INTRODUCTION: PIERRE KLOSSOWSKI: FROM THEATRICAL THEOLOGY TO COUNTER-UTOPIA

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Pierre Klossowski's *Living Currency*, which Michel Foucault called 'the greatest book of our time', takes its title from a parody of a classical utopia that appears at the end of the book.[1] Klossowski imagines 'a phase in industrial production where producers are able to demand "objects of sensation" from consumers as a form of payment. These objects would be *living beings*' (LC 72–3).[2] Human beings, in other words, would be traded as currency: employers would pay their male workers 'in women', female workers would be paid 'in boys', and so on. This is neither prostitution nor slavery, where humans are bought and sold using monetary currency. Rather, it is humans themselves that are used as currency, a *living* currency, and they can function as currency because they are sources of sensation, emotion and pleasure. Far from being imaginary or ideal, however, Klossowski insists that this counter-utopia *already exists* in contemporary capitalism. 'The whole of modern industry,' he writes, 'even though it does not literally resort to such exchanges, rests on a form of trade mediated by the sign of an inert currency that neutralizes the nature of the objects being exchanged. It thus rests on a *simulacrum* of this kind of trade.' *Living Currency* is an exploration of this claim that the monetary economy is a simulacrum or parody of the economy of the passions.

It would be difficult to overstate the influence *Living Currency* had on the generation of French thinkers that came of age in the 1960s. In his youth, Klossowski had been a confidante of Gide and Rilke, and in the 1930s he had participated in the infamous *Collège de Sociologie*[3] and contributed to Georges Bataille's short-lived but influential journal *Acéphale*.[4] During the Second World War, he studied theology in several seminaries, but quickly underwent a religious crisis that he explored in his semi-autobiographical novel *The Suspended Vocation*.[5] His notorious study *Sade My Neighbor* appeared in 1947,[6] followed by the two novels that would make him famous, *The Laws of Hospitality*[7] and *The Baphomet*,[8] the latter of which received the prestigious *Prix des Critiques* in 1965. In the mid-1960s, several remarkable essays on Klossowski appeared, which were evidence of the growing influence of his thought on the younger generation of French thinkers: Michel Foucault's 'The Prose of Acteon' (1964),[9] Maurice Blanchot's 'The Laughter of the Gods' (1965)[10] and Gilles Deleuze's 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language' (1965).[11] 'As far as I'm concerned,' Foucault would later comment, 'the most important authors who … enabled me to move away from my original university education were Nietzsche, Bataille, Blanchot, and Klossowski – none of whom were "philosophers" in the strict, institutional sense of the term.'[12] Deleuze often acknowledged his deep indebtedness to Klossowski. In *Difference and Repetition* (1968), he praised Klossowski for having completely 'renewed the interpretation of Nietzsche' in a series of landmark articles.[13] When Klossowski collected these articles together in a book, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (1969),[14] he dedicated it to Deleuze, and Foucault hailed it as 'the greatest book of philosophy I have ever read, on a par with Nietzsche himself'.[15]

Of all Klossowski's books, however, it was perhaps *Living Currency* that had the greatest influence on his contemporaries. Shortly after the book appeared, Foucault claimed that the ideas of the thinkers that mattered most to him personally had reached their culmination in *Living Currency*. 'It is such a great book that everything else recedes and counts only half as much anymore. This is what we should have been thinking about: desire, value, and the simulacrum.'[16] The book was enthusiastically appropriated by a number of his contemporaries: Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972),[17] Lyotard's *Libidinal Economy* (1974)[18] and Baudrillard's *Impossible Exchange* (1999)[19] were are all direct responses, in one way or another, to the ideas developed in *Living Currency*. One of the reasons *Living Currency* enjoyed such a reputation is that it was seen to have successfully overcome the duality between Marx and Freud – or, more generally, the tension between *political economy* and *libidinal economy*.[20] Roland Barthes had

thrown down a gauntlet to his contemporaries: 'How can the two great *epistemes* of modernity, the materialist dialectic and the Freudian dialectic be brought together so as to fuse and produce a new order of human relations? This is the problem we have posed ourselves.'[21] If Klossowski had succeeded with this 'Freudo-Marxist synthesis' where others – such as Herbert Marcuse and Wilhelm Reich – had failed, it was because in the end his approach was indexed neither on Marx nor Freud, who scarcely appear in his texts, but rather on the more obscure and subterranean pairing of Sade and Nietzsche. 'In his recent works', Deleuze and Guattari declared in 1972, 'Klossowski indicates to us the only means of bypassing the sterile parallelism where we flounder between Freud and Marx.'[22] Perhaps more than any other thinker, it was Deleuze who would take up the ideas of *Living Currency* and push them in new directions. While he was writing *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze penned a revealing letter to Klossowski:

> You introduce desire into the infra-structure or inversely, which amounts to the same thing, you introduce the category of production into desire: this seems to me of an immense importance; for it is the only means to get out of the sterile parallelism Marx–Freud, Money–Excrement … Once again, I'm following you.[23]

The theory of desire developed in the first two chapters of *Anti-Oedipus* was Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to work out the theses proposed in the opening of *Living Currency*.

By the time *Living Currency* was published, Klossowski (1905–2001) was already sixty-five years old. Although he would live another thirty years, he largely abandoned writing after 1972 – in what he would later call his period of 'mutism' – and instead devoted himself to art, that is, to creating full-scale coloured pencil drawings, usually of scenes drawn from his novels. (Klossowski was the elder brother of the painter Balthus.) Today, Klossowski is as well known for his artworks as he is for his essays and novels, though it is hoped that the publication of this translation of *Living Currency* will spark a reassessment of Klossowski's entire oeuvre.[24]

Klossowski's concepts

Klossowski was a novelist, essayist, translator, actor and artist, and his idiosyncratic work defies an easy summation. In the philosophical work that stimulated his contemporaries, however, Klossowski developed a set of

interrelated concepts that would remain at the core of his reflections, and that constitute a starting point for a reading of *Living Currency*, and indeed all of his work: *impulses*, *phantasms*, *simulacra* and *stereotypes*.[25]

1. Impulses

In his early writings, Klossowski often appropriated the description of the soul found in Christian mystics, for whom the soul is the uncreated part of humans that escapes the comprehension of the created intellect (Augustine), an 'abyssal depth' that can only be known negatively (Meister Eckhart), a place of suffering that knows no determination (Teresa of Avila). When Klossowski says that the depth of the soul 'does not signify anything' (NVC 40), he is refusing the theological idea of a 'will' that would preside over its destiny or command its interpretation. Against these determinations of the will, he opposes the free play of the 'impulsive forces' [*forces impulsionelles*] that inhabit the depth of the soul, and which, through their incessant combat, are constantly constituting and disintegrating the self: what Klossowski calls the *suppôt*, utilizing an old scholastic term.[26] The *suppôt* cannot comprehend these impulses, even though it experiences their effects. In and of itself, the nature of the soul is *incommunicable*: the soul is irreducible to the words that would translate it, or the images that would try to contain it. *Non formata sed formans*: productive of forms, the soul is itself unformed. The movements of the soul can be portrayed in discourse or in figures – in simulacra – but they are thereby caught in the snares of language and its everyday codes, or deformed by the illusions of vision. 'How can one give an account of an irreducible depth of sensibility', Klossowski asks, '*except by acts that betray it*?' (SMN 14).[27] One can easily sense Klossowski's filiation with the gnostics and heresiarchs of the early Christian centuries, who opposed to the material world a pneumatic world, or with certain negative or apophatic theologians, for whom only the unspeakable is susceptible to discourse, and the invisible, to vision.[28] But one can see how Klossowski modifies the theological tradition: if there is an apophaticism in his writings, it is related exclusively to the immanent movements of the soul, and not to the transcendent attributes of God.

