

## PIERRE KLOSSOWSKI'S LIBIDINAL ECONOMY

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### I. The living currency

Anyone expecting to find in the *Living Currency* (*La monnaie vivante*) of Pierre Klossowski a romantically indignant critique of industrial society, market laws and capitalism will be disappointed. In the collection of essays, including the short piece of writing that titles the volume, one finds a project and a denunciation of a denunciation. The project is the commercialisation of the 'voluptuous emotion' (Klossowski 2017: 48-50; 53; 56-57; 59-60; 65-68); a term with which Klossowski baptises the perturbing, sensual pleasure that each of us derives from the use and consumption of his or her own phantasm: that which makes of us singular cases in opposition to the gregarious generality imposed on us by the linguistic-numerary code of signs. The denunciation of the denunciation is the critique of the anathemas that, since the mid-19th century, have been launched, in the name of the affective life, against 'the pernicious effects of industrial civilization' (Klossowski 2017: 45). The project has a utopian and parodistic trait despite it being calibrated on something that is 'already existing' (Klossowski 2017: 73), albeit unconfessed. The denunciation of denunciation shapes a question: where does the moral power that the means of industrial production has to exert a corrupting action on the affects come from? The answer constitutes the central thesis of the essays collected in the volume *Living Currency*: the affective life, which Klossowski prefers to call impulsive in order to eliminate every minimal reference to a conscious subject, is already mercantile, already industrial, already consumerist. In short: already economic. Therefore, it is also already pernicious and corrupting, where 'already' means 'in itself'.

For Klossowski, the anathema betrays the complicity of the psychic life with the economic-social life: if industry – today we would say capital – can manipulate our desires and infiltrate our dreams, it is because something, in our desires and dreams, is already industrial and capitalistic. Freud realised this and, to the topical and dynamic points of view in his metapsychology, added the economic one. There is a circulation and distribution of quantifiable energy – the libido – which is susceptible to both increase and decrease. Freud followed its vicissitudes in order to arrive at an estimate, at least relative, of the quantities of

excitement. To this end, he has considered psychic investments in their intense mobility and the oppositions established between them. He bet on the fact that there is a traffic of value that takes place unbeknownst to the subject, and his libidinal economy – a source of inspiration also for Bataille’s general, economy (Bataille 1988) is the science of this fact, that is, the science of the set of operations, equivalences, expenditures, exchanges, investments and negotiations that take place in the psychism in order to maintain, or even compromise, its equilibrium. Klossowski developed it by countering the long-standing ignorance of the mercantile character of impulsive life but, unlike Freud, he did not simply import economic language into psychic life. His aim, as he confesses to Alain Arnaud, was ‘to introduce a hitherto absent dimension into the economy itself’ (Arnaud 1990: 90) by initiating a market parallel to the monetary economy.

Klossowski did not refute the monetary economy. In contrast to Marx, he wanted to restore the right relationship between the structure and the superstructure: ‘economic norms comprise a substructure derived from the affects, and are not themselves a final infrastructure’ (Klossowski 2017: 47). He believed that one can compete with the moral power enjoyed by the industrial regime (the term by which Klossowski used to refer to the socio-economic situation of the time) only after having unmasked the simulacral character of the superficial economy. Indeed, ‘no economy of voluptuous pleasure could ever profit from the industrial regime – despite the claims of the moralists, who denounce such pleasure to our institutional watchdogs. On the contrary, the opposite is the case: it is industry itself that benefits from what we misleadingly call “eroticism” considered as a variable economic norm’ (Klossowski 2017: 49). It happens above all in the spheres of suggestion (publishing, advertising, cinema), despite the fact that industry ‘remains on the sidelines of full exploitation, as it would be possible to do if the means of production were in the hands of those whom these “products” directly concern’ (Klossowski 2017: 50). For such exploitation to take place, it is necessary to imagine

an apparently impossible regression to a phase in industrial production where producers are able to demand objects of sensation from consumers as a form of payment. These objects would be living beings. In this form of trade, both producers and consumers would become collectors of ‘persons’ who are apparently designed for pleasure, emotion and sensation. How could a human ‘person’ fulfil the function of a currency?

