

# Upheaval as Philosophy: *Eleven Theses on Guy Debord*

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*The urban environment proclaimed the orders and tastes of the ruling society just as violently as the newspapers... Obstacles were everywhere. And they were all interrelated, maintaining a unified reign of poverty. Since everything was connected, it was necessary to change everything through a unitary struggle, or nothing. It was necessary to link up with the masses, but sleep was all around us.*<sup>1</sup>—Guy Debord, 1959

*[T]he effort of the philosopher does not and cannot stay on an isolated philosophical level, in a separate consciousness, sphere or dimension; the source of his theories is social practice, and he must direct them back towards life, be it through his teaching or by other means (poetry? literature?).*<sup>2</sup>—Henri Lefebvre, 1958

*I just don't know how to go about this. I want to find out just how I should do it. I think it's going to have to be very subtle; you can't ram philosophies down anybody's throat, and the music is enough! That's philosophy.*<sup>3</sup>—John Coltrane, 1966

## I.

The chief defect of all situationist theory—that of Debord included—is that it responds to the realm of appearances, and particularly that of the urban environment, which always already embodies and reflects a particular and dominant ideology and which is organized and managed by capital; situationist theory thus recommends contestatory interventions that can only ever aspire to be interruptions or disruptions, rendering politics an occasional attack, a kind of piracy, “hacking,” or a temporary counter-media. In short, situationist theory reifies the “permanence” of its opponent by accepting saturnalias of interference as a *modus operandi*. Situationist theory thus admits a desperation and opportunism that, while reflecting a practical consideration of its own position, ultimately mirrors and affirms the “permanence” of the society of the spectacle which it wants to destroy. Debord’s theory is a necessary advance over the materialism of Marx, the idealism of Hegel, and the various combinations of the two (i.e. Gramsci, Lukács, etc.)—none of which captured the singularity of the image-object. Yet Debord’s understandable cynicism regarding revolutionary aspirations leads him to a politics of exceptional activity that leaves the rules intact.

Debord’s earliest efforts reflect his trajectory from the art world [See, for example, Debord’s *Correspondence: The Foundation of the Situationist International (June 1957- August 1960)*], and his personal investment in staging gallery events carrying the principles of an outline for a new political philosophy into the world.<sup>4</sup> Hence, Debord arrives at political philosophy out of various non-political or amorphously political commitments, and never manages to breach those commitments sufficiently for an understanding of the “permanent situation” of capitalism. To be clear, the trajectory from art is a major source of the *strength* of Debord’s work (i.e. contestation utilizing hoaxes, humor and other provocations, seizing attention with creative and visual savvy), but in this case art is a double-bind for it also leads to a practice conceived and fixed mainly in gallery or sketchbook format, so that the discrete acts of a situationist politics often feel like incendiary novelty items. Hence, like Feuerbach, Debord “does not grasp the significance of ‘revolutionary,’ of practical-critical activity.”<sup>5</sup>

## II.

Truth is a matter of both theory and practice. Despite Baudrillard’s obfuscations on the subject, truth can be discerned, although never very easily, and never as a *purely theoretical* or as a *purely practical* matter. Truth is not *a priori* or *a posteriori*, for it is both—it is only ever discerned in the corroboration of the conceptual with human experience, or the corroboration of human experience with the conceptual. While philosophy can help us to identify what ought to be, only the world as it is can help us to identify *which way to go*. One without the other is never enough of the truth—one without the other is always a moral and practical risk. Theory without practice is indeed merely scholastic, but it is no more merely scholastic than the empirical facts of the world are merely “data” without the conceptual assessment of human beings and the organization of such “data” in critical discourses.

