

Castoriadis, C. (1997) *The Castoriadis Reader*. D. Curtis, ed., Translated by D. Curtis., Blackwell.

Foreword

founded *Socialisme ou Barbarie* with Lefort, ran from 1949-1965—Lyotard part of it
central themes: project of autonomy, imaginary institution of society, (workers) self-
management, critique of USSR, the Greek *polis*, democracy, psychoanalysis
texts in the reader cover a wide range of time

he moved away from workerism over time, to include a wider range of political actors
democratic management of society *in general*, not just the economy
no rulers/ruled relation, or what he calls “directors and executants”
no parties, no liberal-oligarchical compromises
private/private (*oikos*), private/public (*agora*), public/public (*ekklesia*)
we must develop the latter two through our political participation
and the three spheres should be robust and independent from each other, and yet
connected
autonomous society = democratic society
first condition of that society is that the *ekklesia* must be effectively public

1 – An Introductory Interview (1974)

In the *S ou B* days they were concerned with:

After USSR, we needed to ask what socialism really is/should be 3
autonomous action of the proletariat should be a central idea 3
socialism = workers management of production; socialism = collective
management of social activity by those who participate in it 3
party (PCI) and nationalization is not the way to go 3
councils that break from the unions are of interest 5
trying to avoid the emergence of leaders, of those who participate more than
others 6
Bolshevik party becomes director over the executants; bureaucratization 6-7
this is the capitalist model, rather than a model true to the working class,
which has institutions like: soviets, councils, sovereign general assemblies
(GA) 7
this worker-centrism must be broadened to the society as a whole; overall socialist
organization of the society *in toto* (not just the economy) 8
it is a false dilemma: centralization of the movement's power vs. the collapse of
the movement 8
we need to contest the established order in general, not just in pieces 9
this requires “exemplary struggles”...e.g. a strike committee that is elected and

revocable can shatter the established assumptions about how such bodies have to be organized (i.e. with centralization and representation) 9

struggles on issues that really matter to people, rather than those that matter to specialists/experts 10

the autonomy of the proletariat; no party as director 11

no mass vs. vanguard; requires activity from the mass, not formal suppressions of the distinction 12

Lefort: we need movements that prefigure another form of society; but it is not possible to effect a radical transformation of society, an overcoming of social alienation 13

we cannot reuse capitalist ideas, we need our own indigenous ones [the implication here, borne out later, is that Marxism is the former, and so we must go well beyond it] 14

importance of struggles other than that of the proletariat 15

we must reject the idea of a categorical/complete theory, one that must be sovereign 16

The break with Marxism

Marxist metaphysics, theory, history are untenable 17

Marx wanted a sovereign theory 17

his worker was a passive object 18

his theory abstracted from class struggle, and so it lost its vitality 19

theory should instead be understood in its social-historical context; contingencies, not abstract constants, categories, laws 23-4

the reality of actually existing Marxist regimes, is 1) a serious problem and 2) not an error of execution, but rather a problem with the idea 25

we need a government by the producers for the producers 26

the key is its *active role* 26

[he implies this group (producers) is not given, it must be constituted, subjectivized, and there are many other ways people can be made into a group, subjectivized]

revolutionaries must think beyond the proletariat and the factory 28

Marcuse: no revolution, only minoritarian revolutionary struggles 28

CC rejects this idea; i.e. for him revolution can be comprehensive, thoroughgoing 29

revolution is the work of everyone, their activity; and it must go in the direction they take it 29

it is not just “collective self-management” [of what already exists], we need “the permanent and explicit self-institution of society” [which, we will see later, is autonomous society] 30

the collectivity must institute a new society, and it must *know* it is doing so 30
it creates institutions, it understands them to be contingent, and it revises them perpetually 30

refuse to remain a passive object, to tap into the imaginative and creative capacities of

society 30

we must reabsorb the functions that alienating institutions now perform (e.g. schooling) 31

how? The answer must be “secreted from within” [society]--he is clear that this is entirely possible 31-2

there must be resonances, points of agreement that institute a common movement (perhaps militants/organizers can help point these out...) 33

theory cannot be religious [it must be pragmatic, limited, and continually tinkered with]

2 – Presentation of *Socialisme ou Barbarie. An Organ of Critique and Revolutionary Orientation* (1949)

[this is his intro to the mission/plan of *Socialisme ou Barbarie*]

Stalinism and the communist parties are a problem 35

is the victory of the bureaucracy a blip/accident, or the result of specifiable economic and social conditions [and deep characteristics of Marxism]? 36

danger of messianic/dogmatic theory 36

theory does not precede action, it is simultaneous 36-7

theory must *develop* with its political/social context [i.e. rather than being perfect, fixed, and immutable] 37

awareness, control by the working class: this can only work if the working class 'raises itself up', takes action to make it happen 37

to want to fold all local struggles into one general struggle is not the right way to think 38

he calls for a heterodox marxism, an open marxism 39

the idea that one theory is the True theory is one of the most important expressions of bureaucratism in the workers' movement 39

theory discussions should involve all [not just theory experts or party leaders or bureaucrats] 39

3 – On the Content of Socialism (1955-1957)

[from a series of articles on the socialism in *Socialisme ou Barbarie*. The upshot is that socialism = workers' self-management of society]

From the critique of bureaucracy to the idea of the proletariat's autonomy (1955)

Neither reformist-socialist nor Stalinist 40

both are trying to *represent* the proletariat; its leadership stratum is permanent 41

Trotsky a critique of Stalinism, but not a solution 42

reformist socialists are just “labor aristocracy” 42

Stalinism is *the* contemporary problem 42

the bureaucracy is now the dominant class in the Russian regime 43

directors (communist party) and executives 44

and spread to other countries 43

planning and nationalizing the means of production does nothing to end class, it just changes the class relation from bourgeois-proletariat to directors-executants 44

the political program now should not be ending private property through nationalization, it must be *workers' management* of the economy and of power 46

need a school of management for the workers 46

Lenin thought the power of the soviets should direct the State; that workers could learn management by doing 46

but the Bolshevik Party came to dominate the soviets [he doesn't recount why] 46

almost inevitable that the party would separate itself from the workers, dominate them, and centralize power 47

workers' management: soviets or councils that manage the economy, avoid nationalization, workers' participatory control without a centralized party, abolish the division between directors and executives, completely socialize the functions of direction 47

it is not so much about overthrowing the party leaders, it is more about how to best positively organize a socialized management of both production and power 47

there is no 'socialism on the proletariat's behalf' by a party or bureaucracy; **socialism** "is nothing but the masses' conscious and perpetual self-managerial activity," which is essentially workers' self-management of society [which itself is the same thing as democracy, which is the same thing as communism] 48

the proletariat acting autonomously, forming its own will, becoming conscious of itself on its own, and coming to engage in free activity together 48

[here he is incredibly ahead of his time in seeing that socialism cannot be vanguardist, or party-led, or State-led, that it must be the same thing as workers' self-management, the same thing as democracy. He is, however, at this time, trapped in a class imagination, seeing the workers/proletariat as the only agent of management; there is an element of economism as well, as though economic production is the only thing that needs to be managed, although he *does* seem to see that "power" (or perhaps politics) is a sphere other than production, which of course could be widened to include all sorts of other spheres that need managing as well...and CC does, to his credit, realize the limits of workerism later in the volume (i.e. later in his career)]

On the Content of Socialism, II (1957)

Russian revolution is not socialism; Hungarian workers are much closer to what socialism means 49

socialism is the product of the autonomous action of the working class; mass organs effecting

workers' management of production 49
in socialism there is meaning to work, freedom, creativity, links between individuals and others and nature 51
socialism is *not* nationalization or centralization 51
positive definition of socialism is contained in the struggles of workers to control the conditions of their existence 51
socialism is autonomy: people's conscious direction of their own lives 51