Klossowski 2017: 72-73

Inspired by Levi Strauss's work on the exchange of women (Levi-Strauss 1969) Klossowski formulates the counter-utopia of the living currency: a kind of *Gedankenexperiment* in which human beings would be exchanged as money. Employers would pay their male workers in women, while female workers would be paid in boys, without that, in this practice, being in any way prostitution or slavery. Rather, it would be the human beings themselves that would be used as currency replacing the function of money. They could do so because, for Klossowski, living bodies of humans are sources of emotion and because emotion yields, is profitable, produces like labour. The value it spreads is not necessarily monetisable in cash, but the notion of a monetary equivalent, for Klossowski, derives from the voluptuous appreciation that humans reserve for each other as erotic objects. Nothing, in fact, is more contrary to enjoyment than gratuitousness: in order to enjoy the pleasure that another body arouses in us, we pay a price, and whoever offers his or her body not only has to demand it for the emotions he or she brings. He, or she, must also manufacture it although

From an economic point of view, one can never confuse the cost of sustaining a being with that of the voluptuousness it procures. Affirming that the law of supply and demand is a canon of voluptuous representation from which *charme* becomes assessable, I deduced that such a cost could serve the representation of an affective 'exchange' capable of replacing the exchange we know. The model is close to the angelicate defined by Fourier.

Monnoyer 1985: 237

## **2. The living influence**

According to Klossowski, all modern industry is based on voluptuous exchanges. It resorts to an inert currency that neutralises the nature of the exchanged objects. In this sense the superficial economy is a parody and counterfeit of the affective one.

If there is a final infrastructure, it is constituted by the behaviour of our affects and impulses (...) economic norms – along with the arts, moral and religious institutions and forms of knowledge – are modes for the expression and representation of impulsion forces.

Klossowski 2017: 47

To be aware that the pathos is the first producer as well as the first consumer means to recognise that

the way they are expressed in the economy, and ultimately in our industrial world, depends on the way they have been incorporated into the economy by our reigning institutions. It is undeniable that this first and final infrastructure is determined by its own reactions to previously existing substructures, but the forces involved are the same forces that undertake the struggle to turn infrastructures into substructures. Hence, if these forces are expressed specifically in accordance with existing economic norms, then they themselves create their own repression, as well as the means of breaking the repression to which they are subjected in different degrees

Klossowski 2017: 47-48

Therefore, we can understand why the *Living Currency* has so influenced the generation of French thinkers formed in the 1960s. Foucault called it ‘the greatest book of its time’ (Foucault 1970, in Klossowski 2017: 41): a book so great that ‘everything else falls away and counts for only half’ (Foucault 1970, in Klossowski 2017: 41). According to Foucault, philosophers should have been thinking of *Living currency*’s main themes: desire, value and simulacrum (Foucault 1970, in Klossowski 2017: 41). Deleuze agrees. In a letter sent to Klossowski in 1979, he places him alongside Godard, McLuhan and Burroughs: ‘the great authors who are truly thinking the image – not only theoretically, but through its practices as a modern element of the present world’ (Deleuze 1979: 61-62). Moreover, in *Difference and Repetition*, he praised Klossowski for having ‘completely renewed the interpretation of Nietzsche’ (Deleuze 1994: 312, n. 19) in a series of valuable articles. When Klossowski collected them into a book, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (Klossowski 1997), a book that Foucault hailed as ‘the greatest book of philosophy I have ever read, on a par with Nietzsche himself’ (Foucault 1969: 66), it was to Deleuze that he dedicated it. Nonetheless, if *Living Currency* has been the text that exerted the greatest influence on ‘French theory’, it is because the themes that the events of 1968 had placed on everyone’s agenda find here an ingenious and refined articulation. Many of the theoretical obstacles that stood in the way of the ‘68 event are, at last, overcome. First: the Marx-Freud dualism. Klossowski dissolves the tension between political economy and libidinal economy in a new order of human relations and, since the unification of the two great epistemes of modernity, the materialist dialectic and the Freudian dialectic, was a common requirement, the success of the solution immediately coincided with the success of the work that reached it.