In other words, the empirical facts of the world alone, without the struggle to understand them from a theoretical point of view, forces a break between the facts of the world and the world itself. If we could manage to extricate the facts of the world from their complex historical, economic and social contingencies, then the facts of the world would be a purely non-political field of data available for the scientific assessment of objective study. But, as C. Wright Mills has said, “No man stands alone directly confronting a world of solid fact. No such world exists.”<sup>6</sup>

The empirical facts of the world always already reflect a politics and, *if there was nothing else besides the world as it already is*, that would mean the end of politics itself. In order for politics to exist there must be some analysis of what is *and* a contention that something other than what already is could possibly be. To be apolitical is nothing more than to accept the facts of the world as they are without any contention. Without theory and a sense of the possibility for something other than what already is, the world would be (and often is) mistaken for an immutable obstacle course, and human understanding is reduced to a means for finding one’s way through to the end of life. Therefore, contrary to a common derision of philosophy as otherworldly and useless (i.e. the common lesson of Thales, who was so involved in observing the stars that he fell into a well), both the world and politics depend on it.

### III.

The antagonisms underlying spectacular society have been complicated and obscured to the point of oblivion and society *cannot* be cleanly divided “into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat.”<sup>7</sup> These two camps, in particular, still exist, but many different constitutive parts comprise each one, some parts ideological, some formed by group identities—many of the constitutive parts bind individual members across class lines. More and more, we discover the failure of class analysis to account for the heterogeneous complexity of class composition. *But this does not mean that we should abandon class analysis.* To the contrary, the actual and ongoing existence of class society requires class analysis. However, the analysis of society must be more complex and less inexorable—refuting all dichotomous thinking that would make things easier to talk about, but farther from the truth of the world. The complexity of the world we live in does undermine and ultimately destroys Marx’s efforts to identify a revolutionary subject position through class analysis. And we cannot rescue the inexorable antagonism of Marx’s “revolutionary class” by introducing a far more amorphous category like Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have done with the “multitude.”

A further complication is that the new complexities of social stratification in so-called multicultural societies cannot be reasonably understood as reflecting revolutionary developments in an historical materialist dialectic. Changes in the composition of society are due to multifarious causes, none of which can simply be celebrated as a harbinger of anything radical or even liberal (i.e. migrations and group diversification often lead just as much—or more—to ethno-nationalist reaction, chauvinistic patriotism, and the reification of racial identities as they do to cosmopolitanism and social solidarity).

But there is some good news. By retaining (i.e. rethinking and reviving) a moral and normative political position against capitalism and its culture, we *can* identify a common ground shared by people across different fields of human life. Indigenous Mayans in Mexico were quite surprised in the 1990s to discover their robust common ground and the profound resonance of their claims with environmentalists and feminists and gays and lesbians and so on—theirs was a commonality of being on the losing side of power, where power is defined by and for capital. However, capital does not by its own force create a revolutionary subject as “its special and essential product.”<sup>8</sup> Rather, the creation of any revolutionary subject today requires the conscious and creative work of the imagination.<sup>9</sup>

Helpful in this regard are the works of Nancy Fraser and Enrique Dussel who find “revolutionary” prospects in subsets of populations that attempt to “transform” instead of “reform” the political-economic and cultural structures of the world.<sup>10</sup> Commonality (and solidarity) among such groups is critical because none can bring about structural transformations alone, or through temporary, sporadic, and opportunist interventions. Yet, the commonality of the aims of disparate groups does not produce a “multitude” that, however internally diverse, retains a cohesive unity over time. If any such “group of groups” did retain cohesive unity over time, then we could employ an analytical rubric of the multitude versus its opponents. But this cannot be done because when we look to the world for something like Hardt and Negri’s multitude we do not find it there. And this is not because we are not looking in the right place, but rather, because it is not there to be found.

In addition to Dussel and Fraser, Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's comments on "expanding the chain of equivalents between the different struggles against oppression" are helpful.<sup>11</sup> But, while these theorists can help us to imagine a new revolutionary subject position, we must keep in mind that none of them comprehended the critical role of the meta-textual terrains that Debord focused on. It is one thing to answer the question of "who," yet another to answer the question of "how." And the final analysis on these questions is not even an analysis—"who" will be answered when they show themselves, and "how" will be answered when they win.