However, Klossowski's early discourse on the soul would give way to an emphasis on the *body*. Klossowski described his books on Sade and Nietzsche as 'essays devoted not to ideologies but to the *physiognomies* of problematic thinkers who differ greatly from each other'.[29] The focus on physiognomy was derived in part from Nietzsche's insistence on taking the body as a model for philosophy rather than the mind, since the body

is the more accessible phenomenon, less surrounded by illusion, myth, and superstition.[30] But what is incommunicable in the organic body are precisely what Klossowski calls its 'impulses' [*pulsions*] or 'impulsive forces' [*forces impulsionelles*]. Nietzsche himself had recourse to a varied vocabulary to describe what Klossowski summarizes in the term 'impulse': 'drive' (*Triebe*), 'desire' (*Begierden*), 'instinct' (*Instinke*), 'power' (*Mächte*), 'force' (*Kräfte*), 'impulse' (*Reize*, *Impulse*), 'passion' (*Leidenschaften*), 'feeling' (*Gefülen*), 'affect' (*Affekte*), 'pathos' (*Pathos*), and so on.[31] The problem with many of these terms, however, is that they inevitably interpret the impulses from the viewpoint of the subject or *suppôt*. A 'passion' (from the Latin *pati*, to suffer or endure) is something that 'happens' to a person, which he or she does not actively choose but experiences 'passively'. Spinoza defined a 'mode' in terms of a relation between affections (*affection*) and affects (*affectus*): every body that produces an 'affection' in my own body at the same time produces a rise or fall in my capacity to exist, an 'affect' that is experienced as a joy or a sadness. The term 'desire' traditionally implies that a person is experiencing a lack that they want to fulfil.[32]

If Klossowski prefers the terms *impulse* or *force* to these other terms, it is because they ascribe a physical positivity and autonomy to the 'obscure depth' of the body or soul. For Leibniz, 'force' is the sufficient reason of movement, and Klossowski uses the term in a similar fashion in order to put impulsive forces on the same plane as physical forces. The extensive organic body finds its sufficient reason in the intensive impulsional body, which is what Deleuze would later call, following Artaud, a body *without* organs. One could say that pharmaceutical efforts to control states of depression, mania, obsession, panic, and so on, take the impulsional body as their object and are aimed at manipulating the state of the impulses.[33] In Klossowski, the philosophical line of demarcation does not lie between body and soul, but rather between our impulsional forces, which are incommunicable, and the expression of these impulses in consciousness, language, and rational and economic norms, which fundamentally falsify the nature of the impulses.

By their nature, the impulses remain largely unknown to the conscious intellect:

No matter how hard a person struggles for self-knowledge, nothing can be more incomplete than the image of all the *drives* taken together that constitute his being. Scarcely can he call the cruder ones by name: their number and strength, their ebb and flow, their play and counterplay, and, above all, the laws of their *alimentation* remain completely unknown to him.[34]

Each of us contains within ourselves such 'a vast confusion of contradictory drives' that we are multiplicities, and not unities.[35] Nietzsche's notion of *perspectivism* does not mean that I have a different perspective on the world than you, but rather that *each of us has multiple perspectives* because of the multiplicity of our impulses. Similarly, Nietzsche proposed his concept of the *will to power* to describe the nature of the impulses or drives: 'Every drive is a kind of lust to rule; each one has its perspective that it would like to compel all the other drives to accept as a norm.'[36] In one of the most subtle analyses of impulsive forces, Deleuze has shown that drives are not 'things', but rather the differential relations between active (affirmative) and reactive (negative) forces.[37] It is only when the effects of these relations between impulsive forces are experienced by the subject or *suppôt* that they become qualified *as* 'passions' or 'affections', and the conscious intellect interprets them as *its own* 'feelings', 'inclinations', 'dispositions' or 'emotions' (NVC 37–8).

What makes each individual an 'idiosyncrasy' is its particular constellation or assemblage of impulses. Indeed, one of the primary functions of *morality* is to establish an order and hierarchy among the impulses. 'Wherever we encounter a morality, we also encounter valuations and an order of rank of human impulses': industriousness is ranked higher than sloth, obedience higher than defiance, chastity higher than promiscuity.[38] For Klossowski, the 'singular' is opposed not so much to the universal, but to the gregarious, the species, what Nietzsche calls the 'herd', which reduces its singularity to a common denominator, and expresses only what can be communicated. 'All our actions are altogether incomparably personal, unique, and infinitely individual – there is no doubt of that. But as soon as we translate them into consciousness *they no longer seem to be*.'[39] The function of morality carries over into language, which treats the impulses as things and only expresses what is gregarious:

> Words actually exist only for *superlative* degrees of these processes and drives — but then when words are lacking, we tend no longer to engage in precise observation because it is painfully awkward for us to think precisely at that juncture … Wrath, hate, love, compassion, craving, knowing, joy, pain — these are all names for *extreme* states: the milder middle degrees, to say nothing of the lower ones that are constantly in play, elude us and yet it is precisely they that weave the web of our character and our destiny.[40]

2. Phantasms

This brings us to the second fundamental concept of Klossowski's tripartite economy of soul: the *phantasm*. The term comes from the Greek *phantasia* (appearance, imagination), and Klossowski uses it to refer to *an obsessional image* produced within us by the forces of our impulsive life. The concept was taken up in a more technical sense in psychoanalytic theory (theory of fantasy), although for Klossowski a phantasm is not, as in Freud, a substitution formation. As Lyotard explains, a phantasm 'is "something" that grips the wild turbulence of the libido, something it invents as an incandescent object'.[41] Falling in love is the most obvious example of a phantasm: love is an impulse with a high intensity, but what we fall in love with is a phantasm or obsessional image that comes to dominate the entirety of our impulses. If we tend to fall in love with the same 'type' of person, if we tend to repeat the same patterns and mistakes, it is because our loves form a series in which something is being repeated, but always with a slight difference. This 'something' is nothing other than a phantasm, which we repeat obsessively, but which in itself remains incommunicable and continues its secret work in us, despite all our attempts to decipher it.[42] Klossowski was, of course, fascinated by the perverse phantasms that populate the writings of Sade.

But Klossowski gives a much broader provenance to the domain of phantasms, interpreting the thought of philosophers and writers in terms of the phantasms they express. 'Thoughts are the signs of a play and combat of affects', Nietzsche wrote – 'they always depend on their hidden roots' (NVC 216). Sade postulated that 'it is temperament that inspires the choice of a philosophy, and that reason, which the philosophers of his time invoked, is but a form of passion' (SMN 67–8). Hamann 'experienced himself as a riddle, but was conscious of the presence in his soul of forces and energies that constitute an irreducible totality, which he knew it was impossible to communicate'.[43] Kant said that we can never get beyond our representations; Klossowski insists that we can never get beyond our impulses and phantasms. A philosopher is only a kind of occasion and chance through which a phantasm is finally able to speak. 'What did Spinoza or Kant do? *Nothing but interpret their dominant impulse*. But it was only the *communicable* part of their behavior that could be translated into their constructions' (NVC 3). Nietzsche's fundamental phantasm, for example, was the eternal return, which was 'revealed' to him in Sils-Maria in August 1881, and experienced as an impulse, an intensity, a high tonality of the soul – and indeed as the highest possible intensity of the soul. What we consider to be the 'doctrine' of the eternal return found in Nietzsche's

writings is nothing but a *simulacrum* of this phantasm, an attempt to express the incommunicable phantasm in a verbal and conceptual form. 'The phantasm', Klossowski says, 'is the obsessional and constrictive fact for all those who strive to create.'[44]

Readers of Klossowski's fictions will be familiar with the phantasm that was the primary object of his own obsession: the figure of Roberte, which he calls the 'unique sign' of his work.[45] 'My true themes', Klossowski wrote of himself, 'are dictated by one or more obsessional (or 'obsidianal') instincts that seek to express themselves … I am only the *seismograph* of the life of the impulses.'[46] Since every phantasm is by nature incommunicable, the subject who submits himself to its irresistible constraint can never have done with describing it. Klossowski's narrative work is thus traversed by a single repetition, carried along by one and the same movement; in effect, it is always the same scene that is repeated. The rape of Roberte in *Roberte ce soir*, the theatrical representations in *Le Souffleur*, the vision of the goddess in *Diana at her Bath*, the description of the statue of St Therese in *The Baphomet* – all articulate one and the same phantasm: the woman discovering the presence of her body under the gaze or the violence of a third party, who, whether an angel or a demon, communicates a guilty voluptuousness. Klossowski describes the entirety of his literary output in terms of his relation to this fundamental phantasm: 'I am under the spell [*dictée*] of an image. It is the vision that demands that I say everything the vision gives to me.'[47]

