity's labor, the Revolution will wipe them out. I'm anticipating somewhat in advance the era when at last people will be able to speak freely without wrapping each word in ten pages of protective explanations. The word 'metaphysics,' as I say it, is enlazoned language's cry of revolt.
I've put aside the utopian issue of the future of science in a communist society. Since such a society does not yet exist, I can only hope that it will destroy the one type of mechanism that there is to destroy, the one which, implanted in men's brains, mechanizes and enslaves their thought, their reactions and their initiatives, so that it will reestablish science in the honorable position which befits it; and that such a society will recognize the necessity of more efficiently ferreting out mysteries and replacing them with a knowledge which is an art of living, a culture both real and whole. It is also probable that any step taken in this direction by a proletarian state will be seen by conservatives and anarchists as a step backward, just as today it is said mockingly to those who once warded indigeneous over legal abortion and the socialization of children that Soviet Russia is 'going backward' as it abolishes legal abortion and endeavors to reconstruct normal family life. Finally, it is certain that the suppositions, in the true sense of the term (degenerate religions, blind faith, sentimental residues of mysticism whose objects and methods have passed into oblivion, etc.), which the same proletarian country is routing out were poisoned foods, but foods offered (often with the deliberate intent to ensnare) to satisfy real hunger. However, it is not enough to take away from an invalid the food which is killing him; you have to follow it up with helpful nourishment. At present, it is clear that scientific knowledge does not suffice to satisfy the hunger to know, nor is it enough, in order to cultivate a man, to give him an intellectual education, plus an artistic education, plus a physical education, plus a political education. And the need for a more real education and a more real culture intended for the individual himself and not just for his external appearances will summon up men capable of the job: for civilization, it will be a matter of life or death.

But, I repeat, this is utopian thinking. The fact is that in the near future, history being irreversible, two avenues are opening: fascism
and the protestant revolution. The first leads with certainty to the crushing of the individual, to blind mysticsims, and to the abuse of intellectual research, which will be limited to the invention of new means (material and other) of destruction. The second leads perhaps to a better society in which human consciousness will no longer be mechanised by mere verbal knowledge and science, but more than it is filled asleep by promises of paradise or terrified by threats of hell. Sure to lose in the first case, I’m betting on the ‘perhaps.’ I say ‘perhaps’ in order to say the least. My heart would like to say ‘surely,’ but today I’m keeping it silent.

2. Three Drafts of an Outline of the Work

Appeal

Historical Background

Provocations

1. The vision of the Almsman
   int. of self. Rev. of Longstock
   int. of the world. Parapsyche
   metaph. exp. CCI

11. The painful Scandal

Revolt, first act of self-destruction

The Moment of Irony
Metaphysical Intuition in History

1. Being and non-being, correlative
   Substitutes for thought, instruments of social oppression
   Revolution is Awakening

2. The phenomena of religion as awakening and sleep

Provocations to Self-Denial

By which man is provoked to think: the Intangible

1. The vision of the Absurd
   The Revelation of Laughter or The absurd evidence of the
   nearest self
   Reflection daughter of scandal
   Denial of self and human alchemy: separate, then reunite
   what was separated, but without sliding back into
   original sleep
   Paraphrase on The absurd evidence of the intuition of the world
   CCl, or The . . .
   The vision of the Abs. as model of metaphysical
   experiment CCl

II. The painful Scandal: Safering. Panergia

III. Result, first act of self-denial
   The Moment of Irony. Depict.
   It's actually a limit-state: passage from rebel to revolution-
   ary; goes beyond it:
   1) in an act
   2) as death
   3) Intact and integrated. Safering, in a new light
   (cf. alchemy)
APPEAL TO CONSCIOUSNESS

that one must awaken immediately
On Metaphysics as supreme science

METAPHYSICAL INTUITION IN HISTORY

Thought is informed in its own tomb
Suffrances for thought, intestinal of slumber and social
oppression
Revolution is Awakening.
The phenomenon of religion as awakening and sleep:
Revelations and Theologics
Science as awakening and sleep:
Thought and Techniques
Art as awakening and sleep:
Poetry and (Fine Arts)
Individual manifestations