The Root of the Crisis of Capitalism

Capitalism is heteronomic: it has directors [owners of the MOP] and executants [non-owners of the MOP], and so people's lives and labor are alien to them 52
their wishes and ideas are ignored; their potential—their capacity for self-organization—is lost 52
they don't work for the social order, they work against it [this is a classic argument, from EPM(?), that capitalism is less efficient than communism would be] 53
that same argument about heteronomy applies to the State as well 53
socialism is “the total liberation of the creative and self-organizing capacities of the masses” 54

The Principles of a Socialist Society

Must integrate individuals into structures that can self-govern 54
structures must be transparent, informative, democratic 55
democracy means “*domination* by the masses” [interesting – later in the volume 277 he defines *kratos* much more generally as sheer force] 55
voting is not democracy; democracy is when people decide for themselves 55
direct democracy, not representational 56
the (workers') council is representative, the GA is democratic 56
generalized participation is key 56
decentralization and autonomy for local units is key 56
and yet some centralization is needed 56
but that does not institute a separation/alienation between center and mass 57
no separate apparatus whose purpose is centralization (i.e. bureaucracy) 57
we need a center controlled from below 57
if we don't think through how to centralize *well*, we will fall into centralizing badly 57
the key is *federation* of workers' councils, a central assembly of councils, a council government 58
these are not a *delegation* of workers' power, but an *expression* of it 58
now what we have is inadequate: information from base to center, and decisions

from center to base 58

but instead we need both to flow both ways 58

place of work is the primary unit of social life; socialism is about organizing work and the workplace [clear workerism/economism here] 56

Socialism is the Transformation of Work

[we can see his workerism and economism here...]

Socialism must be instaurated by the autonomous action of the working class; socialism *is* this action 59

people must control their *primary* activity: production/work 59

political power is not enough; *real* power is managing production 59

plant, shop, industry: these are the important sites of struggle 59

no separate managerial stratum; workers make decisions themselves [autonomy] rather than following decisions made by others [heteronomy] 60

direction and execution are united and never separated 60

socialism is always about the control of *work* 61

no division of labor [i.e. between directors and executants] 61

Worker's Management: The Factory

How can we coordinate directly and bottom up? 63

look to history: Spain in the 1930s, Hungary in 1956 64

no coercive functions 64

no [permanent] administration or technical posts separate from other work 64-5

whatever organizes people from the outside [heteronomy] is oppression, and we are challenging this concept fundamentally 66

those who produce must be the same as those who organize production [autonomy] 66

they must reintegrate those [technicians, administrators] who are now alienated from them 67

two bodies ought to be instituted:

factory council of elected delegates who rotate and are instantly revocable 68

GA of all who work in the plant 68

GA must ratify anything the council says 68

meets one or two days a month 68

The Content of Worker's Management at the Factory Level

Autonomy is limited by circumstance, and we must expand it 70

but autonomy is also limited by responsibility to a wider group: e.g. production decisions

here affect production decisions there...70

coordination and cooperation are key 71

horizontal: council to council; vertical smaller area to larger area 71
[there will be some measure of alienation here]
producers dominating the work process 72
workers should rotate through the various areas, gain wide knowledge 73

Simplification and Rationalization of General Economic Problems

Producers themselves will manage production 74
 there can be no universal objective laws for how to do this, or how to distribute surplus,
 etc. 74
 participation will produce decisions-in-context 74
there should be a 'plan factory' for choosing targets, distributing surplus, etc. 75ff
 it does not *decide* the plan, it studies proposed plans and informs people of the impacts 78
consumer sovereignty: implies a "real market" for goods 78
 where the cost of a good is = to its labor value 79
money will be tied to labor value, remuneration to labor value added 79
equality in wages [to be refined by discussion] 80
what to produce, how much to produce, how much to reinvest, how much to consume... 81
 participation de-alienates workers from these questions 82
a plurality of [economic] plans should be proposed, vetted by the plan factory, decided on by the
people (majority vote in the GA of each enterprise) 83

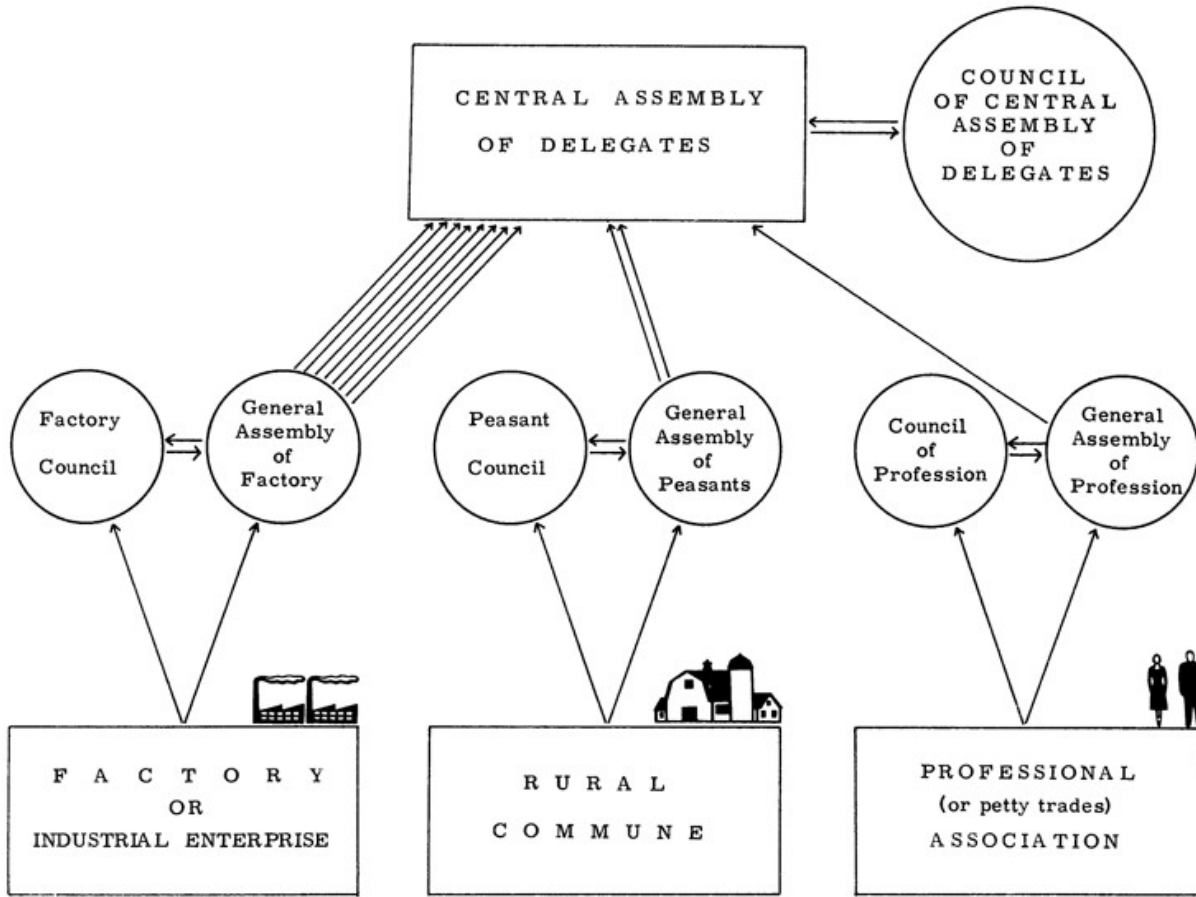
The Management of the Economy

There should be no specific management stratum, either at either the factory level or the wider
levels 83
 economic plans are working documents, gone over by the plan factory, but always
 ratified by the GAs 84
need to lose the idea of the need for increasing industrial growth 85
 production is not all 85