3. Simulacra and stereotypes

This brings us to the third term in Klossowski's vocabulary, or rather a pair of terms: the simulacrum and the stereotype. A simulacrum is a willed reproduction of a non-willed phantasm (in a literary, pictorial, plastic or even conceptual form) that simulates the invisible agitation of the soul's impulses. 'The simulacrum, in its *imitative* sense, is the actualization of something in itself incommunicable and nonrepresentable: the *phantasm* in its obsessional compulsion' (R 76). The term *simulacrum* comes from the Latin *simulare* (to copy, represent, feign), and during the late Roman Empire it referred to the statues of the gods that often lined the entrance to a city. Klossowski applies the term, by extension, to pictorial, verbal and written representations as well. Simulacra are transcriptions of phantasms, artifacts that *count as* (or are *equivalent to*, can be exchanged for) phantasms. In Klossowski, *mimesis* is not a servile imitation of the visible, but artefactual simulation of an unrepresentable phantasm.

For Klossowski, our fundamental phantasm is the ego or the *suppôt*, a complex and fragile entity that bestows both a psychic and organic unity upon the moving chaos of the impulses. It does this in part through the grammatical simulacrum of the 'I', which interprets the impulses in terms of a hierarchy of gregarious needs (both material and moral), and dissimulates itself through a network of stabilizing concepts (substance, cause, identity, self, world, God). Even our 'inner experience' – that which is seemingly most personal and most immediate to us – is subject to the same falsification: '"Inner experience" enters our consciousness only after it has found a language the individual understands … "To understand" means merely: *to be able to express something new in the language of something old and familiar.*'[48] In Klossowski's terms, the shared function of the intellect, language and morality is to convert the (unconscious) *intensity* into a (conscious) *intention* (NVC 51, 70, 112).

For this reason, simulacra stand in a complex relationship to what Klossowski, in his later works, calls a 'stereotype'.[49] On the one hand, the invention of simulacra always presupposes a set of prior stereotypes – what Klossowski sometimes calls 'the code of everyday signs' – which express the gregarious aspect of lived experience in a form already schematized by the habitual usages of perception and thought. 'The stereotype corresponds to the normative schemata of our visual, tactile, and auditory apprehension, the schematization that conditions our primary receptivity.'[50] At the same time, however, every stereotype is nothing other than a worn-out simulacrum: 'stereotypes are merely residues of phantasmatic simulacra that have fallen into common use, as much in language as in art' (TV 132). Every creation of the new, whether in language, art or morality, has its origin in the impulses. But this is why, as a writer, Klossowski can speak of a 'science of stereotypes': by being 'accentuated' to the point of excess, a stereotype can itself bring about a critique of its own gregarious interpretation of the phantasm: 'Practiced advisedly, the institutional stereotypes (of syntax) provoke the presence of what they circumscribe; their circumlocutions conceal the incongruity of the phantasm but at the same time trace the outline of its opaque *physiognomy*.'[51] Even when it has been reduced to the status of a stereotype, the simulacrum (whether sculptural, pictorial, written or conceptual) has its own physiognomy – its own *style* – that betrays the presence of the phantasm and the impulses.

Klossowski's prose is itself an example of this science of stereotypes. By his own admission, Klossowski's works are written in a '"conventionally" classical syntax' that makes systematic use of the literary tenses and conjunctions of the French language, giving it a decidedly erudite, precious and even 'bourgeois' tone, but in an exaggerated manner that brings out its

phantasmic structure. 'The simulacrum effectively simulates the constraint of the phantasm only by exaggerating the stereotypical schemes: to add to the stereotype and accentuate it is to bring out the obsession of which it constitutes the replica' (R 78). This exaggerated style is immediately evident in Klossowski's writings. In 1964, Klossowski published a translation of Virgil's *Aeneid* that provoked a strong critical reaction, since he had attempted to reproduce the physiognomy of the Latin text in his translation, which made it almost unreadable in French, and offended some Latin scholars.[52] Similarly, when *The Baphomet* was awarded the Prix des Critiques in 1965, one of the jury members, Roger Caillois, resigned in protest and published a scathing critique in *Le Monde*, pointing to Klossowski's stylistic insufficiency and grammatical inaccuracy.[53]

If Klossowski gave up writing after 1972, it is at least in part because, in attempting to express the incommunicable phantasm, he wound up preferring the eloquence of bodily gestures and images – what he calls 'corporeal idioms' – to the medium of words and syntax. 'There is but one authentic form of communication: the exchange of bodies through the secret language of corporeal signs' (LC 69). Klossowski cites Quintillian: the body is capable of gestures that prompt an understanding contrary to what they indicate.[54] One arm may be used to hold off an aggressor, for instance, while the other is held open to him in seeming welcome. In language, the equivalents of such gestures are called 'solecisms', and in Klossowski's drawings the hand can be seen as the organ of solecisms. Such gestures are the incarnation of a power that is also internal to language: dilemma, disjunction and 'disjunctive synthesis'. But what the whole of Klossowski's oeuvre sets in motion is an astonishing parallelism between body and language: in his texts, one finds a pantomime in language just as, in his drawings, one finds solecism in gestures.

Such is the economy of the soul elaborated through Klossowski's work: first, there are *impulses*, with their rises and falls in intensity, their elations and depressions, which have no meaning or goal in themselves; second, these impulses give rise to *phantasms*, which constitute the incommunicable depth and singularity of the individual soul; third, under the obsessive constraint of the phantasm, *simulacra* are produced, which are the reproduction or repetition of the phantasm through the exaggeration of stereotypes. *Impulses*, *phantasms*, *simulacra-stereotypes*: a threefold circuit.

A singular use of theology

If there is an obstacle that contemporary readers encounter when reading Klossowski, however, it is his profound immersion in theology. The religious crisis Klossowski experienced during the Second World War led him to withdraw from the world and pursue a complex trajectory of theological studies with the Benedictines and the Dominicans, under the guidance of the Jesuit Father Gaston Fessard, followed by a brief flirtation with Lutheranism.[55] The crisis was short-lived, but it had profound effects on his subsequent thought. Yet if readers are deterred by Klossowski's theological references, it is no doubt because of the very prejudices Klossowski seeks to dispel. There is no mention in his writings, for example, of the tedious arguments for or against the existence of God or the immortality of the soul; nor does he put forward superficial definitions of what 'religion' might be ('belief in supernatural beings'); nor does he talk about theology in terms of 'belief.' Rather, one of Klossowski's primary points of reference is the polytheism of Roman paganism, where the term *theologia* was understood in its literal sense as discourse about the gods. As a result, Klossowski's theology has little to do with Christianity – it is non-Christian and even anti-Christian – but one could say that Klossowski has completely renewed theology by reviving heterodox modes of thought that were closed off by monotheism and Christian orthodoxy.[56]

If one could speak of a 'canon' of theologians in Klossowski's work, it would include the unlikely cast of J. G. Hamann,[57] Marcus Varro, Hermes Trismegistus, Sade and Nietzsche, though his approach to theology seems to have been shaped primarily through his study of the Church Fathers. Klossowski was an accomplished Latinist, and published translations of Tertullian,[58] Suetonius[59] and Virgil.[60] In 1950, he signed a contract with the French publishing house Gallimard to translate Augustine's *City of God*, though the translation (of the first seven books) never appeared and was apparently 'mislaid'.[61] But for Klossowski, the ultimate significance of the works of Tertullian and Augustine, in particular, is that they provided glimpses into the last vestiges of paganism that they themselves helped to destroy. The copious citations in their books, especially Augustine's *City of God*, remain our sole source for numerous texts that have long since disappeared.