Yet, the resolution offered by Klossowski is neither a reconciliation of Marxist theses with Freudian ones, nor a 'freedom for all' in the sense of the '*jouissons sans entraves*' invoked by the placards of the young Parisian demonstrators. For his admirers at the time, Klossowski succeeded where others, e.g. Marcuse and Reich, failed insofar as his approach was indexed neither on Marx nor Freud, names that barely appear in his texts, but on the more incandescent and occult Sade-Nietzsche pairing. Explored also by Bataille, with whom Klossowski shared the adventures of the Collège de Sociologie and the journal *Acéphale*, this nexus proved to be the appropriate means 'to bypass the sterile parallelism of Freud and Marx' (Deleuze and Guattari 2009: 63). Deleuze and Guattari noted this in their *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), which was only two years later than *Living currency* (1970). More than Lyotard in *Libidinal Economy* (1974) and Baudrillard in *Impossible Exchange* (1999), it was Deleuze and Guattari who took up the ideas of Klossowski's economic pamphlet – 'impulses are part of the economic infrastructure'; 'desire desires its own repression' – by pushing them in new directions.

While working on the *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze confessed to Klossowski that the introduction of the desire into the infra-structure or, inversely, but this amounts to the same thing, the introduction of the category of production into desire, seemed to him of 'immense importance' and, 'once again, he was following Klossowski' (Letter Deleuze to Klossowski of 21st April 1971, cited in Spira and Wilson 2006: 15). The theory of desire developed in the first two chapters of the *Anti-Oedipus* is an attempt to elaborate the theses set out in *Living Currency*. Klossowski, in *Living Currency*, had posed and solved the biggest problem of political philosophy: why do human beings fight for their servitude as if it were their salvation?. Therefore, it was impossible to disregard. However, Klossowski had fewer illusions that things could change. To the revolutionary enthusiasm of Deleuze, he preferred the sobriety of a slow and patient reform of customs; to Guattari's schizoanalysis, demonology, i.e. the idea that we are always possessed, subjugated by impulses, whether we want to be or not; to sexual rebellion, 'superior pornology' (Deleuze 1990: 285): a mix of 'erotic austerity' and 'theological debauchery' (Blanchot 1997: 172), and to the more fashionable term '*assemblage*', the more obsolete term 'repression'.

### **3. The living dilemma**

The fundamental problem of politics was not new: La Boetie and Spinoza, just to name two, had already tackled it. Klossowski does not mention them in his works but, varying on the same solution they offered, he argued that we love our chains because our chains are also the only levees we can put up against the impulsional torrent that sweeps over us. And, given that

is the impulsional current itself that produces, with its passage, the levees that so reassure us, one can understand why Klossowski was so sceptical about the possibility of '*jouir sans entraves*'. The first impulsional repression forms the organic and psychic unity of the *suppôt* (*suppositum*): a Scholastic term with which Klossowski uses to designate the human or personal subject. And the *suppôt*, the belief in its existence, is precisely what makes it possible to resist the constant pressure – a reiterated and effective demand – of the greedy impulsional waves: a resistance, therefore, perversely created by the same enemy that one must then resist.

This is why, as long as the *suppôt* takes itself to be an ego, as long as the consciousness interprets the *suppôt* as a subject rather than as a support for extraneous powers and employs the *suppôt* to sustain its own identity – synonymous, for Klossowski, with moral integrity, personality and responsibility – the impulses are perceived as a danger rather than as an opportunity, as an agonising obstacle to self-preservation rather than as a joyful organ of self-dissolution.