The Management of Society

There will be vertical organization: industrial councils that have delegates from each factory; a
central organ that is the expression of workers' desire, rather than a dominator of it 86
 in each factory there is GA and the GA chooses a factory council 86
 the factory councils then send delegates to a GA at the scale of society [I think] 86
 that society-wide GA then elects a 'central council' which is called 'the government' 86
 this network of GAs and councils is all that is left of the State in socialist society; it is the
 whole State and the only embodiment of power 86
agriculture will have to be organized in this way as well 87 in rural communes 90
 no imposition of change by the workers onto the peasants (as in USSR) 88
 but the workers can require that the peasants organize themselves in this GA-council

structure [seems a strange privilege for the working class] 88
 this-all is democratic self-management 89
 the councils will manage all elements of social life 89
 they are *federated* vertically 90



and again, there will be representation (the workers' council is the main form), it will just be much more grounded in workers' participation [strange not to say it is delegation, rather than representation] 91

regional federations of workers' councils 91

central bodies only make decisions that affect *all* 91

State cannot be above society, coercive, separating rulers and ruled 92

the key is to have all government functions taken over by industrial organization: workers' councils, etc. 93

army → armed populace; courts → rank-and-file bodies; government → people as a whole organized by GAs, councils, central assembly of councils (which is a *central power*) 95

the latter must exist, the question is only how best to organize it so that it does not alienate and create specialized institutions, but is, instead, the *expression* of peoples' power 95

central assembly of delegates is composed of delegates elected by GAs in the factories 95
delegates are always revocable, always continue to work [i.e. never a separate entity from workers themselves] 95

this central assembly then elects a few dozen revocable delegates to the central government council 95

central assembly must approve 96

the represented groups can at any time reassert their power 96 [very Locke here]

the population is armed 96

the will to take one's affairs into one's own hands must be preserved 96

alienation and apathy are the result of the destruction of this will 96

political problems must be everyone's [common] problems 97

democracy is when politics and life are joined 97

it is not modern technique that alienates us, but capitalist technology 98

the key is to put technique in the service of democracy; information as well 98

he proposes a mix of direct (assemblies) and representative (councils with revocable delegates) democracy 98-9

GAs for the whole country (?) 99

remnants of the State (coercion) will exist; but there will no longer be a State in the sense that the central bodies will be under popular control 100

activity by people → withering away of the state 100

parties would atrophy in real socialism, and the power of the councils (with their concern for the whole) would grow 101

'holding power' is the province of everyone together 102

a socialist party will be important initially: to make sure the GAs and the councils keep power 102

a kind of champion/steward of working class democracy 102

essential to the process of building socialism:

1) central assembly is sovereign; 2) proletariat is armed; 3) capitalist property is expropriated [by who/what?]; 4) equality of wages; 5) workers' management; 6) peasants too; 7) plan factory

[his vision is workerist, and it has remnants of the idea that we need a state/party that exists to manage and ensure the transition to socialism, and will then wither away, but this is a strong plea for self-management in 1957]

4 – Recommencing the Revolution (1964)

I. The End of Classical Marxism

The workers' movement is mostly lost today 106

bureaucratization, consumerism, apathy 107

new forms of struggle/thought are needed 107

and this renewal must be permanent 108
the main division today is between directors and executants 111
bureaucracy is the main force to struggle against 111
producers must control production/work; they must be autonomous 112
no closed/theological theory—we need open and evolving theory, albeit with provisional totalities 113

II. Modern Bureaucratic Capitalism

Crises of overproduction are no longer important with bureaucratic capitalism 114
we must eliminate a separate ruling stratum (in USSR and the West both) 115
internal differentiation of the working class will be a problem for self-management 116
can unite through opposition to capitalism 117
there is a pyramid that differentiates the executants: the director-executant division is not simple 117-8
the State is, of its own accord, an agent of domination 119
bourgeois democracy is bureaucratized 119
ownership of the means of production is no longer key—what matters is if you are a director or an executant 121
the minority at the top of the bureaucracy is now who make the rules 121
[everyone else just executes these rules]
'the masses' must be conscious, active, aware, autonomous, mature – and that will constitute socialism 122

III. The End of the Traditional Workers' Movement: A Balance Sheet

Parties and trade unions and the traditional workers movement 124
their leaders are part of the bureaucracy 124
a socialist party in power is the same thing as the current arrangement 125
parties and unions are dead as an instrument of working class struggle 125
big difference between wildcat strikes and strikes led from above 127
dead-end to extend demands (e.g. rights) within bourgeois pseudo-democracy 126
nationalization is nothing without worker control [which, if nationalization is done by the State, cannot be worker controlled] 126
corruption of the word 'communist' to mean member of the communist party (same for socialist)
as opposed to: communist = belief in a society in which each gives according to his abilities and gets according to his needs 127
[I want him to define communism here as the same thing as socialism: worker control over economic production/distribution/consumption, meaning both communism and socialism are best understood as: democracy applied to the specific sphere of the economy]
actions against the unions: Hungarian Workers' Councils, shop stewards movement in Britain, wildcat strikes in US 128

these are a rupture, with capitalism, with bureaucratization, with the traditional workers movement 129
barbarism is malls, privatization, apathy, individualization, automatonization 129
be attentive to little revolts against bureaucratization and for autonomy 130

IV. Elements for a New Orientation

Socialism is not nationalization, nor increasing industrial production 131
it is, instead, workers' management of production through GAs and workers' councils 131
[important development (1964):] this idea must expand to other aspects of life beyond work/factory; education, cities, family 131
we can't just denounce alienation/passivity, we have to celebrate autonomy/activity 132
the latter is always working away 132
jettison any remaining respect for hierarchy 133
deal with the strong differentiation in the working class 133
perhaps different positions/foci within the new society 133
what matters is not the results, but whether workers obtained the results themselves 134
[often phrased as: valuing means over ends]
the goal of the revolutionary movement is to develop people's initiative and autonomy
[since the revolution is constituted by their coming to manage their affairs for themselves] 134
abolish capitalism, the bureaucracy, the director-executant division 134
solidarity with anti-colonial struggles; with students; with intellectuals; with service workers; with peasants 135
[for me, these would all be part of the same project, for democracy]
'accidents' [unexpected events] can trigger the masses' becoming-conscious, forging a will, entering into action 136
this conscious will to autonomy is what matters 136
[since, as we will learn later, all societies make their own SIS, but the autonomous society makes it consciously]

5 – Marxism and Revolutionary Theory (1964-1965)

Marxism: A Provisional Assessment

There is no “true” Marxism that excludes all others 139
we need to reject religious/sectarian thinking 141
Marxism is always embedded in history and practice 140
it must always be rethought in context 142
no orthodoxy!!! (i.e. no assumption that there is one True theory) 142
antiquity: political is dominant thought; now: economic is dominant 143
we need to always be rethinking the old categories of thought 144

Marxist categories as they stand cannot grasp what needs to be grasped 144

Theory and Revolutionary Project

Complete and definitive theory is a problem 146

the phantasy of Absolute knowledge goes back to Plato 146

forces us to choose between geometry and chaos 147

we have to rid ourselves of Plato and get more pragmatic 147

experiment in practice, technique that cannot be grounded in a foundation 148-9

so philosophy is not a search for Truth; it is a project to make ourselves [lots of FN here] 149

we cannot found the revolution on a complete theory [or on anything except our own will to govern ourselves] 149

politics belongs to the pragmatic, to experimentation, to “making/doing” – praxis 150

what is to be made/done is: the development of autonomy [among other things] 150

this is a beginning, not an end 150

an ongoing, conscious activity that always gives rise to new knowledge 151

the *subject* of praxis is also made through praxis 152

[revolutionary] politics is praxis that transforms society towards autonomy 152

but also transforms it *by means of* autonomous action 152

[autonomy as means *and* ends]

plan != project 152

while programs come and go, the project remains [suggesting there is a guiding ethic of some kind to the project] 153

we need to grasp present society as a totality (without Absolute theory) 154

[the haunting question here is: without absolute theory, where do we get our guiding value(s)?]