PROVOCATIONS TO SELF-DESTRUCTION

1. The vanishing of the Absurd — The Revolution of Laughter at the
absurd evidence of the intuited self
Reflection daughter of Scandal
Denial of self and human alchemy:
Separate, then . . . but without . . .
Pataphysics or the abs. ev. of the intuition of the world

11. Suffering — The scandal experienced, the painful absurd
Panalgia
Double-edged suffering. A lack. Awareness of a lack

REVOLT

Awakening, first act of self-destruction
Double edge
From Revolt to Revolution
1. DISSERTATION ON PEPHYCICS

I

It will always be most beneficial (didactically) to try at best one can to set out all forms of reasoning as vicious circles; thus, the mind is put on notice to extricate itself, and to do so thinking is necessary. 2 views on science:

1) vulgo: (pragmatism’s universal hidden agenda): means by which not to think (thanks to logical ordering).
2) Paraphysics: provocations to think (thanks to vicious circularity).

II

Paraphysics. Jarry’s definition (nonsense). Humor applied to exact sciences. To know X = to know (~X) only way to know the irreducible. Paraphysics is the reverse of physics. I can balance a Jeez Flies against the rest of the universe. There is no knowledge of the irreducible but through the identification of self with all (~ because: irreducible to what? Let’s say: irreducible to X). It’s enough to make X ~ all in order that . . . etc.) When two fundamental axioms: 1) identity of opposites, 2) progress of consciousness.

Value of paraphysical sophisms. The paraphysical sophism is an apparent sophism which envelops an apparent truth which envelops an apparent sophism which envelops an apparent truth, and so on ad infinitum.

Formal logic of Paraphysics. On paraphysical reasoning. It progresses through paraphysical sophisms going from the arbitrary, from pure fantasy, to necessity, to absolutist rigor; each of these terms containing the other in its turn, and each expressing one aspect at a time of the same reality: the identity of the two terms. Common of Paraphysics: the irreducible (Meyronios); now, the irreducible is such only with regard to an attempt at synthesis in actu-
aly: the only attempt at synthesis in actuality that I can know is that of true consciousness. Thus parapysics shifts knowledge from some abstract, universal comprehension to a particular state of consciousness, to a particular capability for synthesize—that is, to a particular stage in a mind's assimilation of the world. (One must overstep the meaning thus: irreducible to a real synthesis in actuality, not merely to the abstract synthesis of science, oh great Mervinos.)

Paraphysics shall study thus the role of coloration, of perfection, apparently of whom, of man's fancy in the area of knowledge. Extensively in action—Cf. Tao.

And in art—in industry, arts and crafts, bureaucracy, government, etc.

Paraphysical theory of light—in which traditional optics will enter in as a particular incidence of paraphysical optics.

Social Paraphysics—

[Stalek]'

III

[This text stands as an annex to the paragraph titled “Formal logic of Paraphysics,” pp. 31-32 of Tao’s Always Been Wrong.]

Paraphysical arguments do not necessarily set up systems designed to demonstrate the truth of this or that proposition. They generally develop as axiomatic circles and bring the humans spent to a limit-circle of stupor and scandal.

In this line of thinking we can see as paraphysical the famous old vicious circle: Epimenides says that all Cretans are liars; now Epimenides is a Cretan; thus he lies; thus Cretans are not liars; thus Epimenides does not lie, and all Cretans are liars . . . Thus, in fact, this vicious circle is more complex than it seems at first glance; in a way, it forms two loops. It should indeed be noted that ‘Cretans are liars’ means ‘Any Cretan is a liar.’ The falsity of this proposition necessarily implies (by virtue of the principle of oppositions) the truth of the proposition ‘Some Cretans are not a liar’ (or ‘All Cretans are not liars’), but not the truth of ‘No Cretan is a liar’ (or ‘All Cretans are non-liars’). The vicious circle appears thus in two indefinable dichotomous series:

Epimenides says that all Cretans are liars. Now, Epimenides is a Cretan. Thus he lies.

Thus: some Cretan is not a liar.

This: some Cretan is not a liar.

Thus: Epimenides is a liar: thus, some Cretans are not a liar; thus:

(a) Epimenides is a liar . . . etc.

(b) Epimenides is a liar . . . etc.