For Klossowski, there is no subject that is not supposed. The egological or conscious subject is a fiction: a complex but fragile entity that gives a psychic-organic unity to the polymorphic chaos of impulses.

The first force of repression to emerge in the impulses is the formation of an agent of organic and psychic unity, a repression that corresponds, for the agent, to the constraint to which he is subjected by the combat between conflicting impulses during the constitution of this unity.

Klossowski 2017: 80

However, both repression and struggle manifest themselves externally as soon as the individual unity of the *suppôt* is integrated and defined by a hierarchy of values translated into a hierarchy of needs (Klossowski 2017: 80). In other words

Thanks to this acquired organic and moral unity, the individual can now only express his impulses within his own milieu as a given set of material and moral needs; that is to say, he can no longer assert himself in accordance with the movement of his affections, but from the possession of unity, from the capacity to possess, conserve and produce goods in the outside world, to give something in order to receive something else, yet only so long as the exchange in question always concerns objects and not other entities, except

in those circumstances where it would be legitimate to possess living beings as simple objects.

Klossowski 2017: 80

True to Nietzsche's lesson, Klossowski argues that the common function of intellect, language and morality is to convert the oblique, impulsional, intensity into a straight, conscious intention. Impulses invade the *suppôt* and designate themselves there, but they remain independent of the denotation with which they signify themselves. If they converge into a unity, it is at the price of the fatal simulation which follows the reactive-repressive choice to dissimulate impulses by transforming them into gregarious (material and moral) needs by recurring to the grammatical simulacrum 'I'. For Klossowski, the first signs of acquisition and bargaining, like the first patterns of production and consumption, are to be found here, that is at the level of the struggle of the forces that, in a given organism, fight for and against the formation of the *suppôt*. There are in fact two species of impulses competing for the subject's house (*oikos*) in an attempt to impose their own management (*oikonomia*) on it: the impulse aimed at reproduction with a view to the preservation of the species by means of the ego, and the wasteful, luxuriant impulse destined for generation that defies the laws of nature with thought. The former organises an external perversion in the form of the hierarchy of values, goods and needs through which existing institutions govern, thanks to the *suppôt*'s consciousness, the imponderable forces of his psychic life with a second repression that exploits the former; the other presses for an internal perversion, i.e. the dismantling of that hierarchy through the dissolution of the unity on which it is grounded.

Hence the dilemma, which for Klossowski is insoluble, between enjoying without affirming oneself or affirming oneself, affirming one's own internal unity, without enjoying, only to subsist. It is insoluble because the impulses are satisfied in each of the perversions and because between them, as between the two economies, there is no intellectual solution of continuity. Therefore, if one does not start from the point of view of objects and needs to unveil the struggle of the affects against their inadequate formulation – inadequate because in the industrial regime they are 'materially reconfigured into a mere demand for goods, which is an antagonistic inversion of their very being' (Klossowski 2017: 51) – one remains crushed by the hypertrophy of needs artificially generated by industrial society, incurring an alienation far more fatal than the one provoked by the dissolution of the ego: after and for having renounced enjoyment, one also runs the risk of not asserting oneself.

For Klossowski,

any individual who refuses to pay the price for a voluptuous emotion and instead demands that the instinct to reproduce (and thus their own unity) should be free will wind up a paying a hundredfold for that free-ness through the external perversion that creates the conditions in which the unity of the individual can be affirmed.

Klossowski 2017: 66

Conversely,

the day human beings overcome, and thus subdue, this external perversion (the monstrous hypertrophy of their ‘needs’) and instead consent to their internal perversion (the dissolution of their fictive unity), a pact will be formed between desire, on the one hand, and the production of its objects in a rationally organized economy, in accordance with its impulses, on the other.

Klossowski 2017: 66

To the construction of this other economy, centred on an other generation, the counter-utopia of the living currency gives the greatest impetus.