Roots of the Revolutionary Project

Veins of the possible exist in the present society (workers' self-management) 154

directors and executives is the main conflict; bureaucracy is the main structure 155

both are undone by workers' management, the method and the goal of the revolution 156

though we cannot have a total theory, we can understand what is going on in the economy 157

the fact that the workers don't participate in the decisions that shape production creates waste 159

workers management will be much more efficient 159

a sense here that there will be material plenty in socialism (because of this efficiency) 159

it would be a new kind of rationalization of the economy [from below] 160

a sense that workers' management can spread to other sectors of society 161

a sense of a guiding (but provisional) 'future situation', a kind of horizon, that we modify as we go toward it 162

whenever we are political, we are necessarily trying to change the whole of society 162

but this whole is an open one, not a self-contained and organismic one 164

totality isn't something that exists *a priori*, it is something we posit through politics; we totalize;

we move toward totality 164

we cannot know this totality beforehand 165

we know the present society is broken; we resolve to improve it by taking action 166

we desire that our work be meaningful to us as creating beings 167

we desire to participate in decisions; together with others 167

[are these natural qualities?]

my freedom begins where the other's freedom begins; I want the other to be free 167

this entails growing up; overcoming infantilization 168

not society as a paternal family, but a society of autonomous adults 169

power: not *pouvoir* but people returned to their *puissance* [not sure of his terms in the original, but the idea is there]169

socialist revolution is a project to exercise autonomy in order to enlarge it 170

not a utopia, but an awakening and a setting off down a path towards autonomy 170

this will be directed at the family as well 172

it is wrong to think socialism is merely the negation of capitalism

a de-Legalization of rules; a re-immanentization 173

pay close attention to how people are *already* cooperating in work 175

we cannot say that autonomy is *absolutely* better than concentration camps, we can only affirm/assert that it is, and work to bring it about 175

[i.e. there is no absolute ground on which we can establish autonomy as the 'correct' project – and the old Marxists who like to use that word tend to think of theory in this absolutist/Platonic way that he is rejecting... i.e. 'correct' = congruent with Marx's True idea]

history is a project, and we aspire to push it in the direction of autonomy, but we know it can have a wide range of outcomes 176

Autonomy and Alienation

Autonomy at both the individual and the collective level 177

at the individual level it would mean management of the Id and the Ego, of desire and reason, into a subject 180

but not the “I think” subject 180

not the pure freedom of the fictive subject founded on exhaustive rationality [as in Kant], since it must always involve an irrational element 181

the effective subject is in the world 182

the Ego in question is active and lucid and *knows its desire*, and it knows itself to be rooted in society 182

at the social level it is about freedom *with others* 182

[ala Bakunin] one cannot want freedom without wanting it for everyone 183

it is a collective enterprise; intersubjectivity is central 183

the union and the tension of instituted society and instituting society 184

alienation is conditioned by (caused by) institutions (even in the absence of capitalism) 184-5

they take on an alienation of their own, they continue themselves, they put society

into their service 185
communism is surpassing alienation 185
it will abolish classes; it will transform institutions such that they will be hard to recognize compared to their current form 186
it is *not* a society that is *totally* transparent to itself; in which all desires would spontaneously self-harmonize; a society that would realize its collective will without institutions – this is a fantasy 186
we will never even be transparent to ourselves, because the unconscious will always exist, and it will always be opaque 187
there is always a social that is *instituted*, but always also a social that is *instituting* 187
it must be instituted to be visible [there must be cosmos in the chaos] 187
our relation to the social cannot be dependence; it must be inherence—neither freedom nor alienation, the social is the ground on which both exist 187
revolutionary praxis goes beyond the possible, but not to a subject unmoored from history 188
we must be rooted in the social, we must have the Id 189
we must have institutions; but of course not in the sense of [archipolitics] 189
there is always a gap between society and institutions, and this is generative, life-giving [there is always chaos that shines through the window frame we build for it] 189
the existence of institutions != alienation; it matters how the relation between society and institution is structured 189

fn: since 1948, bureaucratization has been prominent, so workers' management becomes all the more central to revolution 191

6 – The Social Imaginary and the Institution (1975)

The Social-Historical

The question of what the right city is 197
the social-historical is the question of making/doing 198
refuse to shoehorn the historical process into an *a priori* frame, into a causal explanation, into the inevitable result of pre-existing forces 198

Possible types of traditional responses

Don't reduce history to nature – or what is functional for the human animal 199
Don't reduce history to the logic of a given structure 200
history is, instead, the emergence of radical alterity 201

history has no *telos*, no purpose 202 no end 203
determinacy is the wrong way to think [it is characteristic of the ensemblistic-identitary
mode of thought that dominates our culture] 203
the imagination; the unconscious – produce new outcomes, change the givens, through
making/doing 204

Society and the Schemata of Coexistence

Society is an ensemble, but not a collection of individuals 206
society is not the collection of things that pre-exist it 207
individuals are already social 207
society is not a thing, a subject, an idea, an organism, nor is it a collection of these things 207
there are no economic, legal, or religious givens that pre-exist society 208
nor are these partial systems that function independently 209
each society constitutes anew these realms and their relations 209
each society self-institutes, it creates its own *eide* (Forms) 210
it is impossible to think this self-institution from inside the ensemblistic-identitary logic
210
we need to *not* think of society's elements as discrete elements of a set 211
we need to think of society instead as magma, which is not chaos, but organization belonging to
a nonensemblizable diversity, as with the imaginary, or the Unconscious 211-2

History and the Schemata of Succession

History is not the succession of discrete elements, each of which causes the other, as part of a
pre-existing plan 212
the world does not start in eternal sameness and then morph into observed difference 212
history is not a pre-determined sequence, but the emergence of radical
alterity/creation/novelty 214
society is incessantly transforming itself [to remain the “same,” it has to actively
reproduce its already-existing forms] 214

7 - The Social Regime in Russia (1978)

Prefatory Note (1985)

This was an attempt to account for the failure of the Russian bureaucracy to reform itself 219

Part I

The Russian regime is not 'socialist' 219
it is a class society: the bureaucracy and the rest 219

directors and executives 220
the former are now the controllers of the means of production 220
capitalism's industrial model of production is still in place 221
the worker remains equally alienated from the means of labor and the product 221
workers' independent organs are crushed 222
executants are subjected to totalitarian control 222
in the West, at least the working class can struggle and achieve gains 222
in the USSR, the irrational bureaucracy is all there is 223
preventing workers from directing production is the key action of the bureaucracy 223
and yet they have to participate in production itself, to which they are central 223
director mislead executives and vice versa 224
reform can democratize to an extent, and must if the system is not to collapse, but it cannot allow
workers to *direct* production [that is the bureaucracy's absolute limit, as D&G would say, the
bureaucracy's *raison d'etre* is to direct] 224
this tension is endemic to the system 225
more generally, the people are excluded from information about public affairs 226
the USSR is an important part of the larger world system ['Empire,' as H&N would say] 227

Part II

Each social regime institutes its particular form; in the USSR it is total bureaucratic capitalism;
in the West it is fragmented bureaucratic capitalism [the SMP for HL] 227
contemporary Marxism is ill equipped to understand the USSR, they say it is the failed execution
of a good plan 228
[they took the problem to be private ownership of the means of production per se (solved by
nationalization) rather than the alienation and lack of control that that ownership produced (an
alienation that is not at all solved by shifting control to the bureaucracy)]
socialism is not a necessary stage of history, it must be instituted by an active populace 229
socialism is direct self-government by people, the self-conscious self-institution of
society [it seems socialism is thus = democracy] 229
capitalism has given rise to a bureaucratic stratum that makes decisions, manages, controls 230
separates management and production/workers 230
of course the magma has instituted the bureaucracy 231
Western industrial organization borrows from State and Army 231
the State then reiterates this organization; and extends its power in the USSR 232
trade unions adopt the bureaucratic model 232
the USSR's total bureaucratic capitalism is its own historical variation 233
but still, the domination of one group (those in power in the bureaucracy) over all of
society 233
must always understand power [*pouvoir*?] to mean one group over others 234
but the domination of one group over all others is not given, it has to be *instaurated* 234
[CC definitely understands power as *pouvoir* here] 234
in USSR: essential alteration of the relation between civil society and State 235

in West: public/State-private/civil divide 235
USSR wipes out the divide; State sphere consumes all 235
 the Party consumes the State; unifies the director class 235
 pretends to be the whole when it is necessarily a part 236
rational mastery is key idea 236
unlimited expansion of the forces of production, development, dol 236
 this idea fits the bureaucracy perfectly 237
 everything must be rationalizable 237
[so, one would surmise, we have to counter this rationalism at the core of modernity, capitalism, Marx, bureaucracy, USSR, etc. as a necessary part of the project of autonomy]