#### IV.

Debord starts with an extreme form of alienation, which deepens Marx's theory of estrangement and recognizes the complete failure of the predictive side (that is, the promise) of historical materialism. One could say that, in Debord, this latter recognition is dialectically related to the new depth of alienation. To state the problem bluntly: How can we resolve the failure of revolutionary projects and the lost promise of historical materialism, on the one hand, with the maintenance of revolutionary aspirations on the other (especially if alienation manages to extinguish instead of ignite revolutionary aspirations)? This is still the pre-eminent question today. The problem was summed up very well by Raoul Vaneigem in his *Basic Banalities (Part 1)*: "In this social context the function of alienation must be understood as a *condition of survival*... The satisfaction of basic needs remains the best safeguard of alienation; it is best dissimulated by being justified on the grounds of undeniable necessities. Alienation multiplies needs because it can satisfy none of them; ...the glut of conveniences and elements of survival reduces life to a single choice: suicide or revolution."<sup>12</sup> Here, I read suicide to have a particular signification regarding the life and the living spirit of the revolutionary. Either we will find revolutionary alternatives to revolution, or we will choose to end our lives *as revolutionaries*. Simply put, without a way through this impasse, the revolutionary becomes a relic for the archives of history.

Keeping the revolutionary subject position alive in the world is not a task for the philosopher, but philosophy can work through the impasse if wielded by others than philosophers. And while radical philosophy has its professors, it is not a profession. The way forward is never a matter of intellectuals writing recipes for the people and the people providing study material (in the form of their lives) to intellectuals. Philosophy itself must become the ongoing activity of those who can think and communicate well, and who can do better than my kind at reaching more than specialized reading publics looking for "groundbreaking" texts.<sup>13</sup> When I hear or see or learn about an articulation of some kind that reframes critical questions in a provocative and compelling manner that destabilizes ideology, I cannot but conclude that it is philosophy broke loose.<sup>14</sup>

I must make a qualification at this juncture. There are and have been versions of "*folk philosophy*" that could never be called "radical philosophy." There is a difference between the two, and it is a difference that makes all the difference in the world. Let us take a particularly dangerous example. *The School of Practical Philosophy* secularizes philosophy by offering it up (selling it, to be precise) as a practical means for the "philosophically trained" person to achieve positional advantages (economic, psychological, spiritual) in complete felicity with the existing society. Like much of the "practical psychology" that aims to teach people how to be happy, "folk philosophy" is oriented toward making "healthy" adjustments to the existing world, and not in any way toward making transformations of the world into something other than what it is. Philosophy only retains its transformative potential for as long as it is not made (and does not make us) compatible with the smooth functioning of spectacular capitalism.

#### V.

Debord, not satisfied with the "science" of Marx's crisis theory, wants to abandon the whole enterprise.<sup>15</sup> But Debord does not sufficiently understand the reluctance of human societies to desire and imagine, let alone to work for radical transformations. Generally, people are not open to structural transformations in the absence of imminent crises. John Locke understood this well in 1690, and his observations are no less true today: "People are not so easily got out of their old forms, as some are apt to suggest. They are hardly to be prevailed with to amend the acknowledged faults in the frame they have been accustomed to. And if there be any original defects, or adventitious ones introduced by time, or corruption, it is not an easy thing to get them changed, even when all the world sees there is an opportunity for it."<sup>16</sup>

Americans in the US are especially uninterested in radical and revolutionary politics; that position is largely a result of the fact that the global crises many people worry about are still in the realm of abstraction for most Americans. Americans, for example, need to find themselves in greater imminent danger than a well-managed flurry of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (mad-cow disease) to prompt them to become vegetarians who oppose factory farming. Likewise, the “crises” of peak oil and global warming and fresh water reserves are not imminent for as long we can continue everyday life relatively uninterrupted, except by occasional worries about the abstract eventually becoming concrete. Most of the political work that takes place in between crises is preparatory, as people must be ready to act when the opportunity structure changes.<sup>17</sup> We must utilize crisis theory in order to comprehend the political significance of the abstract becoming concrete.