#### **4. The living economy**

Just as Freud, in his essay on ‘The “Uncanny”’ (*SE* 1919 XVII: 217-56), wished for aesthetics to be oriented in an economic sense, Klossowski wished for economics to be welded to aesthetics as its specific golden resource. What makes currency living is in fact ‘an emotion that is sufficient unto itself, inseparable from the fortuitous and useless existence of an object that is “convertible into currency” and thus arbitrarily appraised’ (Klossowski 2017: 74), since

there is no common measure between the sensation the living object could elicit on its own and the quantity of labour that would be needed to provide the resources to sustain this object of sensation.

Klossowski 2017: 73

A tool or machine yields that much; the living object procures that emotion. But if the value of the tool compensates for the cost of its maintenance, that of the living object that is the source of emotion is imponderable. It is conventionally fixed because, from the point of view of



ordinary exchange, the living object, i.e. the source of emotion, is worth what it costs to maintain it. Yet, its cost is, in reality, incalculable, although it is precisely its incalculability the principle of calculation.

Like the gold reserve of the Gold Standard System abolished the year after the appearance of *Living Currency*, the gold which makes currency living as fire heats what is cold, is the principle of all exchange not in spite of, but because it is exchangeable. Every trade, for Klossowski, is grounded on an untradeable, just as every price is raised, or lowered, in function of something that lacks it, and every communication depends on an incommunicable. Money, that is, performs a function analogous to that of speech because

given the syntax of money [*la syntaxe monétaire*], the (economic) intelligibility of the use-object as a commodity guarantees the same fraudulent operation (in relation to needs and their objects) as does the intelligibility of language (in relation to the life of the impulses).

Klossowski 2017: 68

In both cases, whether it is the obscure propensity that is ignored in the linguistic sign, or the pretended concordance of object and need established by the numeral, the limit of intelligibility is the unchangeable according to the degree of idiosyncrasy, and to trade in the voluptuous emotion is to value it in the same way as a gold-sample. Klossowski, in other words, hopes that the incommensurable gives rise to new measures and the unusual promotes new customs, aware that,

in our world of industrial fabrication, what appeals to people is not what seems naturally free of charge, but rather the price that is put on what is naturally free of charge. Voluptuous emotion (not communicated or incommunicable) is above all indifferent: it has no value as long as it can be experienced by anyone and everyone. But as soon as someone who is still capable of experiencing it no longer has the means of immediately experiencing it, the emotion ceases to be indifferent and gains in value.

Klossowski 2017: 67

To believe that the commercialisation of voluptuous emotion is another operation promoted by the sordid spirit of profit is to blind oneself to its radiant, inner, commercial nature. Emotion produces, but it does not only produce value. It also produces objects, and

Klossowski's aim is to demonstrate that commodification is intrinsic to impulses because of their ability to create, each one, its own object. He is not, therefore, so much interested in freeing impulses from their repression by *suppôt* and the economy that reinforces it - an impossible undertaking - but, rather, in updating voluptuousness betting on the future guaranteed by the manufacture of objects of use. Not all means, in fact, are equivalent. The industrial regime manufactures tools useful for subsistence that conceal emotion; the impulsional regime produces useless and economically sterile simulacra that propagate it. Yet, for Klossowski, the useful-utilitarian distinction is itself mendacious: not only there is waste in the production of tools and utility in the simulacrum, albeit pathological; not only 'it is only as a simulacrum that an object finds its necessary use' (Klossowski 2017: 45). Like the industrial tool, the simulacrum also has a cost of production. We have forgotten this since the creation of the first simulacra - the *idola* with which the gods were honoured by ancient humans - was dismissed as unproductive. Klossowski protests against the all-modern notion of free art derived from this oblivion. What he finds detestable is not industry's exploitation of phantasms - industrialisation is an inverted perversion established by the survival impulse, and perversion is the peculiar economy of the phantasm - but that pernicious removal of the obstacle that is the lowering of the cost of suggestion's instruments.