8 - From Ecology to Autonomy (1980)

Science/technique is not neutral 240
our dominant social imaginary (both in USSR and the West): unlimited expansion of rational mastery (and the forces of production) [over society, over nature] 240
why don't the dominated revolt? 241
 it is *not* because they are repressed and manipulated 241
 it is because the system produces assent to the system 241
 it is *not* just coercion 241
 individuals are produced that make sense in the system; they are good at accepting authority 242
what is sacred and authoritative now is scientific knowledge/expertise/technique 242
 we must debunk this “expertise”; and valorize the intelligence of people in general 243
there are no *natural* needs; all needs are socially constructed 244
 capitalism creates particularly *economic* needs, puts them at the center, and then satisfies them 244
 the collapse will come when capitalism can't meet the needs *it* has installed in people 245
 the “need” for perpetual growth is only a fabrication of capitalism 245
the workers movement attacked the system of authority and pursued an autonomous society 246
 the ecology movement has attacked this assumptions about “needs” 246
 the need to “master” nature: true of both capitalism and Marxism 247
the ecology movement *does* tend toward the autonomy of society 247
 it argues for a steady state instead of continual growth 248
 and often envisions self-governed social units using locally renewable resources 248
it is not enough to seek *regulation* of environmental destruction, to achieve good outcomes for the environment 248-9
 we must take control of the decisions that affect the environment 249
 [means over ends again – particularly an issue w/r/t ecological destruction]
 we must govern ourselves in relation to our environment 249
 do we have the capacity? (of course); do we have the will? (not clear) 249
 do we truly want to be our own masters? 249

autonomous society is not just management, government, institution; it is a whole new culture and way of life by which we expect and value different things [in which we are different beings] 250

are there signs of this emerging? Prefigurations? 250
how do we place limits on ourselves? 250
especially ecological limits 251
the limits have to come out of society itself [it must be immanent] 251
institutional creation must also come out of society itself [it must be immanent] 252

9 - The Crisis of Western Societies (1982)

Prefatory Paragraph (1995)

USSR has collapsed, time to examine the West 253

The Decomposition of Leadership Mechanisms

Capitalist and Liberal institutions are resilient 254
after WWII, Western governments took on large role in managing economy 254
since 1974, they are overwhelmed; Keynesianism is lost 255
States no longer are in control of their economies (e.g. monetary policy) 256
the liberal, or soft, bureaucratic apparatus needs a leader/chief that the people can applaud 257

The Evanescence of Social and Political Conflict

Disappearance of movements, and so electoral party politics are all that's left 258
unions are just bureaucratized sectoral lobbies 258
the various movements—women, ecology, youth, ethnic—are minoritarian and have failed to articulate themselves in universal terms 258
they have not “assumed a positive political project” 258
political society is fragmented 259
[quite unhelpful here, esp. for 1982!]

Education, Culture, Values

Traditional family in crisis 259
the push of the youth for greater autonomy is a germ 259
need to disaggregate the educational system as well 259
it is just a contract now: diploma for profession 260
no values in society other than income/standard of living 260

The Collapse of Society's Self-Representation

Society needs to posit itself as something so that it can hold together, and create a will to be of *this* society 261

each individual has to bear this society, they have to be fashioned by its institutions, they have to acquire their meaning by reference to the society 261

but if this society can't represent itself, can't articulate its values [then both it and the individual are lost—think of Thatcher: there is no such thing as society...privatization all the way down to the individuals] 262

the current society does not *want* itself as a society; it cannot affirm itself 263

it posits progress as the quantitative increase of what exists [toward liberal capitalism at the end of history], rather than as a qualitative shift into a new way of life, a new idea of value 264

liberal capitalism is seen as the *telos* of humanity, but it lacks meaning 265

10 – The Greek Polis and the Creation of Democracy (1983)

[these ideas were first propounded by CC at a seminar led by Habermas]

What can we take from Greek democracy? 267

the self-aware judgment of one's own institutions [i.e. autonomy] was first invented here 267

interest in the other 268

ability to critically examine one's institutions 268

 this is part of the democratic movement 268

Greece is where democracy and philosophy are created 269

Greece is a germ, not a model 269

what it did, for the first time, was to understand that social-historical forms (laws, institutions, norms, meanings, identities) are not given/determined, that society institutes itself 269

but rationality is not the core of this process; it is not what humans share in common; creative imagination is 270

truth is not falsifiable, it is an ongoing *agon* to decide on one idea or another 270

how then can and do we judge and choose together? This is key now, because we now see history as the product of judging and choosing, not of determinacy; that means there is no foundation 271

 Greece is a kernel because they understood there is no foundation, and so they *practiced* judging and choosing, because they got that society was self-instituted 271

this realization [that there is no foundation] was true of the enlightenment too, and it led to both good and bad outcomes [both our Gods *and* monsters were unleashed] 272

judging and choosing is a *collective* activity; deliberation about laws; and about 'what is justice/the good city' 272

cosmos is created, *by us*, out of chaos; we can't change chaos, but we can/do change cosmos 273
we must make cosmos, but can never be *total* cosmos 274
thus there is always a place for political action, for deciding/choosing 274
in democracy, all citizens are presumed to be part of this process of political creation 274
Plato postulated that there exists in the world a total perfect cosmos [Ranciere calls this Plato's
archipolitics]; this idea has plagued political philosophy, and it was true of Marxism as well 274
the idea institutes a heteronomy, because we don't get to decide what that order is, if it is
eternal and perfect 274
but despite this bad idea, at certain points Greek society saw itself as engaging in a
permanent self-instituting process, and **this is the germ we need to take from them** 274
that idea is autonomy: we institute our own society 275
who is the auto? The community of citizens 275
they are self-legislating, self-judging, self-governing as equals, participating actively 275
the *ekklesia* is the assembly of the people, and it is sovereign 276
all citizens have the right and duty to speak there 276
the *boule* is the council that assists the *ekklesia* 276
this is direct democracy, no representatives 276
Paris commune, workers councils, soviets – the sovereign body is the totality of those
concerned; delegates exist, but they are subject to constant monitoring and recall 276
representation is alien to democracy, obviously, because permanent representatives
alienate power from the body of citizens to the body of representatives 276
decisions are made *by citizens*, not by experts 277
the *ekklesia* should listen to experts on the subject of their *techne* (they are 'technicians'),
but the citizens are the experts in public affairs, and *they* should decide 277
the user is the best judge of the expert's advice; the user of the *polis* is the best judge of
experts' proposals 277
currently, we think only experts can judge experts → bureaucracy 277
polis is not a State 277
kratos = sheer force 277
politeia != State, it = the institution of the community
the Greek would not have been able to understand the concept of the State as separated
out from the body of citizens 278
the distinction is not between State and population, it is between body of citizens
and actual people [seems to retain a 'body politic' idea here] 278
in the Greek *polis* there was no State, no State apparatus, no permanent bureaucracy 278
magistrates were chosen by lot; and they were beholden to the *ekklesia* 278
citizens are both citizens and private people, but *as citizens* they think in terms of the
common good – the model is *not* an *agon* among rival private (economic) interests 279
the political is a *public* affair, takes place in a *public* space (free discussion in the *agora*, formal
discussion in the *ekklesia*) 280
it is not about having a right to do x, it is about actually doing x 281
participation educates a citizen, and he becomes better at it 281

public time: the past is not burden, but context in which we are constantly remaking our institutions 281