The success of Christianity was so complete that it is difficult to recover the pagan thought that the Church Fathers destroyed, since our own sensibilities have been determined by their victory. Augustine, for example, was scandalized that not a single Roman god discussed by Varro

showed the slightest interest in eternal life, readily admitting that eternal life had become the obsessive phantasm of the Christians.[62] Paganism treated the gods as 'products' offering certain services, and one invested in the gods through participation in their cult; but none of the Roman gods were offering the service that Augustine craved. Similarly, Augustine rails against the pagan assumption that *the gods were created by humans*, and 'that "divine matters" are a human institution, like pictures and buildings'.[63] Yet for paganism, the question 'Do the gods exist?' is parallel to the question 'Do paintings or sculptures exist?' The answer is *yes*: like pictures and sculpture, the gods exist because *we have created them*. If this response sounds strange to modern ears, it is because we simply take for granted the success of what was no doubt one of the most successful crusades in the history of thought, namely, the critique of idolatry. The Judaic tradition criticized the fabricated gods of paganism, such as the golden calf (Exod. 32), for being mere 'idols' – statues whose 'eyes do not see' and 'ears do not hear'. This critique was redoubled in the colonial period with the concept of the primitive 'fetish' (derived from the Latin *facticius*, 'made by art, artificial'), which was popularized by Charles de Brosses in his 1760 book *On the Cult of Fetish Gods*.[64]

Yet what replaced the idols were still simulacra: rather than statues with eyes and ears, the gods became concepts or 'idealities' marked by lists of various attributes (omnipotence, omniscience, goodness). The 'problem of evil' became a problem of predication: how can the attributes 'all-powerful' and 'all-good' be simultaneously ascribed to the creator of an evil world? Yet sculpting a material statue and creating an ideal concept are both acts of fabrication. Even the notion that the gods were *not* created is itself a simulacrum that has been *created by us*, just as Plato created the concept of the Idea (εἶδος) as a form anterior to all creation. The *object that one fabricates* and *the idea that one believes* are both simulacra, produced from obsessive phantasms. Yet there is obviously a difference between a material statue and an ideal concept: it was in one and the same movement that the gods were made *transcendent* to the world and the proposition (or concept) was separated from the world in order to *denote* or 'correspond' to everything in it (the relation of 'truth'), to the point where 'God' and 'Truth' were made into identical idealities. The reasons for this change are complex, and include the invention of writing, and the apt title of a book on Klossowski, *L'énoncé dénoncé* (the 'statement denounced', or 'the denunciation of the proposition') encapsulates his attitude toward this latter tradition, and was perhaps one of his own reasons for largely abandoning writing.[65]

One of Klossowski's great audacities is to have revived the tradition of idolatry by resurrecting the pagan concept of the *simulacrum*, the Latin

term for Roman statues or idols. The theological engagements that led Klossowski to this position are complex, and we will simply attempt to isolate three critical moments.

1. Marcus Varro

For Augustine, one of the greatest representatives of paganism, and thus one of his greatest enemies, was Marcus Varro (116–27 BCE), a Roman theologian, grammarian, philologist and rhetorician. He ceaselessly attacks one of Varro's (lost) texts, *Antiquitates rerum humanarum et divinarum* (*Antiquities of Human and Divine Things*), a forty-one-volume work in which Varro distinguished between three fundamental types of theology in the Roman world: mythical, physical and civil. 'The name 'mythical'', Varro wrote, 'applies to the theology used chiefly by the poets, "physical" to that of the philosophers, "civil" to that of the general public.' Augustine preferred to call mythical theology *fabulous theology* ('since the name "mythical" is derived from *mythos*, the Greek word for fable'), and to call physical theology *natural theology* ('*physis* being the Greek for "nature"').[66] Augustine's aim in the *City of God* was to condemn the fabulous and civil theology of ancient Rome ('both "fabulous" and "civil" theology merit condemnation') and to distinguish them from the natural, discursive and philosophical theology of Christianity, which was the only true theology.[67] His triumph was complete: Aurelius Augustinus was the thinker 'in whom the world of myths died' (DB 13).

Klossowski's own aim is the exact opposite of Augustine's. In his 1968 book *Sacred and Mythic Origins of Certain Practices of the Women of Rome*, Klossowski attempted to recover the 'fabulous' or 'mythical' theology that Augustine helped to destroy.[68] If 'civil theology' referred to the temple cults upon which the health of the Roman state depended, 'mythical theology' referred both to the fables of the poets (*fabulous theology*, strictly speaking) and to the *theatrical theology* (*theologia theatrica*) that took place on the stage in theatres and circuses of Rome.[69] The sacred rites of civil theology were conducted by priests, whereas the fables of theatrical theology were composed by poets and mimed by actors (who nonetheless were sacred officiants, like priests) (DB 82). According to Roman tradition, it was the gods themselves, invoked during the ravages of a plague, who ordered the institution of stage shows in Rome. Sociologists often (and rightly) interpret temple gods as legitimations of the social order. Yet in theatrical theology, 'the mythic world spilled out well beyond the rituals of the temples, flowing out in torrents into the circuses and onto the theater

stages' (WR 132). Klossowski argues that *theologia theatrica* played a very different role than the temple cults, since it was guided by a principle that went far beyond utility or rational knowledge. What appeared on the stage shows of Roman theatre functioned as a precursor to the debaucheries depicted in writing by Sade.

In the Roman theatre, or 'stage shows' (*ludi scaenicae*, literally 'stage games'), the immoral escapades of the gods were represented on a theatrical stage by actors and mimes. According to contemporary accounts, it was the *gods themselves* who wanted to be worshiped in their most immoral and most shameful behaviour. 'These gods *take pleasure* in their *own shame*' (DB 82). Arnobius observed that:

> the *personae* of very sacred gods are made to appear amidst the worst obscenities, in such a way as to incite the mirth of the carefree spectators. The deities are insulted, are covered with ridicule; the theater resounds with shouts and stands up as one, the better to see, amid the din of the applause and approval of the crowd. (WR 133)

Valerius Maximus said that for the most part the stage shows consist of acts of debauchery; Minucius Félix 'finds that the adulteries furiously portray the gods' turpitudes, which the actor exposes, demonstrates, and acts out, and in this way penetrates the spectators' souls' (WR 133). Varro himself writes that, in mythical theology, 'we find stories about thefts and adulteries committed by the gods, and gods enslaved to human beings. In fact, we find attributed to gods not only the accidents that happen to humanity in general, but even those which can befall the most contemptible of mankind.'[70] Seneca was outspoken about the cruelness of some of the ceremonies: 'One man cuts off his male organs; another gashes his arms.'[71] In fact, the Romans themselves considered certain erotic practices to be depraved – there is an entire tradition of Roman austerity that prepared the way for the reaction of the Church Fathers.

Next to nothing of this *theologia theatrica* has come down to us: a few scenes from Terence, the names of a few writers such as Naevius, Pomponius, Laberius and Lentulus. Hence Klossowski's reliance on critical witnesses such as Augustine and Tertullian. 'The authors of your farces only entertain you by covering your gods with disgrace,' writes Tertullian. 'In these mimes, in these jests, do you think that you're laughing at the actors or at the gods when you state *Anubis the Adulterer*, *The Moon Man*, *The Flagellation of Diana*, *The Testament of the Late Jupiter*, The *Three Starving Hercules*?'[72] Augustine describes *theologia theatrica* as 'fictions, sung by poets and acted by players', revelling in 'obscenities' and 'the complete

degradation of the gods'[73] (CG VI 7 241). Klossowski notes that Augustine presumes the doctrine of Incarnation, which readily admitted that gods could take on human form ('the Word made flesh') (DB 83). Augustine's issue with *theologia theatrica* lies elsewhere: he follows Plato's strictures in the *Republic* (379a–383c) that the gods must be good, unchanging and truthful. For Augustine, 'he who says *god* presupposes a *good god*, since an evil deity is a contradiction in terms – hence the idea that those gods are *demons*' (DB 83). For a Christian theologian, deities who take pleasure in their debaucheries are a perverse absurdity: they represent the mischief of demons, which makes the entirety of pagan mythology a vast enterprise of demonic imposture, a world of inconsistency and contradiction.