In the artisanal age, the voluptuous emotion circulated, like knowledge, as a rare object thanks to instruments whose prestige gave value to the product; in the industrial age, on the other hand, the technique of suggestion counts for little or nothing compared to the emotion felt in contact with the suggested object. It is entrusted to stereotypes while these are sold out in function of massive consumption and an increasingly powerless standardised imaginary. But

if the instruments of voluptuousness no longer cost anything because of their outright vulgarisation (already claimed by the students with their 'revolution'), it is the very value of the goods that these instruments procure that disappears

Klossowski in Monnoyer 1985: 236

This is why, although it seems ignoble to most, the blackmail with which the artist demands, through his work, that we pay the price for the pleasure he or she makes us prove, is, in the end, the only way of guaranteeing 'the erotic valorisation of an image' (Klossowski in Monnoyer 1985: 236), and the erotic valorisation of the image, for Klossowski, must be

guaranteed at all costs as it is the only propaedeutic to the acquisition of the psychic state indispensable to the creation of living currency.

## 5. The living factory

Paying workers in living objects of sensation instead of monetary wages would be practical only if the living object itself were appraised in terms of the quantity of labour required...

Klossowski 2017: 73

Only if 'a living object (or objects) could be entered into the balance sheets of accountants, its possession by the worker would be purely symbolic and convertible into money' (Klossowski 2017: 73). However, the possession of an object, of the other and of oneself as an object, is purely fantasmatic, thus mediated by an image rather than by an emotion. Only fantasmatically can we exercise what Sade called the 'right to enjoyment' (Sade 1971) and Klossowski reinterprets as the 'right to reflection', at least to that singular form of reflection that is the *delectatio morosa*. Hence, the attribution of greater value to the emotion rather than to the image that releases it is a misfortune. Only images of pleasure make it possible to lift the mortgage that coin-words place on the original communication: 'the exchange of bodies by the secret language of body signs' (Klossowski 2017: 90).

Images are figurative mental constructions of intellectual value and, as long as we have a body whose proper name claims ownership, we cannot avoid resorting to them. The integral interpenetration of intentions for the benefit of the anonymous intensities to which Klossowski's *Le Baphomet* (Klossowski 1988) gives fictional form is not feasible on this earth. Here, we can only criticise the market economy by perpetuating it. According to its dictate, erotic enjoyment cannot be assimilated to the enjoyment of one good among others because the living body, i.e. the source of pleasure, is neither an object, nor, therefore, an object possessable. But for Klossowski it can become so. Its alienability or inalienability is only a matter of taste, linked to the customs one adopts, and the living currency, like Klossowski's 'hospitality' (see Klossowski 1969), is a custom, that is a lesson imparted by the image. One learns to look upon the phantasm as the instrument with which one accesses the objectuality of one's own body as well as that of others, and to make use of it for this access. In perversion, in fact, the phantasm coincides with the image of an aspect of the living being cut out and then attached to the phantasing subject. The image is partial. And yet, being detached, absolute

(from *ab-solutus*), it applies to the whole and allows it to be treated as an object, as the phantasm from which the voluptuous emotion is elaborated and heightened.

In other terms, the phantasm is the first manufactured object and, thus, also the first object of use. Every other tool externalises a phantasm, and that is why, by creating tools, industry provokes, *malgré soi*, the representation of the impulsional forces it would like to silence in the din of the goods made by its useful tools. Sade showed that instrumental behaviour is first perverse, and perverse internally. The impulse forges the phantasm by taking a matter from the instinct of propagation after wresting the voluptuous emotion from the procreative act to which the needs of species destine it. Once suspended, the emotion is fixed at a state prior to the completion of the gregarious act and, when its natural function is interrupted, its energies are displaced elsewhere: no longer towards the biological or organic body but, precisely, towards its image, i.e. its phantasm.