limits of autonomy – there is no foundation, there is only our will 281-2

autonomy requires this assumption 282

so we are only limited by what we choose to define as justice – we *can* do anything, but we *shouldn't* do anything 282

nothing can protect us from “folly or suicide”...except *us* – *we* are the foundation 282

anyone can propose anything, but the *ekklesia* must judge it, and must judge all laws as well 283

no professional judges – the people must judge (i.e. rethink/interpret existing law) 284

tragedy: shows us that being is chaos, that there is no order, really, that we are not in charge in the big sense 284

we build cities, and institutions 285, and laws 286

but there is nothing to guarantee we are doing this right; we can only surmise that we are wiser together, that the more common a decision is, the more likely it is to be a good one...this, he says, is “the fundamental maxim of democratic politics” 286

what is it we are trying to do with our self-institution? Autonomy is an end in itself, but it is not *just* that, we want autonomy also in order to be able *to make/do* 286

to act together politically, to decide in common, to thrive in the agora 286-7

Pericles' funeral speech is a great work of political thought that offers a substantive conception of democracy 287

it is the love of beauty and wisdom and the desire to *act* to bring it about 288

the object of the institution of the polis is the creation of the [full] human being, the citizen, who loves and practices beauty, wisdom, and the common good, for whom art and philosophy are ways of life 288

the Greeks never stopped asking why we institute society, what we were trying to achieve in doing so, which is to produce the citizens above 288

false dilemmas: individual/society or civil society/State 288

11 – The Logic of Magmas and the Question of Autonomy (1983)

[this was a talk delivered at a seminar in 1981 on 'self-organization' (*auto-organization*)]

Inconsistent multiplicities vs. sets [imaginary/magmatic logic vs. ensemblistic-identitary logic] 290

he favors the former

against reducing society to rational-functional determinations 291

the social-historical and the psychical sphere are connected and independent 291

ensemblistic-identitary logic: determinate thinking, finite sets 291, categorical distinctions, separate, discrete units/objects/elements 292, identity is possible, non-contradiction is mandatory, well-ordered relations, class of things == property of the members of that class 294

these elements are posited *a priori*, and assumed to be operating to change the social-historical 293

x === x takes the two to be identical when they are not and can never be (there are two *different* x's on the page) 294

a world of rules is created that 'perfectly' orders things and relations among things, but these rules are made up, they are not the actual rules the world operates by 295

but it is precisely in this act of making up these rules that we can see proof of the radical imaginary at work 295

Hegel is a proponent of this logic; Plato too; all of philosophy is fixated on determinacy, and posits the indeterminate as existing but inferior 295

[e.g. the Forms are complete determinacy] 296

Magmas

Magmas transgress ensemblitic-identitary logic 296

magma: that from which one can extract an indefinite number of ensemblitic organizations that can never be reassembled 297

inexhaustible, indeterminate, impossible to separate into discrete units (i.e. every unit is contaminated with every other with which it is associated) 298

what is magmatic is what is *not* ensemblitic-identitary in its mode of being and mode of organization 298

what cannot be accounted for in an ensemblitic-identitary account (what is a remainder in that account) is magmatic 300

magmas are irreducible 300

deterministic/probabilistic is not an important distinction, both are ensemblitic-identitary 300

Einstein: the impossibility of separating out elementary phenomena 301

mud, instead of a grid 301

he is all in favor of Einstein muddying the waters of physics 302

it is only in the mud (the magma), amidst the indeterminate, that we can see what has been (partly) done, and what has not, and thus know how to initiate something new 303

this mud is where the radical imaginary operates 303

significations that cannot be set into classes, those are magmatic significations 304

yet of course we cannot speak without using ensemblitic-identitary operators 305

radical imagining is the positing something that is not, *ex nihilo*, and connecting it to other things 305

the imaginary institution of society [often shorthand as IIS] is the constitution of arbitrary points of view, and then making relations among these 305

we need to try to operate in the imaginary domain rather than the ensemblitic-identitary domain 306

Power of the Ensemblistic-Identitary Logic

We organize our world by means of classes, properties, relations 306
an absolutely disordered universe is unthinkable 306
ensemblistic-identitary logic expresses a functional-instrumental necessity to the way things are in society 307
but the philosophical turn to ensemblistic-identitary logic, and a rational political philosophy, since Plato, is not necessary and can be other

Ontological Theses

The not-fully-determined, chaos, abyss, groundlessness – on which we impose an ensemblistic-identitary logic 307
there is no archipolitics: no state of being is fixed, eternal [we can always return to the magma and begin again] 308

Questions about the Living Being

Autonomy is when a living being is the aware author of its own law, and instaurates a new relation with that law; it knows that it made the law, and it knows that it can modify the law 308
he prefers 'self-constitution' to 'self organization' – the latter is not radical enough [it only has us organizing what already exists, not creating what exists in the first place] 309
automaton (Aristotle) is that which has within it the principle of movement 309
an autonomous being is self-constituting, and posits its own significations, constitutes its own domain of classes, properties, and relations [i.e. in the ensemblistic-identitary mode, but it is conscious that it is doing so] 309
all existing things can be reconstituted other than how they are, i.e. none have an *eidōs*, a Form that is unchanging 310

The Question of Social and Individual Autonomy

Autonomy is to challenge received truths 310
most societies have been heteronomous 311
it was a radical rupture (Ancient Greece, enlightenment Europe) for a society to put into question its own institutions, significations, and laws; for it to undertake to consciously alter itself 311
in autonomy, we reject the ensemblistic-identitary idea that the initial conditions of our society are necessary 312
Plato wanted to find that political rationality that was *the* political rationality, and have politics come to an end 312
the project for an autonomous society must break Plato's (and the ensemblistic-identitary's) grip on our imaginations 312
what is [the strata] permits us to act and create [experiment with lines of flight] but it dictates

nothing to us [what *is* does not *have* to be] 312

in his work autonomy is not philosophical, but political; it has to do with the self-transformation of society 312

we need autonomous mass organs, rather than parties/States that lead/dominate/control the masses 312

these autonomous organs will give themselves their own organizational forms 313

revolutions fail when these organs cease to exist and act autonomously, and they allow separate powers to exist and rule 313

self-government and self-management (which we should no longer assume to be *workers'* self-management) rests on the self-organization of collectivities 313

[this is a key move, to shed the leaden assumption that workers/economy/production are more important than any other sphere of life]

it must overcome heteronomy 313

it has to apply to *all* social life/*all* spheres 313

autonomous society institutes itself, and gives itself its own law, and knows it is doing so 314

it knows its laws are not given by nature, or God, or the logic of economic production [i.e. scientific Marxism is just as bad a mystification as natural law or Christianity] 314

the key is not to accept the givens as givens; not to accept the law/institution given by the other [nature, God, party, logic of production] as final 314

we want autonomy *for itself*, but we also want it for something else, which is to be able to make/do [*faire*] things 314

[presumably to *faire* differently than we are *fairing* currently]

institutions self-preserve, they socialize psyches, provide a meaning that covers over the Abyss 315

these institutions are *things we have to have* [they are Rothko's frames], but we have to see their particular form as contingent, and we have to take up the project of instituting them ourselves, and knowing that we are doing so 315

they can never have an absolute foundation, and we must remember that 316

their source is our own creation of them, and this is the problem of **democracy**, which renounces all ultimate grounds for society and proceeds on the assumption that people institute society for themselves 316

democracy therefore knows that the limits to society are not ontological limits:

there are no limits to what we *can* do, there are only ethical/political limits, limits to what we *should* do; and these are limits we place on ourselves, knowing we are doing so (autonomy), they are not limits placed on us by a force beyond us, they are not limits that are given by another, limits we cannot control (heteronomy)

316

the autonomous life, which is democracy, starts from this stark realization: there is no one and nothing beyond us, there is only us, this life, and we must decide what to make of it 316

12 – Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary (1994)

I.