But this is precisely where Klossowski locates the greatness of the lost tradition of *theologia theatrica*. 'Civil theology' was the object of a temple cult, and 'the purpose of a cult – with its expiatory, propitiatory sacrifices which serve to intercede with a deity in order to avert his anger, gain his assistance, or mind him of favours granted in a given situation – is to bind the god to his functional role' (WR 128). The very term 'religion' is often said to be derived from the Latin *religare*, meaning 'to bind, to tie', that is, the god is bound to his or her function, and the celebrant is bound to the god and its cult; the antonym of religion is *negligence* (of both god and cult).[74] But theatrical theology began where civil theology ended: it recounts what befell gods or goddesses when they ceased to play their civil function (WR 128). In both the myths of the poets and the mimes of the stage shows, the gods were *liberated from their veneration*: 'The stage shows reserved for the divinities a sphere in which they manifested themselves not in actions beneficial to society, but in the sovereign and purely gratuitous pleasures of these gods' (WR 129).

The Women of Rome analyses the various dimensions that *theologia theatrica* assumed when it was freed from its cultic restrictions. First, the 'pan-theology' of pagan myth 'presupposes a notion of space were the inner *life of the soul* and the *life of the cosmos* form a single space, in which the event – which for us is "psychological" – is situated as a spatial fact' (SDD 119n). Already, the demonology of the Neo-Platonists was tending toward a psychology, that is, toward a separation of the human (images of a psychic 'interiority') from the universe (what we call 'objective reality'). But in the pagan world, 'the entire soul managed to situate these images in space, and to render them indistinguishable from the soul' (SDD 120). In the eminently spatial conditions of the mythic world, the forces of the cosmos and the forces of the soul (impulses and phantasms) coexisted in a single *topos*, where they received their simulacral expression in statues and theatre (WR 123). Second, within this *topos* of myth, the impulses were

magnified through the disproportionate optics of what Klossowski calls a 'gulliverian' vision – the gods as omni-debauched, omni-perverse:[75]

> If these deities were ever to resemble humans, they had to borrow from them the very thing that, by their own [impassible] nature, distinguished them from mortals: the *passions*. Is it any surprise, then, that in assuming human passions, *the gods magnified them to an excessive degree equal to their divine nature*? (DB 83)

The vices adopted by the gods on the stage, through the actor, assumed limitless proportions – 'the most dreadful, most pernicious passions of human nature' – which humans themselves could not practice with impunity given their mortal situation (DB 83–4). Finally, the gods themselves were *sexual beings* who pursued, avoided and copulated with each other, and their divine sexuality assumed disproportionate dimensions in the stage shows (SDD 119). Although 'procreation is useful to the temporal prosperity of the state' (WR 91), the sexual act was freed from this limitation in the stage shows: the gods were shown to embody a sexuality that was inexhaustible because it was eternal, and eternal because it was aimless and hence *useless* (WR 91). Such was the 'debauchery' that Tertullian and Augustine condemned in the Roman stage shows, although it was only the rational language of Roman austerity that could reduce the divine relations to mere 'adulteries' or 'fornications'. Interestingly, Klossowski speculates that 'the disappearance of sexually determined divine figures, which were replaced by monotheism's conception of asexual divinity, did not occur without causing a shock, a profound imbalance in humanity's psychic economy, of which we apparently have not yet by any means felt the final repercussions' (WR 135).

What Klossowski finds in the *theologia theatrica* of the Roman stage was a polytheism that had become unmoored from its cultic anchor, and had become the *topos* of gods and goddesses that were sexed and sexual, who celebrated their vices and debaucheries as much as their virtues, and existed in a space that made no distinction between the soul and the cosmos. All of Klossowski's fictions – from *Diana at Her Bath* to *The Laws of Hospitality* and *The Baphomet* – can be read as attempts to reopen the scintillating and now-lost space of the *theologia theatrica*.

2. Hermes Trismegistus

Varro, however, was not the only figure Klossowski retrieved from Augustine's *City of God*. If Varro was the paradigmatic pagan, Hermes

Trismegistus ('thrice great') was the paradigmatic idolater. Hermes was the purported author of the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *Asclepius*, which lie at the origins of the Hermetic tradition, and was similarly attacked in the *City of God*. Hermes claimed that it was his ancestors who invented 'the art of making gods', but he immediately added: 'Since they could not create souls, they called up the souls of *angels and demons* and made them inhere in sacred images … so that by their means the idols could have the power of doing good or inflicting harm.'[76] Angels and demons, for the Neo-Platonists, were intermediaries between gods and humans, and for Hermes, idol-makers needed to call upon demonic forces in order to animate their simulacra of the gods.[77]

In his article 'Return to Hermes Trismegistus' ('On the Collaboration of Demons in the Work of Art'), Klossowski explains how he incorporated Hermes' conception of the demon into his understanding of simulacra. Hermes, he says, 'constantly comes to mind when I stand before a work of one of our modern (or even contemporary) masters … *What relation is there between such artworks and idols*? How can we claim, today, that a painting or a sculpture derives from the same [demonic] principle?'[78] Klossowski's response is that the demons invoked by the artist are nothing other than the hypostases of the impulsive forces and phantasms that 'possess' the artist. When artists create a work, they 'imitate' the obsessive constraint of a phantasm produced by the impulses (demons), externalizing the phantasm in a simulacrum (a god or idol), so that the phantasm can be 'exorcized' from the *topos* of the artist's soul in order to be placed in the simulacrum (a sculpture, a picture, a text). In this sense, *every theophany is a pathophany*.[79] Once the artwork or idol is finished, the techniques used by the artist tend 'to coincide with the "style" that is indissociable from the aspect under which the initial obsession of the artist is made visible in the work' (TV 145). The spectator and the artist, to be sure, do not 'interpret' the work in the same manner: the obsessions of the artist never coincide with the joy or anguish of the spectator. Yet what can account for the power of the finished work, if it is not the movement of a 'demonic' presence coming-and-going between the artist and his simulacrum, and between the simulacrum and its viewers?

If demons are defined by their power of metamorphosis, it is because a demon is never identical to itself, but is constantly changing and morphing, intensifying the view of the contemplator or modifying the object being contemplated. In other words, through the demonic presence, the obsession exerted by the phantasm 'acts simultaneously but *differently* in the artist and its simulacrum, and in its viewer'.[80] It is such a demon that lies at the heart of *Diana at her Bath*, Klossowski's retelling of the

myth of Diana and Acteon. 'The demon *simulates* Diana in a theophany', Klossowski explains, '*and* creates in Acteon the desire and the hope of possessing the goddess', thereby becoming 'Acteon's imagination as well as a mirror-image of Diana' (DB 35). The demon inhabits not only what it reveals (the goddess Diana) but also the spectator (Acteon) to whom the image of the goddess is revealed. Tertullian critiqued the strategy of demons in precisely these terms: 'The demon was in both the thing it made visible and in the person who saw the thing' (TV 144). In this sense, we must say that the demonic is not the opposite of the divine, but something much more bewildering and vertiginous: *the Same*, the perfect double, the exact semblance, the doppelgänger, the angel of light whose simulation is so complete that it is impossible to tell the imposter (Satan, Lucifer) apart from the reality (God, Christ). The simulations of demons imply a liquidation of the principle of identity: behind every simulated mask there lies, not a face, but only another simulation, another mask, and another mask behind that mask. 'If we demystify', Klossowski concludes, 'it is only to mystify further' (NVC 131).

