The Smith of the Gods

45 - « But What Became the First Colonies of Roanoke? »

450- We have been taught that the first colonies of Roanoke failed; that the colonists disappeared, leaving behind them only a cryptic message: « Gone to Croatan ». Later, reports would tell of Indians with « gray eyes », but they were set aside as mere legends. According to the official version, what really happened is that the Indians massacred the colonists. However, « Croatan » was not some kind of Eldorado; it was the name of a neighboring tribe of friendly Indians. It would seem that the colony was simply moved from the coast to the Great Dismal Swamp region, where it would be absorbed by the tribe. And the gray-eyed Indians were real – they are still there, and they call themselves the Croatans. Thus, the first colony of the New World had chosen to give up all contact with Prospero and to go off with the Wild Men, with Caliban the savage. They withdrew. They became « Indians », « natives », they opted for chaos, abandoning the hideous miseries of the servitude of the plutocrats and intellectuals of London. It is simply wrong to dismiss the pirates as mere highway robbers of the seas. In a sense, they were « social bandits », although their communities were not traditional peasant societies, but « utopias » created almost ex nihilo in « terra incognita », enclaves of total freedom occupying the empty spaces of the map. It seems indeed that they believed in them, no doubt because they had experienced pirate enclaves close to that of « Libertalia ». Again, freed slaves, natives, and even traditional enemies like the Portuguese were invited to join them as equals (the liberation of slave ships was their main concern).

451- The land was held in common, representatives were elected for a short term, the booty shared; far more radical doctrines of liberty were preached, going beyond common sense. Libertalia had the hope of enduring, and Captain Misson died in its defense. But most pirate utopias were destined to be only temporary; in fact, the real « republics » were their ships, which sailed under the auspices of the « Articles » (the pirate code). The coastal enclaves had no law at all. An Afro-Islamic origin is claimed by certain groups, like the Moors of Delaware and the Ben Ishmael, who migrated from Kentucky to Ohio in the middle of the 19th century. The Ishmael practiced polygamy, never drank alcohol, earned their living as minstrels, had married Indians whose customs they had adopted; they were nomads and built their houses on wheels. Some espoused anarchist ideals, and they were the target of eugenicists within the framework of a rather perverse pogrom that intended salvation through extermination. As a tribe, they disappeared in the 1920s, but in reality they no doubt swelled the ranks of the first black Islamic sects. The isolated communities, or at least those that were able to preserve their identity into the 20th century, insistently refuse to be absorbed by the dominant culture or by the black « subcultures » in which modern sociologists are in the habit of cataloging them. In the 1970s, inspired by the birth of the American Indian revival, a number of groups – among them the Moors and the Ramapoughs – applied for recognition as Indian tribes to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Moors and the Ramapoughs essentially reject the « diachronic » or historical explanation of their origins, favoring a « synchronic » identity based on the myth of Indian adoption. Becoming « savage » is always an erotic act, an act of nudity. Before the « closing of the map » (as distinct from the territory), most anti-authoritarian energy was directed toward « escape » communes, as evoked by Chaplin’s

« Modern Times », and various phalansteries, etc. It will be noted with interest that some of these were not meant to last « forever », but only as long as the project seemed to keep its promises. By utopian socialist standards, these experiments were failures, and consequently, we know little about them.