Crisis theory is necessary, but must be done without the predictive side of Marx or the indifference of Baudrillard. As much as radical philosophy can redirect attention, nobody will imagine and fight for possible futures unlike the present until the present proves its unsustainability in imminent and concrete ways.

The imminence of unsustainability is the only catalyst that lies in wait for a revolutionary politics today. The practice of radical philosophy (and situationist politics, since crisis is the ultimate situation) is limited for as long as we live *in between crises*. But if and when crises are deep and widespread and especially if and when they reflect transnational system-crises, then the “permanent situation” of spectacular capitalism becomes all at once evidently impermanent and is thus more susceptible to the inroads of radical philosophy. Like Debord, my own view lies in between the optimism of Marx and the oblivion of Baudrillard. Yet, unlike Debord, I explicitly recognize the catalyzing prospects of crises. The downside of this view is that the emergence of such crises is out of our hands. Even though human culpability *does* often lie behind the environmental crises that are treated as purely “natural” events, such events are mostly made by generations of humans collectively and inadvertently, and such crises cannot be unmade or averted by the conscientious lifestyles of green anarchists or green consumers (which often amount to the same thing).

When the financial systems collapsed in 2008-2010, the US was only prepared to bail out its private sector through gargantuan measures of corporate welfare. US civil society vacillated between seeing this as a regrettable necessity or, suspending all logic, socialism. Meanwhile many in the civil societies of France, Greece and Spain, and in the city of Brussels, were ready to make real socialist transformations. Those movements, however, appear to have been suffocated by isolation or diminishing appeal, just as the most revolutionary transnational aspirations of the Zapatista rebellion were almost evaporated by the end of the 1990s. Still, the most promising responses are not coming from the US. I do not propose any vanguard, and certainly not a national vanguard, but for numerous reasons of culture and economy, the new revolutionary subject *will not hail from the US*.

One of the hardest questions I hear from students in the US is, “What can I do?” I do not buy into the old rhetoric about the “belly of the beast” or “using the master’s tools to dismantle the master’s house.” Solidarity may be the only role to play for those in the US. There is only one other option, and that is if the world’s most marginalized and rebellious people form “transgressive public spheres” and invite our participation from abroad.<sup>18</sup> Of course, a crisis may change this reality, but it is worth keeping in mind that the crisis of empire is often the vital contestation of everyone else who could not afford to wait until the bitter end.

## VI.

The world needs a kind of humanism. This is a moral claim. The basic principles of humanism can be derived from multifarious sources, from Marx’s early manuscripts of 1844, to Louis Althusser and Raya Dunayevskaya, to Jean-Paul Sartre. Humanism is not very clear in Debord. The humanism that animates the cosmopolitan philosophy demarcates the broadest (even if the thinnest) sphere of human solidarity. Cosmopolitanism itself is a very good idea, and is the logical extension of humanism; but its faults come out in the rejection of nationalisms, certain forms of which have served liberatory purposes, as can be seen in the colonial and postcolonial struggles of peoples in the 20th century, and clearly in the works of Frantz Fanon and Partha Chatterjee.<sup>19</sup> What is needed, then, is a general humanism combined with the principle of self-determination. Our human being provides a broader basis for solidarity than shifting national, religious, or other identities which are in a slow flux. However, people use such other identities to highlight their particular struggles against exclusion, discrimination, poverty, disempowerment, etc. In some cases (i.e. under occupation or colonial rule), the assertion of national or sub-national identities is part of a liberatory struggle for

self-determination. And it is necessary to clarify that self-determination is not the business of states, which have long histories of preserving themselves first and foremost, and of treating their “constituents” as instrumental to the goal of self-preservation and the propagation of power. We must, therefore, always distinguish between national identity and the national state.