As a society, we have examined the individual imaginary, but not the social 319
philosophy as a search for truth (*logos, nous*) over opinion (sense, imagination) 320
phusis = nature; *nomos* = institution/convention 320
in Greek democratic cities, it was known that institutions had no foundation, but Plato ignored
this wisdom, and sought the foundation in rational-philosophical truth 320-1
the social instituting imaginary can create, *ex nihilo* [as with desiring-production] 321
for Plato since nothing can come from nothing, the imagination must create unreal,
imaginary things 321
for Plato, everything True is permanent, everything false is fluctuating 321
we have bought every bit of Plato's thinking 321

II.

Imagination is a creator, inventor 321
the radical instituting social imaginary (ISI) is radical because it can create significations
and institutions *ex nihilo* – it is a *vis formandi*, a forming force
the psyche and the anonymous collective are the agents of this imagination 322

III.

Imagination can represent an object that is not present or even existent 322
it is the power to make be that which is not 322
we seem to have no access to the experience of others, and yet we do in that we are the product
of our society 324
my creation of the world is always also *our* creation of the world 325
I share with others “a biological and social genericity” 325
my experiences are imaginary creations, I have to create my sense of them, and that sense
is at once individual and social 325
the political imagination/experience is the one that sees itself as part of a multiplicity of
worlds 325

IV.

Radical imagination is what makes it possible for us to create for ourselves our own proper
world, for us to consciously organize our world 326
there is a generic own proper world (our world – social) and a singular own proper world
(my world – individual) 327
everything that *is* contains an ensemblistic-identitary dimension, so that it is not absolutely

indeterminate 328

the radical social imaginary creates institutions and language and reason 329

V.

Psyche needs meaning to survive; society is the institution of meanings 330

socialization forces the psyche to mostly abandon its solipsistic meaning for shared meanings 330

the anonymous human collective is the agent of the radical instituting imaginary 331

VI.

All individuals are always already socialized 332

there is, however, a psyche that is original, unsocialized 332

society *creates* itself, creates its own *eidōs*, institutions 332

it then organizes what it creates, but society is not pre-existing – it institutes itself 332

it is always also re-creating itself 333

there are constraints to this creation: biology, the psyche, the institutions that already exist, the humming drives of the existing society 335

social imaginary significations create a proper world for society 336

VII.

Almost all societies institute themselves through the closure of meaning; they are heteronomous; they cannot put their own institution into question [i.e. they just assume what is to be given] 336

ancient Greece was the first to break this pattern; the enlightenment was the second 337

thus emerged the project of autonomy: to do politics as a collective emancipatory movement and philosophy as self-reflecting critical thought 337

this project does not aim at utopia, its politics does not aim at happiness but freedom, which is to say conscious making the laws for oneself 337

13 – Culture in a Democratic Society (1994)

I.

Culture for the masses, but not one that is given to them 339

II.

The poietic imaginary 339

democracy is the *kratos* of the *demos* = the power of the people 340

the people are sovereign, they make the law, which is to say that society makes its institutions, it is autonomous, it self-institutes itself and is aware it is doing so 340
and its individuals are similarly autonomous 340

the law must exist, there must be a way to declare a collective resolution to have x be a rule that we agree to collectively 340

so autonomy, or people consciously instituting society themselves, is essentially what democracy is. Democracy is another name for autonomy. 340

all else is instituted heteronomy 340

which is a condition in which the foundation for the law (and for how we understand justice) is not society itself (immanent), or people themselves, but something outside society (transcendent) – something that institutes a closure of signification, because that foundation is not controlled by the people, it lies beyond discussion [*logos*] 341

traditional monarchies are a good example 341

III.

Imagination (our human *vis formandi*) creates cosmos in the midst of chaos 342

we humans also have a *libido formandi*, a desire for formation [of cosmos], for making meaning, for setting into order 342

reason cannot be this desire 342

since reason cannot create, when we organize rationally, we only rearrange what exists; when we organize poetically, we create the new, we *give form* to chaos, which is to say we create new forms of cosmos 343

the definition of culture: it is our giving form and meaning to chaos 343

religion, e.g., is a transcendent ground for this giving form, and it channels our *libido formandi* narrowly 343

in democracy we abolish such transcendent grounds; the only possible ground is *us* – and *we* create the meaning of our own life 343

we can never have any guarantee that is external to us 344

therefore we are *alone* in being, in chaos, and must build cosmos for ourselves [recall from chapter 10, and from *The Birth of Tragedy*, that this fact of our being alone is what tragedy teaches us] 344

IV.

Creating new forms in freedom is intoxicating; we grow psychically 345

Art does not present the ideas of reason; it presents chaos to us, but it gives some form to chaos, it is a window on the chaos, it shows us that we live on the edge of the Abyss, which an autonomous being must accept and work with 346

the public can *be shown* this window by the artist; but a democratic public can also *itself* be creative 346

V.

Democratic movements ruptured the closure of meaning [i.e. the locating of meaning outside of the people themselves] but that rupture is in danger of being closed again 356

[it always is, though – the closure of meaning never goes away for good, or, we are always tempted to fall back into it]

we must remain active to ward off that closure; and not fall into a spectator's role 347

this activity must **stimulate me without tiring me** 347

democracy is definitely not a life in which individuals do what they like [pace Plato] 347

it requires that we give ourselves meaning [and also limits] 347

we cannot let meaning *be given to us* [by the State, by advertising, by entertainment] 347

the content of meaning is not so much what matters, but the question of who is creating it 348

14 – Psychoanalysis and Philosophy (1996)

The subject is not dead, psychoanalysis should try to help the instauration of the reflexive and deliberative subject 350

it is not about the unlimited reign of desire 351

the human being is not a rational animal; s/he is an imagining animal whose goal should be autonomy 351

Ontology

The inherited ontology thinks: being = being-determined 351

[but there is a part of being that is being-indeterminate]

this is an ensemblistic-identitary logic 352

it tries to make affect, representation, and desire determinate 353

but these things are indeterminate, mixed together; they cannot be separated out 353-4

they are magma 354

there is a passage from the psychic monad to the socialized individual 354

representations are not the mirror of nature; they distort, displace, condense 354

ensemblistic-identitary wants to treat psyche and soma as discrete 354

but they are together in magma 355

determinism in psychical life is absurd 355

the radical imagination is what differentiates one being from another 355

Philosophical Anthropology

Every being is a being for itself; it creates its own world; the imagination [cf. Desiring-production] is its key element, but this element has been relegated to exist as an unreliable subordinate to reason 356

the key is to revalorize our idea of the imagination to its proper, productive, instaurating role 356

and we pursue autonomy by revalorizing the imagination and using it consciously 356-7
the problem with inherited philosophy: it restricts the imagination to the reproduction of already perceived elements; i.e. it does not allow for its capacity to *create* 357

the initial psychical monad has a need for society [but also really wants to be alone] 357

society is a magma of social imaginary significations 358

the latter organize the proper world of each society and give it meaning 358

Practical Philosophy

If a desire is neither good or bad, how do we establish good and bad? 359

we need to gain access to our unconscious, gain lucidity about our own history and desire 359

so our reflective and deliberative subjectivity can emerge; and that subjectivity can ask questions of right and wrong 360

the project of politics is for autonomy, of myself and of others 360

15 – Done and To Be Done (1989)

Dispense with the Hegelo-Marxist ontology; instead, an ontology of creation that makes possible the instauration of an autonomous society 361

being manifests as concrete organization, or cosmos 362

the mode of being of the social-historical is that each society creates a magma of social imaginary signification (SIS), and it is not rationally analyzable vis a functional analysis 363

there is no ground from which an SIS springs; each society creates it anew 363

and SIS has an ensemblistic-identitary dimension, but also an imaginary one 364

the SIS does not come about deterministically, necessarily, as the causal result of some pre-existing set of truths 366

we *need to* instaurate an SIS and its institutions to survive 367

the question is whether we do so consciously and critically, whether we put our own institutions (and laws) into question 368

we must abandon determinacy as absolute, but we do not live in complete indetermination either 369

creating the SIS means positing new determinations, new laws, new *eidōs/forms* [but doing so self-consciously and critically] 369

and we do so in a context, within some limits 370

Relationship to Inherited Philosophy

The creation of philosophy is the putting into question of the closure of the SIS; it is consubstantial with democracy, and goes together with the rupture of social heteronomy, and the production of reflective and deliberative subjectivity 370

philosophy's job is to rupture closure, to question totality, to create the soil on which philosophy walks, and to always go beyond the land it has created to date; the movement of thought cannot stop; it is not resolution that thought should seek, but contradiction, aporia, paradox 371

inherited philosophy, however, limits this proper activity with determinacy; it institutes a closure 371