2. Epimenides is not a liar: thus all Cretans are liars; thus Epimenides is a liar. Thus some Cretan is not a liar; thus:

(a) Epimenides is a liar . . . etc.

(b) Epimenides is a liar . . . etc.

11. Or Epimenides is not a liar: thus all Cretans are liars; thus:

(a) Epimenides is a liar . . . etc.

(b) Epimenides is not a liar . . . etc.

[In the margin of this text we read:]

It would be possible to escape the vicious circle by eliminating the second hypothesis; indeed, if ‘Some Cretans is not a liar,’ Ep., who says ‘Any Cretan is a liar,’ lies. Ep. is a liar, but not all Cretans are. But formal logic does not allow us to rule out this second hypothesis for one can do so only by challenging the meaning, the content of the propositions, the very notion ‘liar’ itself has to be thought out.
10. The capitalized 'Teaching' refers to the practices of the Gurdjieff groups active in France at the time.

11. You're Always Been Wrong.

Thus to say: René Daumal added the comment 'so' in the margin some years after writing the manuscript. This is the first of Daumal's marginal notes mentioned by Jack Daumal in the brief section appended at the end of his introduction. - TV

2. In the margin: 'dialectical?' - TV

3. I wish to emphasize with this proviso the similarity of the occurrence. - ID

4. 'Prima materia' is the traditional alchemical term denoting matter in its pristine state before differentiation. Daumal writes "pure brine"; I feel "raw stone", although in keeping with the prosaic side of Daumal's discursive register, may be misleading. Conversely, 'Great Work' (for Daumal's 'Grand Oeuvre') is often seen in writings on alchemy in place of 'magnum opus'. - TV

5. With a few minor changes, a portion of the preceding section ('The Revelation of Laughter'), from its beginning up to the words 'a forward dash which denounces the goal,' was published in 1929 in the journal Cahiers and placed after the present section ('Paraphysics') whose first few lines were deleted up to 'preordained by Faust'; together they were titled 'Paraphysics and the Revelation of Laughter'. A few pages were included in Chaque fois que J'oublie parfait with the same title, but they were clearly typed in the author's own handwriting: 'On Paraphysical Laughter, that is, our awakening'. In point of fact, these pages appear to be a draft or the text published in this volume and also therefore of the article published in Cahiers. - ID

6. René Daumal's Chaque fois que J'oublie parfait (Each Time the Dawn Appears), subtitled Essai et Notes, U was published by Gallimard in 1923.

The essay also appears, two years after its publication date, in the Mercure de France edition of Le DernierHomme tombee, under the title 'La Paraphysique et la Révélation du Rire' in the 1972 Gallimard reedition of Daumal's Essays and Notes titled L'Evidence Absolue. In
the Gallimard volume, the essay's order follows that of the Rêve text. A translation of this version is included in René Daumal, *The Poem of the Wind*, trans. Mark Polizzotti (San Francisco: City Lights, 1965), 15-13, under the title "Epiphanies and the Revelation of Laughter". - TV

6. Reference to a character in *Koren of Larry's Explosive Opinions of Denise Daumal, Inexplicable*. - TV

7. For *jolie boule*, the original French is *site de pêche*. *Type boule*, a more literal translation, is not adequate to convey its resonance with the expression *par site de pêche*, which means colloquially "per person"; that is, "per individual." Daumal's rather humorous use of *site de pêche*, while evoking individuality, is meant to connote the anonymous individual in the crowd, "John Q. Public," and, by extension, whatever is designated or set off as a discrete unit. *Jolie boule* seems best suited to suggest the humorous overtones of *site de pêche*. - TV

8. This passage is particularly helpful for understanding the legend of Hs and Mo in Mount Analogue. - TV

9. We include at the end of this volume (Documents, 5) a few pages found in René Daumal's manuscripts which refer either to the present section ("Epiphanies") in its entirety or to certain of its passages. - TV


11. This paragraph, included in Jack Daumal's commentary as it is inserted into the body of the text. - TV

12. The seven sentences incorporated between this note and the note are highlighted in the margin with emphasized question marks which seem to indicate that Korel no longer "agreed" with this passage when reading long after it was written. - TV