There are thus as many demons as there are obscure forces and impulses in the human soul, and as many divinities as there are simulacra. To be sure, the word 'demon' (*daimōn*), like the word 'god' (*theos*), has a complex history, and the Neo-Platonic demons are not the same as the demons of the Gospel or Socrates' demon. But if Klossowski is willing to rehabilitate the very notion of a demon, he says, it is because demonology

> does not consider possession to be an illness, but a spiritual fact. The soul is always inhabited by some power, whether good or bad. Souls are not ill when they are inhabited, but when they are no longer inhabited. The illness of the modern world is that souls are no longer inhabitable, and they suffer from it … To rehabilitate demonology is to establish an authentic *pathophany* that is both a method and a protest [*contestation*]. The *theatrical* character of theology came to it from its belief in the human soul as a locus inhabited by autonomous powers – a spiritual topology, *pathos* conceived as a *topos*. For an artist to achieve his ends, to obtain the effect he seeks, he has to maintain the hypothesis of a demonic universe analogous to the forces that inhabit him; and he will treat every movement of his soul as a correlate to a demonic movement. (R 107–8, 105–6)

One could hardly overemphasize the fact that, for Klossowski, gods and goddesses are *not* projections of the human imagination – which would reduce them to a 'human, all too human' transcription of experience – but

processes that simulate the inhuman forces and impulses that inhabit and possess the human soul, and are the explication of being itself.[81] Indeed, 'the imperative to "objectively" reproduce "nature"', Klossowski notes, is itself derived from 'a modern phantasmatic obsession' (R 78), but it is through the creation of simulacra that, as Nietzsche predicted, the world becomes a fable again.[82]

3. Nietzsche

The third, and perhaps most unlikely, of Klossowski's paradigmatic theologians is Friedrich Nietzsche. Klossowski's landmark 1957 lecture 'Nietzsche, Polytheism, and Parody' (SDD 99–122) is an analysis of Nietzsche's relation to ancient polytheism and the depths of his theological proclivities. Nietzsche's famous declaration of the 'death of God' is in no way synonymous with the empty claim that 'God does not exist'. Rather, the proposition 'dramatizes' the polytheistic fact that gods are ceaselessly born and killed, created and destroyed, in multiple ways and for multiple reasons. 'When gods die,' Nietzsche said, 'they always die several kinds of death.'[83] The phrase 'God is dead' can be used to dramatize innumerable divine deaths: the good news of the Christian gospel (Jesus died for your sins), the dismemberment of the Greek god Dionysus by the Titans, the death of belief in the Christian god in the nineteenth century, and so on. Nietzsche even provides a parable to describe how the gods of polytheism died: when one of the gods declared that there was only one God, the other gods rocked on their chairs and laughed and laughed until they *laughed themselves to death*. The gods of myth and theatre died of laughter.[84] The rise of monotheism meant that one impulse had become dominant at the expense of all others, an impulse Nietzsche identified, in *On the Genealogy of Morals*,[85] as *ressentiment*. But Nietzsche was equally interested in the creation of gods: he himself created his own concept of the god Dionysus, with his prophet Zarathustra, and summarized his entire philosophy as a combat between two gods ('Dionysus versus the Crucified'), and it is not by chance that it was a *demon* that introduced his doctrine of the eternal return.[86] 'How many new gods are still possible!' Nietzsche exclaimed. 'As for myself, in whom the religious – that is to say *god-forming* – instinct occasionally becomes active at impossible times – how differently, how variously the divine has revealed itself to me each time!'[87] Such texts not only go against the grain of the popular image of Nietzsche, but they indicate the degree to which Klossowski's own approach to Roman polytheism took place through the lens of Nietzsche's thought.

Nonetheless, Klossowski takes seriously the usual interpretation of the 'death of God', and one of his most persistent themes is that the monotheistic God was the guarantor of the identity of the self and of its substantive base, the integrity of the body. Like Sade, he saw radical atheism – the 'the supreme act of normative reason' (SMN 15) – as little more than an inverted monotheism, since it replaces the identity of God with the 'the possession and identity of a responsible ego' (SMN 5), and thus changes nothing. But the death of God implies more than the death of the reasonable and moral self. 'The normative structure of the human species is expressed physiologically by the subordination of its life functions to the preservation and propagation of the human species,' he continues, 'which corresponds to the need to express and perpetuate oneself in language' (SMN 14). This is why Klossowski interpreted *sodomy* as the key to all of Sade's perversions (62): sodomy is a gesture that strikes at the law of the propagation of the species, and thus bears witness to the death of the species in the individual ('integral monstrosity'). Indeed, as Deleuze saw clearly, the order of God, in its most general form, can be said to include the following elements: 'the identity of God as the ultimate foundation; the identity of the world as the ambient environment; the identity of the person as a well-founded agency; the identity of bodies as its base; and finally, the identity of language as the power of *denoting* everything else'.[88] In Sade, as in the Roman stage shows, this divine order of integrity will be exploded by the pan-demonium (literally) of an order of perversity: 'a perversity in the lower world where an exuberant, stormy nature reigns, full of raping, shameful debauchery, and travesty … and a perversity up above, where spirits are already mingling with each other'.[89]

The divine order can thus be opposed point by point to the order of the Antichrist, which 'is characterized by the death of God, the destruction of the world, the dissolution of the person, the disintegration of bodies, and the shifting function of language, which now expresses only intensities'.[90] Kant had already seen this in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, when he subjected rational psychology (the Self), rational cosmology (the world) and rational theology (God) to a common death. What then opens up before us, as Deleuze puts it, is a field of a-cosmic, impersonal, and pre-individual singularities, 'mobile, communicating, penetrating one another across an infinity of modifications'.[91] Such is the upshot of Klossowski's singular use of theology, which is no longer a reflection on the nature of a transcendent being, but a place where theatrical theology and demonology merge with Nietzsche's Dionysianism to become a discourse on the immanent impulses that constitute the life of the soul as much as the life of the cosmos.

Living Currency and counter-utopia

With this conceptual and theological context in hand, we can return, finally, to *Living Currency* and its companion piece 'Sade and Fourier', where Klossowski's reflections on the nature of impulse, phantasms and simulacra are brought to bear on a domain he had scarcely dealt with earlier: the socio-economic.[92] 'I wanted to introduce into the economy a dimension that was absent from it', he would later comment.[93] The fundamental thesis of the book is that economic norms are '*modes for the expression and representation of impulsive forces*' (LC 47). *Living Currency* is meant to be a challenge to traditional Marxism, since for Klossowski the 'infrastructure' is not economic but *impulsive*, and phantasms play a generative role equivalent to that played by labour power in Marx. 'Emotion, like labor, is "productive" … The real producer and consumer is *not* the purely fictional unity of the individual, but rather his *impulsive phantasms … Pathos* is the first producer, the first fabricator, and the first consumer.'[94] The idea that the economy is linked to psychology, each with its own depressions and crises, is commonplace, but by making the economy a direct expression of the impulses, Klossowski was able to create the synthesis of political economy and libidinal economy that many of his contemporaries had been seeking.

Yet a more radical and more complex thesis immediately follows from this. *Living Currency* opens with the observation that 'industrial civilization has been anathematized for ravaging the life of the affects' (LC 45). But if this is true, and industrial civilization is itself a product of the impulses, then one can only conclude that *the impulses are creating the means for their own repression* (LC 48). Klossowski had already argued that the impulses repress themselves through the creation of 'the organic and psychic unity of the subject [*suppôt*]' (LC 48), but he now extends this claim to the economy, which supports the subject like a scaffolding or prosthesis. Each implies the other, for once an individual acquires an organic and moral unity, its impulses and phantasms can only be expressed insofar as it is the possessor of this unity, which is itself supported by the hierarchy of material and moral needs of the social formation in which it exists. 'This hierarchy of needs is the economic form of repression that existing institutions impose by and through the consciousness of the subject onto the imponderable forces of its psychic life' (LC 48).