Castoriadis has been critical of Marx and distanced from him – M's rational metaphysics 372 and Plato's theological philosophy 372

though Aristotle has more democratic possibility in his work 372

he is still a determinist, but he rediscovers Heroditus, the *phusis/nomos* distinction, the *polis* and justice, and the imagination in his work on the psyche – the seed of the idea of the imaginary institution of society is in A's work 373 for him, *nomos* and *eidos* are created by humans 373

CC invented the SIS and then read it back into Aristotle and Kant 374

A: the good life is developing *logos* in the *polis* 374

CC: the *phusis* proper to man (his nature) is radical imaginary [or maybe he is saying we should act and think as if this is our purpose/nature] 374

the SIS cannot be traced to biological facts; it is entirely our own doing 375

all societies institute their own laws and organization; but only a very few do so consciously; thus only a very few societies have philosophy or politics 375

Psyche and Society

Psyche is socialized, but never totally; there is always an indeterminate element to the psyche 376

psyche needs meaning, but it must renounce its proper meaning, and trade it in for the meaning of the SIS 379

the unconscious is a magma 379

the question of the relation between psyche and soma 380

for CC, education and psychiatry should be oriented toward autonomy 381

passage from psyche and heteronomous individuals to reflective and deliberative subjectivity 381

when we assimilate the SIS we do so actively 381

Learning and Progress

Humans are malleable, history is contingent, the product of relentless human creation 382

subjectivity is too 382

and needs; and problems; and meaning 383

dispense with the idea that the world just *has* meaning and our job is to figure out what it is; and then hierarchizing societies based on how close they are to the True meaning 383

[instead, of course, we create our own meaning] 383

Meaning and Validity

We have to define what has meaning and what does not [think of Ranciere's Aventine plebs], what is valid and what is not 385

only in Greece did 'the other' come to be seen as not automatically wrong 386
there is thus an element of relativism introduced into valuation, but it is never absolute 387

so we need to judge of validity: what is a valid meaning/reason/idea/law? Most societies accept an existing law as *ipso facto* valid. But we should instead do this through critical reflection and deliberation 388-9

and reason is a key faculty for questioning our principles 389

but the rational faculty is no more universal than imagination 390

revealed truth – scriptures, whether the Bible or Marx – stops inquiry 390

we cannot rationally found reason; or language 391

philosophy uses non-reason as much as reason 392

we require the will to reflect, to critically question our SIS 393

CC has been looking for heralds of autonomy in concrete struggles for years 393

the will for autonomy is necessary; it is the motive force *toward* 393

the sublimation of desire into will 394

but...why *autonomy*? There is no way to *found* the reason why we should do it, other than that we *will* it 394

we have created the tradition of democracy/philosophy/autonomy/freedom, [and really all CC is doing is urging us to stick to *that* project rather than some other] 394

we need to create a space and time in which to discuss what is just 395

Newton didn't *discover* gravity, he *created* the theory of gravitation 396

a good theory encounters the world in a way that is fruitful for *that* SIS 396

we are constantly posing theories, searching for a better way to encounter the world 396

a theory must first make sense, then it can be the basis for an ethical injunction 397

[there is a lot of a Rortyan “the truth is what you can get people to believe” here]

Autonomy: Ethics

CC's autonomy is not Kant's idea 398

praxis is a modality of making/doing 399

it is the activity that helps the other in *his* project for autonomy 399

it is the activity of a reflective and deliberative subjectivity 399

no injunctions are categorical 400

they are all in context 400

while autonomy is an end/guide, it is not a universal arbiter 400

we have to choose in context [this is pure A] 400

phronesis [practical wisdom] must be practiced for autonomy to exist 400

autonomy is critiquing and acting on what is, in order to change it 401

for Kant universalizability is key; CC approves, if it is taken to mean that I have to defend my act

before others – it is a *political* question, whether something is universal 401
I must be responsible toward others, toward the law we have created together 402
the imperative for CC is: become autonomous, and contribute to others' autonomy 402
autonomy does not mean being unconnected to others, or totally free of all determinations 403
that is not autonomy, that is anomie 403
we should want to obey the Good out of respect for the Good 403
we have to work within constraints; we are part of an already ongoing project, we do not
create the SIS utterly from scratch 404

Autonomy: Politics

Politics is the project of creating institutions that facilitate autonomy 405
private sphere (*oikos*); public/private sphere (*agora*); and the public/public sphere (*ekklesia*) 405
we typically collapse the last two 405
the core of democracy is the becoming truly public of the *ekklesia* 405
totalitarianism tries to collapse all three 406
the State makes the *ekklesia* become private 406
 liberal democracies are profoundly Statist, bureaucratic 406
 they make the *ekklesia* private 406
 public affairs are decided by an elite subset 407
autonomous society needs the *ekklesia* to be truly public again, i.e. not controlled by
select groups, but by people 407
 representation blocks this; capitalist private ownership blocks this 407
 representation alienates sovereignty to the representatives; sets up a
 governors/governed relation; elections ratify this alienation 408
rights of man are a minimum 408
parties shrink and limit thinking/discussion 409
 they institute bureaucracy/hierarchy, prevent democracy/autonomy 409
autonomous society will need all three spheres; and they are mutually independent, and yet
articulated to each other 409
 private sphere will be private, home, market, means of production... 410
the relations between the spheres has no ground; they have to be worked out by the society 410
 the *ekklesia* should be large, but not all things, just those things that concern everyone
 411
 public/private (*agora*) is the market, economy 412
 the capitalist market and the command economy are not the only options 412
 capitalism is not a genuine market; a genuine market has no capitalism [Holland]
 412
 there will be a *genuine* market (consumer sovereignty, democratic allocation of
 resources, the plan factory) in the autonomous society 413
 also, each enterprise will be self-managed by the producers 413

Today

Equality of wages/incomes? 413

that kind of specificity cannot be set out *a priori* 414

CC began with the contemporary workers movement, and that led him to Athenian democracy 414

Hungary and Poland in 1956; a form of life invented by the workers movement 414
when these forms degenerate, they give rise to bureaucracy [and the party] and the division of political labor 414

so we must ward off the bureaucratization of society 414

and work for the becoming public of the *ekklesia*, a re-appropriation of power by people, a decentralization of decision-making, the participation of people in decision-making, consumer sovereignty, self-government of producers [in their factory] – i.e. universal participation in all decisions that affect the whole, self-limitation in decisions 425

the **proletariat is not special, privileged**, even though CC has argued that in the past 415

an autonomous society is instaurated by the autonomous activity of the collectivity 416

the passion for democracy and for freedom is a deeper one than the desire for consumer goods 416

[he doesn't think this depth is objective, we will have to convince each other that democracy is the better choice]

our life in autonomous society is going to have to be more frugal, less technological, less 'productive' in the industrial sense (due to ecological limits) 417

and we can institute this frugality democratically 417

we can downgrade economic activity from “the purpose of life” to “a means to life” 417

[that last question is tricky – CC can't argue that we all, deep down, prefer autonomy to heteronomy – because there is no ground for a preference like that. We would have to *decide* together that we prefer autonomy. Is it possible, in CC's no-ground world, to say that autonomy is *better* for us (whether or not we prefer it), that we thrive more in it than in heteronomy? Is there a natural law like: the human animal is better suited to live (their power to act is increased more) in an autonomous society than in a heteronomous one? Do humans have autonomy as a *telos*?]