The kind of base humanism I am proposing makes it impossible to “presuppose an abstract—*isolated*—human individual.”<sup>20</sup> The meaning of being human is a meaning that must always be negotiated within a social context. This is a basic sociological and existential observation, well expounded by phenomenology, and controversial mainly to essentialists who want to mystify the human person.<sup>21</sup> But the point has a further stipulation vis-à-vis Debord: *Just as the human person does not exist as an isolated individual, so too the revolutionary transformation of human society cannot take place as the culmination of isolated individual acts.* On some level, perhaps this seems obvious. But, after World War II, radical movements around the globe saw the emergence of a form of lifestyle politics, often seen in atomistic varieties of anarchism and consumerist politics.<sup>22</sup>

The total individuation of the human person, which can only occur in one’s imagination, leads inevitably to the individuation (or privatization) of political action, which has only an imaginary value. As Jürgen Habermas pointed out in his earliest works, individuation or privatization of political action is actually depoliticization.<sup>23</sup> As it turns out, no matter how deformed our social life becomes, we ultimately understand ourselves only and always within the context of other human beings. Other human beings make each of us who we are, whatever distinguishes us as individual persons is only visible in the light of other people, and other human beings make one social reality (or another) possible. Solipsism is a philosophical error that cannot actually occur in the world of human affairs.<sup>24</sup> The only thing that everyday people can do that can *really* be seen and heard, that can, in other words, intervene in and possibly transform *the conditions of everyday life*, is collective action.<sup>25</sup> The movement of collective action can feel like plate tectonics, and the instinct to step outside of the collectivity is understandable, but none of that sensibility makes it any more effective (or, for that matter, possible).

## VII.

Debord was right in making the first necessity of the program collective action. But his effort on this score was hobbled by an opposing force, that of the cult of personality of his own role in the SI and of the SI itself. Debord sharply denounced the conversion of his philosophy into the ideology of “situationism.” He even cites this move from theory and philosophy to ideology as one of the root causes of the dissolution of the SI.<sup>26</sup> Already in 1960, Debord wrote “There is no ‘situationism.’ I myself am only a situationist by the fact of my participation, in this moment and under certain conditions, in a community that has come together for practical reasons with a certain task in sight, which it will know how or not know how to accomplish.”<sup>27</sup> But any honest account of the SI inevitably reveals Debord’s top-down micro-managerial style, his own susceptibility to the trappings of political purism and *cause célèbre*. I am not the slightest bit interested in this as a biographical curiosity or a lifestyle criticism, but rather, as a specific historical context that indubitably impacted Debord’s political thinking. This point is not psychoanalytic and can be simply stated as follows: Debord’s narrow and tenuous faith in a coterie of situationists was just as misplaced as any narrow and tenuous faith in any group with a particular name and set of organizational texts. The strategy of the putsch has been far better utilized by the powerful than by their antagonists, and it is time that the antagonists understood this.

I am therefore not a “pro-situ” writer who wants to see some kind of new SI. As interesting as the storied history of the SI is, Debord’s *writing* was his real legacy. Debord himself said that, of the many names he had been called, “theoretician” was the most fitting, and, he asserted, he was “one of the best.”<sup>28</sup> We are certainly safeguarded then in shelving all of the biography and confronting the theoretician as such. With regard to the SI itself, we need a complete inversion of how the footnotes have gone thus far. That is, the theory and the analysis of spectacular capitalism and spectacular socialism must take center-stage, while all the rest of the SI drama, which has until now been the source of Debord’s notoriety, should become the new footnote. In order to put these works to work for the future, we must take them from the trap of the SI itself.

This project is neither about the recuperation of the SI nor is it about the fossilization of the SI in time. Recuperation wants to turn a corpse into a kind of Frankenstein’s monster, and fossils are useful for the reconstructive work of paleontologists. We must continually remind ourselves that revolutionary politics is neither recuperative nor backward-looking.