Pulse and phantasm, as then instrument and object, co-conceive each other. The phantasm is an object constructed according to the perverse impulse that creates it and uses it, fixing the price of the emotion that consumes it. The price is confounded with the use that imposes itself as interchangeable, that is without price and preliminary to any other use, to any other manufacture. So, in whatever way the unity of an individual reaches its physiological fulfilment in its corporal dimension, it will always be exchanged against the phantasm under whose constraint, in any case, it remains. Both the utensil and the simulacrum originate there because, as soon as the impulse fabricates the phantasm as another child than the one generated by the copulation of bodies, the impulse reinvests phantasm's forces outside itself, not acting, as impulse, elsewhere than in the relation of the human being to what is fabricated or not fabricated. Yet, since the impulse is satisfied both with the tool at the service of the individual unity of the *suppôt*, and with the simulacrum that imposes itself and persists at *suppôt's* expense, deciding for one or the other factory constitutes the irreversible.

For Klossowski, industrialisation is an inverted perversion in that it is fuelled by voluptuous emotions deviated from their procreative role and employed to corroborate the homogeneity of the economic subject. The stereotype of suggestion allows industry to intercept the genesis of individual phantasms by turning them towards its ends because stereotypes are degraded simulacra and simulacra are objects produced by the phantasm when not the phantasm itself. The utensils dissimulate the impersonal constraint in a need of the individual and the instinct

of propagation thus takes revenge on the passivity to which the internal perversion confines the subject who suffers it. But, in order

for an object of sensation to be worth a quantity of labour, the (living) object must, from the start, have a value (of sensation or emotion) that is equal to if not greater than the product of such labour.

Klossowski 2017: 73

and such a 'quality of a sign' (Klossowski 2017: 75) only fully constitutes value when the quality of the good corresponds to the immediate satisfaction not of a need, but of the initial perversion. It is to the latter, then, that one must consent in order to secure 'the legitimate possession of living beings' (Klossowski 2017: 73). In order to value the enjoyment of the body as that of a commodity and worth, that is as an object of use, one must suspend ownership by accepting, as perhaps neither the Sixty-eighters nor their followers did enough, the internal perversion. Only by dissipating ourselves as objects used by the phantasm and usable, therefore, also by other's phantasms, can we provoke this perversion in other people, by means of a simulacrum: the price to be paid for the pooling of goods between the erotic living objects envisioned by Fourier's utopia.

In the manufacture of tools for survival the phantasm is used by the *homo contabilis* (the starring of Bataille's narrow economy), while in the production of a simulacrum it consumes the *homo hospitalis* (the starring of Bataille's *dépense*). Hence, the impulse finds expression of its own phantasm in the economic products of art. In the utensil sphere, which refuses to give phantasm a word without, however, denying it currency, the affect acts under cover by feeding the difference between what one accepts to receive in inert currency and what one is worth in one's own eyes. This difference is suffered and denounced by the 'industrial slave' (Klossowski 2017: 75): a dead soul (*Living currency*, reversing the title of Gogol's *Dead souls*). Klossowski opposes it to the living currency because the industrial slave is a sign of what he or she costs and not of what he or she is worth. Living currency ignores this difference since he or she constitutes itself as a sign guaranteeing riches and as these riches themselves. As a sign, he or she is valid for all sorts of material goods; as a good, he or she excludes any demand other than the demand for which, as a simulacrum, that is an implement of voluptuousness, he or she embodies satisfaction.

Nevertheless, ‘satisfaction is itself excluded by his or her quality as a sign’ (Klossowski 2017: 75). This fact reminds us that it is in industry’s interest that the utopia of a common property of Eros dreamt of by Fourier ‘remains a utopia, and Sade’s perversion remains the driving force behind the monstrousness of industry’ (Klossowski 2017: 66). Utopia ‘conceals the profound reality’ (Klossowski 2017: 66) of ‘what is nowhere’ (Klossowski 2017: 52) and which only a golden body can make room for by making this reality ‘proliferate everywhere as the sole reality by the very fact of the active presence’ (Klossowski 2017: 52) of its speculative soul.

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