In the original text, the footnotes are the letters 'a' and 'b' in superscripts. The placement of this note and the next in our text correspond accordingly to their placement in the original. - TV
20. See preceding note. – TV
21. In the margin next to this sentence: "What gap?" – TD
22. Cf. Alexandre’s David-Nef, Mystique et magie du Trésor Islamique. – KD

This work was originally published in Paris in 1929 by Pion. In English translation, it is Magic and Mystery as tiger, trans. A. Hills-ens (New York: Dover, 1971). – TV

23. In the margin: "Poor me!" – TD

24. In the margin, even with the name ‘Pikhanos!’ René had written ‘Old Pikhanos!’ in pencil and drawn below it the Bolshevik emblem of the hammer and sickle, topped by a five-pointed star. – TD

Georges Valentinovich Pikhanov (1886–1918), considered the founder of Russian Marxism, at first sided with Lenin, then became a Menshevik; he fled Russia after the assumes 1917 Bolshevik takeover. – TV

Hegel, Philosophy of Nature (on the Bhagavad-Gita). – KD

26. In a letter written to Carlos Suarez in the spring of 1942, Daumal will refer to certain articles of the statutes of the Theosophical Society in India, which singularly tie that organization to the Intelligence Service; see René Daumal, Correspondence, 1939–1953 (Paris: Gallimard, 1993), 282. – TV

27. This remark on René Guissot is tagged in the margin with a large question mark, which is in no way surprising. – TD

Presumably, René Daumal’s question mark is not ‘surprising’ because of Guissot’s reputation as a traditionalist reactionist. – TV

28. René Guissot, L’Homme et son dénier selon le Voltaire, Le Roi du monde, 3, Aubetine spirituelle et paupière temporaire, etc. – KD

These three volumes were published respectively in 1924, 1927, and 1929. Of the three, two have appeared in English translation: Man and His Bewitchment According to the Voltaire (London: Lucas, 1943), and The Lord of the World (Eltingham, England: Constable Spring Press, 1981). – TV

29. A Christian devotional book traditionally ascribed to Thomas a Kempis, a German monk, and to have written it around 1425. – TV

30. Again, as in the margin, a large question mark, with the written comment: "but... (no proleterat)... Ramakrishna, Vivekananda..." – TD

31. According to Jack Daumal’s comments in the ‘Documents’ section of the original Marcuse de France edition of Ta ra! (Maman, Mon pére), a file bearing the title ‘Affaire Décë’ (God Affair) was found among René Daumal’s papers after his death. The file contained the manuscript and two copies of ‘Poem to God and Man!’ together with a number of letters he had received from various sources giving documentary evidence of the events, circumstances, and attitudes which prevented the poem from being published until its insertion in Ta ra! (Maman, Mon pére) in 1970.

In the spring of 1942, Daumal was retained by Lise Delarue, who was launching a new literary review, Le Phare de Néoudy (The Néoudy Beacon). Despite the objections voiced by his friend and collaborator André Roland de Rennou in a letter of 27 May 1942 to Daumal (concerning the Néoudy ‘searchlight, allow me to invite you immediately to withdraw your poem from that shilling?’), Daumal allowed the poem to be published. But, fearing scandal, ‘Lady Delarue’ (as Rennou called her) gathered up all undistributed copies of the issue and had the pages unbound so that the pages on which the poem was printed could be removed. Word of what she had done reached Henri Michaux and Antonio Axnau, both of whom consequently refused to collaborate on the review. More importantly, Jean Paulhan, then editor-in-chief of the prestigious Nouvelle Revue Française, also got wind of the affair and reacted by publishing in the monthly feature: ‘Review of Reviews’, a short paragraph stating that the ‘Phare de Néoudy had published in its first issue a beautiful poem by Daumal; immediately following the manuscript was the poem’s first verse. Next year’s for the poem was the Cahiers du Sud, whose editor, Jean Baudot, refused it in December 1943, this time not for fear of scandal but because it was against the review’s policy to publish anything having to do with God. ‘We don’t talk about God at the Cahiers, we ignore him.’

Again, in 1954, even though it was championed by Franz Hollens, who wanted it for a collection of poetry he would publish called Disparu non, it was turned down for reasons almost identical to those of Lise Delarue. A year later, Hollens wrote to Daumal, saying he would like to try to get it published in Entres du Nord, a new review