## VIII.

All good theory is essentially practical. All of the most pressing problems of spectacular capitalism will find their solutions in human practice and theory, and not necessarily in that order. This follows the basic Kantian principle that what works in theory also works in practice, a principle which remains true and yet continues to run contrary to the common saying (no less common today) on theory and practice that Kant was responding to in 1793.<sup>29</sup> That common saying, which Marxist orthodoxy (and anarchist anti-intellectualism) has repeated *ad nauseam*, has served to separate critique from praxis, which impoverishes both.<sup>30</sup>

## IX.

The highest points reached in Debord's political philosophy consist of his formal efforts toward the practical synthesis of creative, theatrical, and surprising collective action, utilizing humor and savvy to cultivate (or provoke) an insurrectionary and/or revolutionary comportment and critique. Following such practical thinking, even new political parties (in addition to political science itself) should not be organized around elections and legislation as much as for the cultivation or understanding of insurrectionary and/or revolutionary tendencies.

## X.

The standpoint of old socialisms has been to view the state, and capitalism, as instrumental historically transitional modes; the standpoint of new socialisms must be more anarchist with regard to the state and less predictive (less willing to find anything inexorable) with regard to capitalism. The standpoint of new socialisms must seek to understand the complex social-psychological position and composition of civil society and the destabilization (via radical philosophy) of the ideological impediments on that terrain.

## XI.

Philosophy can *change* the world if it is wielded by others than philosophers; when the best philosophical works are the emancipatory struggles of the marginalized among us, *interpretation is not their sole content*.

## Notes

1. Guy Debord, *On the Passage of a Few Persons Through a Rather Brief Unity of Time* (AK Press, 2003), p. 20.
2. Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: Volume 1* (Verso, 2008), p. 76
3. John Coltrane cited in Frank Kofsky's *Black Nationalism and the Revolution in Music* (Pathfinder Press, 1988), p. 241.
4. Semiotext(e), 2009.
5. Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, Thesis I.
6. Mills, "The Cultural Apparatus," in *Power, Politics and People: The Collected Essays of C. Wright Mills* (Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 405.
7. Marx, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Part 1, in *The Portable Marx* (Viking Penguin, 1983), p. 204.
8. Marx, op. cit., p. 215.
9. Franco "Bifo" Berardi speaks of composition, re-composition, and "compositionism" to refer to the creative processes of forming a political subject as a conscious collectivity (Autonomedia/Minor Compositions, 2009).
10. See Enrique Dussel's *Twenty Theses on Politics* (Duke University Press, 2008) and Nancy Fraser's *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition* (Routledge, 1997).
11. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (Verso, 2001), p. 176.
12. Raoul Vaneigem, *Basic Banalities (Part 1)*, Thesis # 6, in *Situationist International Anthology* (Bureau of Public Secrets, 2006), pp. 120-121.
13. Thinking and communicating well does not imply formal education or conventional measures of literacy. To the contrary, in the wider world of art, where we find some of the greatest thinkers and communicators throughout human history, formal education and conventional measures of literacy can actually be limitations or impediments. It is also worth reading the speeches and letters of impoverished workers, former slaves, anarchist and communist mechanics and electricians, and women who have been blockaded from education and the rights of political citizenship. Such examples reinforce the possibility for the secularization of radical philosophy and its prospects for openness and inclusion, since its two main components—*thought and critique*—are not and have never been the private property of professionals.
14. In connection with this point, see the quotation at the top of this article from John Coltrane. His later recordings, such as *Ascension* and *Interstellar Space*, and their critical reception by offended connoisseurs, raise