452- Nestor Makhno's Ukraine and anarchist Spain were meant to last and, despite the demands of perpetual war, both succeeded up to a certain point: not that they could have lasted « long », but they were well enough organized and could have persisted without outside aggression. Nestor Makhno tells us: « One remembers the tree that rises from the cracks in a rock or from the ruins of a church. The green tree of samizdat is even more astonishing. It grows on the building under construction of totalitarian socialism ». Samizdat is the model of a free literature existing in the absence of freedom. It has an old tradition, embodied most fully in Russia by Pushkin's fate. Censorship and the persecution of writers go hand in hand with every totalitarian and autocratic regime. Artists have always tried to get around prohibitions coming from above. But whereas in the past there were forbidden works, now there is a forbidden literature. What does samizdat have in common with ordinary literature, and how does it differ from it? Samizdat includes all the genres of literature inherent in free literary production: verse, prose, works on political and social life, scientific research, translations, programs for the political structure of society. But there are also genres peculiar to samizdat alone: letters to Western newspapers (which these do not always publish), and reports of court hearings. This genre was brilliantly inaugurated by the journalist Frida Vigdorova, now deceased. Samizdat does not confine itself to giving the opposition's points of view, it also provides the unofficial texts or shorthand records of statements made by leading personalities at secret meetings. These last two extraliterary modes of expression have been raised by samizdat to the level of a literary genre, just as the epistolary art once became literature with the English sentimentalists, or study turned into a finished work with French painting. The characteristic feature of samizdat is the interpenetration of literary and non-literary elements. This is so because it is not a free literature, but an existing model that grows in the absence of freedom and does not fulfill only literary functions. – Gabriele D'Annunzio, a decadent poet, artist, musician, aesthete, feminist, daredevil pioneer of aviation, black magician, genius lout, emerged from the First World War as a hero at the head of a small army: the « Arditi ». Short of adventures, he decided to seize the city of Fiume and present it as a gift to Italy. But Italy refused his generous offer, the prime minister calling him mad. In his anger, D'Annunzio decided to declare independence and see how long he could hold out. He and his anarchist friends drafted a constitution that proclaimed music as the fundamental principle of the State. Artists, bohemians, adventurers, anarchists, fugitives and stateless refugees, homosexuals, military dandies, eccentric reformers of every stripe, Buddhists, Theosophists and Vedantists, poured into Fiume in hordes. The party never ended. Every morning D'Annunzio read poetry from his balcony; a concert and fireworks every evening. That was the whole activity of the government! Eighteen months later, when the wine and money ran out and the Italian fleet appeared on the horizon firing a few cannonballs at the municipal palace, no one had the energy to resist.

453- If we compare Fiume with the 1968 insurrection in Paris, or the Italian urban insurrections of the 1970s, or the American countercultural communes and their

anarcho-leftist influences, we will notice certain similarities, such as the importance of situationist aesthetic theory, what we might call « the pirate economy »: – living like nabobs on the surpluses of social overproduction – the love of colorful disguises and the concept of music as a social revolutionary modifier – finally their shared impermanence, their readiness to go far away, to change shape, and to settle in other universities, on other mountain tops, in other ghettos, factories, houses, farms, and even on other planes of reality. Foucault, Baudrillard, Derrida and others have abundantly discussed various modes of « disappearance ». Here, I would like to suggest that the TAZ is, in a way, a tactic of disappearance. When theorists speak of the disappearance of the social, they mean on the one hand the impossibility of « social Revolution », and on the other the impossibility of « the State » – the abyss of power, the end of the discourse of power. The anarchist question in this case should therefore be: why should one seek to confront a « power » that has lost all meaning and become a mere simulation? As Ted Kaczynski suggests, such confrontations will only produce dangerous and abominable spasms of violence from the big brainless morons who will have inherited the keys to the armories and prisons. This is perhaps a cruel incomprehension on the part of the Americans of the subtle Franco-German existential/romantic theory. But who said that understanding was necessary in order to use an idea? (70 % of retweets are neither read nor understood) Disappearance seems to be a very logical radical option for our era: and not a disaster or a death of the social project. Contrary to the morbid and nihilistic interpretation, the TAZ intends to use it as part of effective strategies in the continual « revolution of everyday life » in the situationist spirit: the struggle cannot cease even with the ultimate failure of social or political revolution, for nothing, short of the end of the world, can put an end to everyday life, or to our aspirations for good things, for the Marvelous, the Magical. And as Nietzsche said, if the world had the possibility of ending, logically it would already have done so; it has not, therefore it cannot. And, as a certain Sufi said, no matter how much forbidden wine we drink, we will carry that burning thirst with us into eternity. « Chaos linguistics » sketches a presence that continually disappears from any classification by language and cognitive systems; an elusive, evanescent, subtle presence – the Strange Attractor around which the same accumulate, chaotically forming new and spontaneous orders. Here we have an aesthetic of the frontier between chaos and order, the margin, the zone of formal catastrophes where the ruptures of the system can attain illumination. The disappearance of the artist is, in situationist terms, « the suppression and the realization of art ». But where do we disappear to? And will we be heard of again? Will we still be seen? We are going to Croatan – what is our fate? Our whole art consists of a farewell note to history – « Gone to Croatan » – but where is it, and what will we do there?