Klossowski's aim, however, is *not* to 'liberate' the impulses from their repression by either the *suppôt* or the economy, but quite the opposite: he wants to show that commodification is inherent in the impulses, given their ability to create their own object (LC 60), which is why they can be

commercialized and turned into economic commodities. In their 1972 book *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari famously took up and developed Klossowski's two theses: 'drives form part of the infrastructure' and 'desire desires its own repression'.[95] Klossowski, they indicated, had posed in precise terms the fundamental problem of political philosophy: 'Why do humans fight *for* their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?'[96] More importantly, perhaps, if the impulses create their own repression, Klossowski argues that they are also capable of creating 'the means of *breaking* the repression' to which they have subjected themselves (LC 48). When Deleuze and Guattari wrote *A Thousand Plateaus*, however, they replaced the term 'repression' with the term 'assemblage' [*agencement*], since the former seemed to imply that the impulses could somehow be unshackled from their repressive chains. They cannot: impulses and phantasms are always assembled, arranged and organized in determinate ways by both the *suppôt* and the economy. This is why Deleuze and Guattari argue that phantasms are never individual but always collective: all phantasms are necessarily *group* phantasms,[97] although, as Klossowski will show, group phantasms diverge into two differing regimes – those that find their immediate satisfaction in the already existing stereotypes of the codes of everyday signs, and those that instead manage to simulate the obsessional constraint in a new simulacrum.

Despite its brevity, *Living Currency* is a dense and complex text that develops these themes in numerous directions. We will simply highlight here the ways in which Klossowski was led to rethink two of his fundamental concepts – simulacra and phantasms – in light of the contemporary socio-economic situation, which he often calls, simply, the 'industrial regime'.

1. Simulacra and utensils: Toward an 'impulsive' theory of fabricated objects

One of Klossowski's primary innovations in *Living Currency* is to locate his notion of the simulacrum within a larger theory of fabricated objects. What the industrial regime has brought to the fore is the distinction between objects manufactured to sustain human existence – *utensils*, or objects of *use* – and the objects produced by art – *simulacra*, which are 'useless' for subsistence and economically sterile. This distinction is based, in part, on the thesis of the famous article by Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Its Mechanical Reproduction', which Klossowski had translated into French in 1936.[98] Initially, even objects of use were inseparable from

'custom' or ritual: 'the fabrication of objects was first inspired by the gods' in the production of idols, which were qualitative and singular. With the advent of technologies of reproduction, however, Benjamin argued that the fabricated object lost the 'aura' it once had as a simulacrum, and instead became a reproducible and exchangeable utensil.

What then is the relation between *the act of divulging a phantasm in a simulacrum* and *the act of fabricating a utensil* (LS 64)? It has been suggested that 'useless' works of art have survived in the industrial regime only because they have been reduced to quantifiable commodities within the so-called 'art market'. But Klossowski argues that the useful/useless distinction is an inadequate one: there is as much useless waste in the production of utensils as there is usefulness in the simulacrum, which is one reason why Klossowski strongly rejects the modern notion of the 'priceless' nature of art, and of 'pure art' in particular (LC 47). *Living Currency* puts forward a far more original thesis: the distinction between the 'noble' simulacrum and the 'ignoble' utensil can only be understood through an analysis of the phenomenon of *perversion*.

Klossowski largely adopts the concept of perversion developed in the nineteenth century, which presumed the existence of a sexual instinct or impulse that was directed toward procreation. Any deviation from this goal was deemed to be a diversion or 'perversion' of the sexual instinct, which led to Krafft-Ebing's famous typology of perversions in his 1886 book *Psychopathia Sexualis*: inversion, fetishism, sadism and masochism.[99] In a similar manner, Klossowski suggests that the 'sexuality' encompasses two propensities, 'the *procreative instinct* of the species, and the *voluptuous emotion* that precedes the act of creation', and that a perversion therefore 'denotes a *fixation* of the voluptuous emotion at a state *prior* to the procreative act' (LC 49). By separating sensual pleasure – which Klossowski always calls 'voluptuous emotion' – from the instinct of propagation, a perversion is any activity that holds the procreative function in suspense, and instead seeks out new objects of investment by *diverting* or rerouting the procreative impulse and directing its energies elsewhere – namely, to a *phantasm*. Klossowski sometimes calls these diversions *prélèvements*, 'deductions' or 'debits', as if one were withdrawing from an account. But once the impulse is reinvested and 'captured' in the phantasm, it strives to reinvest its forces outside of itself in the form of a *fabricated* object, that is, in a simulacrum (LC 60, 62, 81). A simulacrum is thus the product of a 'perverse' phantasm.

What then is the origin of the *utensil*? Klossowski argues that utensils *also* have their origin in phantasms, but the initial constraint of the phantasm is first *renounced* (LC 61) and then *reconfigured* (LC 25, 51):

the obsessional constraint of the phantasm is now presented as a *need* of the individual, and the act of fabrication is reduced to the production of economic *goods* that satisfy those needs. Similarly, the voluptuous emotion associated with the phantasm is ensconced in a *stereotype*, which is 'what the industrialist spirit suggests and then imposes on the receptivity of individuals as *the most satisfying of objects*' (TV 105). Through all these means, the industrial regime is able to manipulate phantasms in order to convert their obsessive constraint into an obsessive urgency to produce and consume goods, thereby commercializing them and making them profitable for its institutions. Such is the paradox that Klossowski locates at the heart of the industrial regime: it is by nature *perverse*, powered by voluptuous emotion that has been diverted from its procreative role, yet takes this diverted energy and puts it in the service of maintaining the unity of the economic subject (the *suppôt*).

Both utensils and simulacra, then, have their origin in phantasms, which are as productive for Klossowski as labour power was for Marx. The difference between the two types of objects lies in their relation to the individual unity of the subject, the *suppôt*: a fabricated utensil must *serve* this unity, whereas a simulacrum can only persist at the *expense* of the individual's unity and integrity (LC 60–1). More generally, utensils serve gregariousness (the herd instinct) and the perpetuation of the species, whereas simulacra serve the singular and the exceptional. Both Sade and Nietzsche insisted that 'the species only merits being named the raw material of life through the elaboration of exceptions, or monsters' – whence the Sadean idea of an 'integral monstrosity', which is the opposite of the idea of an 'integral person' (LC 69–70). What defines a monster is the *lack* of individual unity, and an individual becomes monstrous when its unity is shattered in the service of its phantasms. In other words, in the fabrication of utensils, the phantasm is *used* by the economic individuals, whereas in the production of a simulacrum, the phantasm *uses up* the individual (33). 'There are thus two circuits that interpenetrate each other within the unity of the individual,' Klossowski concludes. 'The individual can never break apart the two circuits; it can only defer the perpetual urgency of one or the other circuit' (LC 40).

2. Phantasms and industry: The price of 'voluptuous emotion'

The second major innovation of *Living Currency* concerns the question: under what conditions can *voluptuous emotion* in particular be

commodified, once it is separated from the act of procreation? The industrial regime has reconfigured the impulses into a mere demand of goods and has commercialized phantasms in order to redirect them toward its own ends. But as Klossowski points out, 'what we call "erotic pleasure" cannot be treated as if it were simply the enjoyment of one good among others … because it is related to a very particular object – *a living object*, and hence a body' (LC 51). Is it possible to speak of a right to 'own' pleasure, as Sade put it, if this pleasure is related to a living body (LC 51)?

This is the question Klossowski began to address in his 1970 article 'Sade and Fourier', which staged a 'hypothetical debate' (SF 79) between the two thinkers, ultimately contrasting Fourier's utopian vision with Sade's counter-utopia.[100] Charles Fourier (1772–1837) was the boldest and most original thinker among the early nineteenth-century social theorists whom Engels called 'utopian socialists'.[101] Klossowski's interest in Fourier had no doubt been provoked by the publication, in 1967, of *The New Amorous World*, a manuscript containing Fourier's proposals concerning love and sexuality that he had completed in 1818 but never dared to publish.[102] The appearance of the book 150 years after its composition was thus something of a literary event. If Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Things*, had famously analysed the trinity of 'labour, life and language', one could say that Fourier had been interested in a fourth term: love.[103] What Klossowski found revolutionary in Fourier's manuscript was that Fourier treated 'erotic pleasure' as a *primordial need* and thus had 'dared to extend the "communal ownership" of all goods to *living, erotic objects*', that is, to human beings (LC 52).