- questions about what qualifies as “music,” let alone as “jazz,” about how to listen in spatial rather than in linear terms, about the commercial viability of collectively improvised music that has no fetishes of familiarity, and about how ecstatic and unruly real freedom and democracy might sound. Has any professional philosopher (i.e. Adorno?) done better than Coltrane to raise these questions? Likewise, regarding political questions, one might ask: Who better raises questions about public and private spheres of influence and control, Jürgen Habermas or the water war activists who made a rebellion in Cochabamba, Bolivia in the spring of 2000?
15. In particular, see Theses 79 to 95 in *The Society of the Spectacle* (Zone Books, 1999) for Debord’s critique of Marx’s historical materialist dialectic and the scientific intentions of that model.
  16. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government: The Second Treatise of Government*, Chapter XIX: “Of the Dissolution of Government,” Section 223 (any edition).
  17. Consider, here, Gramsci’s appropriation of military science for political struggle, and in particular, his observations on “war of movement” and “war of position.” Gramsci argues that political struggle cannot just happen when you want it to, or practically, when you can mobilize the resources for it. One must also be in the right position to advance one’s arguments and to defeat one’s opponents, and such a position is often ripened by an “organic crisis” in the hegemony of the existing power structure. See, for example, Selections from the *Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, (International Publishers, 1971), the section on “State and Civil Society.”
  18. For more on my theory of the “transgressive public sphere,” see Chapters 6 through 9 in *Unbounded Publics: Transgressive Public Spheres, Zapatismo, and Political Theory* (Lexington Books, 2008).
  19. Although it is not true that all cosmopolitanism leads to a “rejection of all nationalisms,” it is true that some of the most prominent theories of cosmopolitanism, from Kant to Nussbaum to Habermas, move in that direction. For Kant, cosmopolitanism is an ultimate ideal, higher than the ideal national community, and is the precondition for his dream of perpetual peace. Nussbaum has juxtaposed cosmopolitanism to patriotism in a way that presents the two as oppositional choices that displace each other. And Habermas has declared an era after the nation-state with his conception of the “postnational.” Other cosmopolitans, like Kwame Anthony Appiah and Charles Taylor, defend a far less dichotomous (and better) view. See, for example, their replies to Martha Nussbaum in *For Love of Country?* (Beacon Press, 2002).
  20. Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, Thesis VI.
  21. It is necessary to make a qualification here regarding the human being (as an ontological subject) and humanism (as a moral point of view). In my conception, humanism begins with the species human being, but that does not mean that humanism as a moral point of view cannot be extended to non-human animals. I agree with much of the animal rights literature that posits personhood for non-human animals on the basis of their personality, sentience, community membership, and mortality, among other attributes. Indeed, I would far rather live in a world that recognizes and grants personhood to non-human animals than to corporations. Presently, our legal conventions do just the opposite of this, and I think we are worse off for it, and certainly less humanistic.
  22. Sadly, situationist writings have been increasingly appropriated and invoked by “lifestylists” alongside the increasing popularity of the situationists since 1968, and in some cases, the appropriation was not the sole fault of the appropriators. Debord understood the pitfalls of lifestyle politics early on, writing in 1959, “If we arrogantly reject all the unpleasant conditions of the cultural reality in which we are caught and which we must transform, we will manifest, on a personal level, an ironclad (and inoffensive) purity. But such idealist satisfaction will condemn us to a solitude that is opposed to the first necessity of our program: collective action” (*Correspondence: The Foundation of the Situationist International (June 1957 - August 1960)* [Semiotext(e), 2009], p. 217).
  23. See, for example, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (The MIT Press, 1991) and *Legitimation Crisis* (Beacon Press, 1975) where Habermas discusses the deformation of the public sphere and various forms of civil, familial, and vocational privatism.
  24. Even the most ruthless individualist businessman’s “self-made” wealth depends ultimately on the existence and actions of other people.
  25. We must not lose sight of the conditions of everyday life in everyday life itself.
  26. The problem of ideology is discussed at great length throughout *The Real Split in the International* (Pluto Press, 2003). For two particularly vivid examples from that book, see Thesis # 25 and Footnote 14 in “Theses on the Situationist International and Its Time, 1972.”
  27. Debord, Situationist International, Number 4, 1960, cited in *Considerations on the Assassination of Gérard Lebovici* (TamTam Books, 2001), p. 73.
  28. See *Considerations on the Assassination of Gérard Lebovici*, p. 75.
  29. The common saying that what may be true in theory does not apply in practice.
  30. In fact, most Marxism is not orthodox and most anarchism is not anti-intellectual. However, such versions (and they are the worst versions) of Marxism and anarchism *do* exist, and they are the only versions that opponents tend to recognize for the obvious reason that reductionism makes rejection easier.