454- First of all, we are not speaking here of literally disappearing from the world and its future – there is no escape, no turning back to a Paleolithic « leisure society » – no eternal utopia, no retreat into the mountains, no island, no post-revolutionary utopia – and most probably no revolution at all! The only solution to the « suppression and realization » of Art lies in the emergence of the TAZ. We would be wrong to dismiss the criticism claiming that the TAZ itself is « nothing but a Work of Art », even if this is one of its snares. The TAZ is the only possible « time » and the only possible « place » where Art can be born for the simple pleasure of the creative game, and as a real contribution to the forces that allow the

TAZ to form and to manifest itself through relations of love, friendship, fraternity… A world in which the TAZ had managed to take root might well resemble the world imagined by « Hans E. Widmer alias P.M. » in his « bolo'bolo » fantasy novel (a treatise of anarchist political economy). Perhaps the TAZ is a « proto-bolo ». But insofar as the TAZ exists now, it is much more than the banality of negativity or countercultural marginalism. We have mentioned the festive aspect of an uncontrolled & consubstantial moment of spontaneous but brief self-organization. It is « epiphanic » – a paroxysmal experience on the social as well as the individual scale. Liberation is realized in struggle – that is the essence of Nietzsche's « victory over oneself », the ferment of the « Feast ». The present thesis of Hakim Bey could also take as its banner Nietzsche's wandering. It is the precursor of the drift, in the situationist sense & according to the definition given by Lyotard. We can foresee a whole new geography, a kind of map of nomadic pilgrimages on which the sacred sites would be replaced by paroxysmal experiences and TAZs: a real science of psychotopography, which one might call « geo-autonomy » or « anarchomancy ». The TAZ implies a form of wildness, an evolution from the tame state to the wild state, a « return » that is also a step forward. It also requires a « yoga » of chaos, a project of classification, of consciousness or simply of the « higher » life that one would approach by surfing on the « wave front of chaos » of complex dynamism. The TAZ is an art of life in perpetual ascent, wild but maternal – a seductress not a rapist, a smuggler rather than a bloodthirsty pirate, a dancer not an eschatologist.

455- Let us admit that we have taken part in parties where, for one brief night, a republic of gratified desires was established. Would we not confess that the politics of that night have more reality & force for us than that of the government? Some of the parties we have spoken of lasted two or three years. Is this a thing worth imagining, worth fighting for? Let us study invisibility, networked work, rhythm analysis, psychic & psychedelic nomadism, and who knows what we might come up with. Of all the answers given to Saussure's linguistics, two are of particular interest here:

First, contemporary « anti-linguistics » can be traced back to Rimbaud's departure for Abyssinia or to Nietzsche's sentence « I fear we shall never rid ourselves of God, since we still believe in grammar », to Dada, to Korzybski's capilotraction and his map that is not the territory, to Burroughs' cut-up and its eruption into the gray room; by accidentally cutting up columns of newspapers, Burroughs notices that two re-arranged newspaper fragments could constitute a coherent message. We are in 1959, and the cut-up has just been born. It consists of a cutting up and then a re-arranging of texts of various origins (literary texts by Rimbaud or Shakespeare, newspaper articles, texts by Burroughs and his friends, advertising, etc.). One could almost speak of a genetic link between collage and politics; at least, the relation between practice and political intention is historical. Indeed, as early as 1912-1913 one finds in Picasso's collages the presence of press clippings dealing with political themes; Dadaist collages also play ironically on the détournement of images of industrial society, and in the 1950s, collage as a political form experienced a kind of apogee with the situationist détournements, which are moreover contemporaneous with the cut-up, and with Zerzan and his attack on language itself as representation and mediation. Then, Chomsky's linguistics – his belief in a « universal grammar » and his three schemata represent an attempt to save language through the discovery of « hidden invariants », in the same way that certain scientists try to save physics from the irrationality of quantum mechanics through «

non-linear hidden variables ».

456- One might have expected Chomsky, as a good anarchist, to side with the nihilists, but in reality his magnificent theory has more in common with Platonism or Sufism than with anarchism. The adepts of logic and of the mystery of numbers are the most cautious of sages. Traditional metaphysics describes language as a pure light shining through the prism of the archetypes; Chomsky speaks of « innate grammars ». Words are leaves, sentences branches, mother tongues limbs, language families trunks, and the roots are in the « heavens » or in DNA. I call this « Her-Meta-Linguistics » – hermetic and metaphysical. Nihilism or « Heavy-Meta-Linguistics », in honor of Burroughs, seems to me to have killed language and threatened to make it impossible – while Chomsky clings to the promise and the hope of an eleventh-hour revelation. Language must be « saved », but without recourse to any « specter », or to any supposed rule concerning God, dice and the universe. The universe arises spontaneously (principle of immanence), as Kuo Hsiang points out; the search for a lord or an agent of this creation is an exercise in infinite regression toward the void. The Tao is not « God ». The Tao simply happens. On the human scale, misery stems from the exclusively human capacity to fall out of harmony with the Tao – to lose spontaneity. The Chuang Tzu is not interested in why humans are so inept; its only interest is to reverse the process & to « return » to the current. The return is an action, but also a state – hence the paradox of action/non-action. The concept of « wu wei » plays so central a role in Taoism that it has managed to survive into modern religious Taoism as the truth behind all metaphysics & all ritual. Chuang Tzu is more anarchic than Lao Tzu – but is he an « anarchist »? Of course, not because he wants to bring down government, but because he believes government is impossible; not because he would sink so deep as to adopt an « ism », but because he sees chaos as the essence of all becoming. One of the major representatives of hermeto-linguistics today is Noam Chomsky, who despite his anarchism believes that language is coded in one way or another, even though he substitutes, as Timothy Leary did, DNA for the Platonic archetypes!

