Mysticism and Mechanization

…the great souls — to a greater extent than philosophers — are those of artists and mystics (at least those of a Christian mysticism that Bergson describes as being completely superabundant activity, action, creation). At the limit, it is the mystic who plays with the whole of creation, who invents an expression of it whose adequacy increases its dynamism. Servant of an open and finite God (such are the characterisics of the élan vital), the mystical soul actively plays the whole of the universe in which there is nothing to see or to contemplate.[note]Ibid., 112.[/note]

…everything happens as if it were doing its utmost to set itself free from these laws. It has not the power to reverse the direction of physical changes, such as the principle of Carnot determines it. It does, however, behave absolutely as a force would behave which, left to itself, would work in the inverse direction. Incapable of *stopping* the course of material

changes downwards, it succeeds in *retarding* it. The evolution of life really continues … [as] an initial implusion: this impulsion… brings life to more and more efficient acts by the fabrication and use of more and more powerful explosives.[note]Ibid. (emphasis in original)[/note]

Building the Social Myth

It must be noted that fiction, when it has the power to move us, resembles an incipient hallucination: it can thwart our judgment and reason, which are strictly intellectual faculties. Now what would nature have done, if she wanted to guard against certain dangers of intellectual activity without compromising the future of intelligence? … if intelligence was to be kept at the outset from sliding down a slope which was dangerous to the individual and society, it could only be by the statement of apparent facts, by ghosts of facts; failing real experience, a counterfeit of experience had to be conjured up. A fiction, if it is vivid and insistent, may indeed masquerade as perception and in that way prevent or modify action.[note]Ibid., 109.[/note]

Ordinary language could not produce these results in any very certain manner; appeal must be made to collections of images which, taken together and through intuition alone, before any considered analyses are made, are capable of invoking the mass of sentiments which correspond to the different manifestations of the war taken by social against modern society… This method has all the advantages that integral knowledge has over analysis, according to the doctrine of Bergson; and perhaps it might be possible to cite many other examples which would demonstrate equally

well the worth of the famous professor’s doctrines.[note]Georges Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 113 (emphasis in original).[/note]

Reversal

The pessimist regards social conditions as forming a system bound together by an iron law which cannot be evaded, as something in the form of one block, and which can only disappear through a catastrophe that involves the whole. If this theory is admitted, it then becomes absurd to attribute the evils from which society suffers to a few wicked men.[note]Ibid., 11.[/note]

The Revolutionary Myth

only means by which the European nations, stupefied by humanitarianism, can recover their former energy. This violence compels capitalism to restrict its attention solely to its material role and tends to restore it to its warlike qualities it formerly possessed. A growing and solidly organized working class can force the capitalist class to remain ardent in the historical struggle; if a united and revolutionary proletariat confronts a rich bourgeoisie ready for conquest, capitalist society will reach its historical perfection.[note]Ibid., 78-79.[/note]

...the idea of the general strike, constantly rejuvenated by the sentiments provoked by proletarian violence, produces an entirely epic state of mind and, at the same time, bends all the energies of the mind towards the conditions that allow the realization of a freely functioning and prodigiously progressive workshop; we have thus recognized that there is a strong relationship between the sentiments aroused by the general strike and those which are necessary to bring about a continued progress in production. We have then the right to maintain that the modern world

possesses the essential motivating power which can ensure the existence of the morality of producers.[note]Sorel, *Reflections on Violence,* 250. On the “economic bridge” between socialism and capitalism, see *The Illusions of Progress*, 205-207. See also Vince Garton, “Technoindustrial Capitalism and the Politics of Catastrophic Velocity”, *The Cyclonograph,* June 23rd, 2017.

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