Who could be the representative of nihilist linguistics? What about William Burroughs? In his honor, we could call it « heavy-meta-linguistics ». Although the aesthetic of each of these schools is remarkable, each must be doubted. Hakim Bey, as a spiritualist anarchist, develops a theory of language that could « save » language from the accusation of mere representationalism & alienation or corruption of the soul. However, it is fitting to have a theory without teleological excrescence – no « lord » of language, no imperious category, no determinism, no revelation from « outside » or « above », no genetic coding, no absolute essence.

457- It exists in two places, in an « ancient » elegantly balanced by a « modern », the Tao of Chuang Tzu & the chaos theory of Ilya Prigogine. The sage is not trapped by semantics, he does not confuse the map & the territory, but he « opens things to the light of Heaven » by filling them with words, by playing with words. Once adapted to these currents, the sage makes no special effort to « illuminate » the map in the light of Heaven, for language does so by itself, spontaneously. Language pours forth. Thus, the great poet of the American Left, of the « Free Speech Movement », Akim Bey, professor of Anglo-Saxon and Latin literature across all the great universities of the West Coast in the 1980s, delivers to us a poem widely

taken up by the most active sensibilities of the libertarian movements. Thus it begins:

« But there is no question of writing to the Wild Children.

They think in images – prose is for them a code they do not fully master, ossified & digested, in which one cannot have total confidence.

You can write about them, so that those who have lost their silver chains can follow.

Or write for them, making History a process of seduction into your own Paleolithic memory, a barbarian seduction of freedom, of chaos as Chaos.

For these species from another world or of the « third sex », the wild children, fantasy & imagination are always undifferentiated.

An unbridled game: the source of our Art & the rarest Eros of all the races of Eros.

To embrace disorder both as source of style & voluptuous warehouse, the foundation of our extra-terrestrial and occult civilization, our conspirationist aesthetics, our lunatic espionage – this is the action of either an artist or a child of ten or thirteen.

Children, whom the awakened senses betray through a dazzling sorcery of bestial pleasures, reflect something wild & obscene in the nature of reality itself: natural ontological anarchists, angels of chaos – their gestures & bodily odors diffuse around them a jungle of presences, a forest of prescience inhabited by snakes, ninjas, turtles, ninja turtles, futuristic shamanism, piss, unchained ghosts, rays of sunlight, ejaculations, birds' nests & eggs, a joyful aggression against the moaning of those from the lower planes, so that impotence encompasses their destructive epiphanies or their creations in the form of fragile apings, but beware, sharp enough to cut the light of the moon.

And yet, the residents of these lower aqueous dimensions truly believe that they control the Wild Children, and such vicious beliefs carve out most of the substance of the moment.

The only ones who actually desire to share the harmful destiny of these wild fugitives or guerrillas, rather than to direct them; the only ones who can understand this cherishing and this unbridling are always the same, those are artists, anarchists, polymorphous perverts, heretics, a gang apart who meet and gather as Wild Children would, fixed gazes around a table while the adults babble behind their masks.

Our realization, our liberation depends on theirs: not because we ape the family, that misery of love which holds a banal future hostage, nor the State which educates us all to sink below the horizon of uselessness – no, ten times no, but because we, and they, the wild ones, are the image of one another, bound and surrounded by that silver chain which defines the limit of sensuality, transgression and vision.

We share the same enemies and our means of escape are the same: a delirious and obsessive game, enthused by the spectral brilliance of the Pack of wolves and their children. » (Akim Bey)

Knowing the twisted mind of the puritan fringe, I point out that in this poem there is no salacious allusion, no hidden intention, no suspicion to be raised about possible unspoken things or non-conformant turns of phrase. There is nothing to find there other than what is written, in the most awakened, cleanest, simplest, most obvious sense. To those who have

ears to hear…

Let the Last Supper begin!