For Fourier, voluptuous emotion is 'the passion best suited for the formation of social ties', but the problem with what he mockingly called 'civilization' is that it had failed to recognize the sheer diversity and inconstancy of human sexual proclivities, which were essentially polygamous. How else could one account for the ubiquity of adultery in civilized societies? Fourier therefore proposed to ground his reorganization of civilization in the impulses and their phantasms, that is, in what he called 'the free play of the passions' (SF 82). Fourier divided his society into affective units or 'passional' groups that he called 'Phalanxes', whose goal was not simply to satisfy material needs but ensure all men and women a rich and satisfying sexual life. 'Each affective grouping', Klossowski notes, 'was based on emotions whose phantasms cannot be communicated beyond their immediate circle' (SF 84). One of the fundamental conditions for the realization of Fourier's amorous utopia was what he called the 'sexual minimum': every mature man and woman would be guaranteed a satisfying minimum of sexual pleasure, just as one is guaranteed a 'minimum

wage' in the world of work. For Fourier, love was neither a private matter, nor a recreation that distracts from work, but an essential and institutionalized part of collective life.[104]

Klossowski, like many others, was obviously intrigued by Fourier's proposals, but as one of Sade's most famous interpreters he also drew attention to a number of revealing differences between the two thinkers. Sade, for his part, had developed 'a form of communal life based on the *violation* of the physical and moral propriety of persons' rather than the free play of the passions (LC 54–5). Similarly, Sade had confined his perverse activities within the limits of clandestine societies, whereas Fourier thought that 'the basic principle underlying clandestine groups should be upheld and extended to the rest of society', that is, everyone should be divided into categories based on age and social position, and sorted into different affective units based on is principle of 'passional attraction' (LC 52; SF 85). Most importantly, unlike Fourier, Sade recognized the essential function that *money*, as an abstract equivalent, played in the kind of 'universal prostitution' he envisioned. For Klossowski, it was this emphasis on the role of money that set Sade apart. At bottom, Sade agreed with Fourier that there could be only one form of universal communication: '*the exchange of bodies through the secret language of corporeal signs*', in which the arousal and the living object of the emotion were one and the same – a living currency (LC 69; SF 90). But Fourier's utopia was based on the idea that a direct 'exchange between individuals could take place at the level of the passions' (SF 88), and that this exchange could be realized through a principle of *play*, that is, through 'entertainments, spectacles, ritual ceremonies, contests' not unlike those found in the *theatrica theologica* of the Romans (SF 86). In Klossowski's terms, the 'creative freedom' of play would be the *simulacrum* capable of establishing a free and gratuitous exchange between individuals at both the material and psychic level (SF 86).

Klossowski argues that this is precisely what Sade would have objected to in Fourier. Since phantasms are incommunicable, no direct exchange is possible between individuals at the level of their perversions. A *simulacrum* of communication indeed exists, but can only be provided by money, and not by play. 'Sade has the distinction of being the first modern thinker to recognize the close relationship between the phantasm and its commercial valorization, and thus the role of money as *a sign of the incalculable value of the phantasm*' (SF 89). In his secret societies, Sade insisted that men and women had to be *saleable* as traffickable objects, and even members of the Society of the Friends of Crime had to pay dues of 10,000 francs per year (SF 91). Money circulated through the clandestine societies as

a simulacrum of exchange through which one could appraise the value of phantasms and ensure the circulation of their objects. For Sade, in other words, 'money forms an integral part of the representative mode of perversion' and is an essential 'instrument of integral monstrosity' (SF 89). Just as industry has appropriated phantasms and voluptuous emotion for its own profitable ends, Sade appropriated money, a sign of wealth and hard work, to sustain the circulation and value of perversions.

For Klossowski, it is this Sadean gesture that marks the birth of the modern commercialization of voluptuous emotion: 'Even in economics, perversion itself is the ground of value' (LC 54). Indeed, Klossowski shows how two specific forms of perversion pervade industrial production. For Sade's characters, the *quality* of a single victim, on whom the torturer inflicts his tortures, sometimes takes precedence over the concept of the specific act, while at other times, it is the same repeated act, indifferently inflicted on a large *quantity* of victims, which affirms the quality of the act. The same principles have been carried over into the modern industrial economy: either industry uses the same repeated act (automation) to mass produce identical objects-in-series, or it experiments with various manufacturing methods to confer quality on a single product in order to increase its rarity and price (LC 57–9). 'Sade intended to demonstrate', Klossowski argues, 'that the existing institutions of any regime implicitly advance the cause of the so-called polymorphously perverse, and thus structure perversion' (SF 83).

In Klossowski's hypothetical debate between Sade and Fourier, then, it is Sade who wins out over Fourier. Fourier had wanted to ground his utopia on the free play of the passions – 'free' meaning *free-of-charge* – but Sade showed that voluptuous emotion, which always includes an element of aggressiveness, necessarily presupposes value and appraisal, that is, *a price to be paid* (LC 53). Sade thus validates Klossowski's argument that commodification is inherent in the impulses. Both Stendhal's proverb ('Many manage to sell what they could never give away') and Nietzsche's aphorism ('No one wants her as a gift, so she has to sell herself') express the fundamental principle of voluptuous emotion: *nothing in the life of the impulses is free* (LC 68, 65).

Just as every individual is caught up in two intersecting circuits of objects, so every individual faces an incessant dilemma between two types of perversions: 'either an *internal* perversion, which is a dissolution of the unity of the individual – or else an internal *affirmation* of the individual's unity, which is an *external* perversion' (LC 65). The parody of a classical utopia that gives *Living Currency* its title is nonetheless Klossowski's testament to the greatness of Fourier. Fourier's entire effort was aimed

at overcoming the *external* perversion of the industrial economy (the monstrous hypertrophy of 'needs') so that humans could consent to their *internal* perversion (the dissolution of their fictive unity), thereby producing a 'harmony' between the life of the impulses and the productions of the economy. As such, Klossowski concedes that Fourier's utopia conceals a profound reality. 'But until that reality appears', he concludes, 'it is in the interest of industry for Fourier's utopia to remain a utopia, and for Sade's perversion to remain the driving force behind the monstrousness of industry' (LC 66).

Lisieux, May 2016

Notes

1   Pierre Klossowski, *La monnaie vivante* (Paris: Losfeld, 1970). The original hardcover edition incorporated a series of photographs by Pierre Zucca, which were not included in the subsequent paperback editions (Paris: Joëlle Losfeld, 1994; Paris: Rivages, 1997). The initial draft of *Living Currency* was presented to the Institut Français in Florence in April 1970 under the title 'La mercantilisation des phantasms erotiques selon les norms industrielles' ('The Commercialization of Erotic Phantasms in Accordance with Industrial Norms'). In English, the best works on Klossowski's oeuvre are Ian James, *Pierre Klossowski: The Persistence of a Name* (Oxford: Legenda, 2000) and Hervé Castanet, *Pierre Klossowski: The Pantomime of the Spirits*, trans. Adrian R. Price with Pamela King (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014), which contains analyses of both 'Sade and Fourier' (69–75) and *Living Currency* (142–59).

2   The following works by Klossowski will be cited in the text using the following abbreviations:

DB = *Diana at Her Bath*, trans. Stephen Sartarelli, in *Diana at Her Bath and The Women of Rome* (Boston: Eridanos Press, 1990), 3–84.

LC = *Living Currency*, in this volume.

NVC = *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997; London: Continuum, 2005). Page numbers refer to the Chicago edition.

R = *La Ressemblance* (Marseille: André Dimanche, 1984).

SDD = *Such a Deathly Desire*, trans. Russell Ford (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007).

SF = 'Sade and Fourier', in this volume.

SMN = *Sade My Neighbor*, trans. Alphonso Lingus (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991).

TV = *Tableaux vivantes: Essais critiques 1936–1983* (Paris: Gallimard, 2001).

WR = *Sacred and Mythic Origins of Certain Practices of the Women of Rome*, trans. Sophie Hawkes in *Diana at her Bath and The Women of Rome* (Boston: Eridanos Press, 1990), 89–138.

3   See Denis Hollier, ed., *The College of Sociology*, trans. Betsy Wing (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), which includes essays by Klossowski, Georges Bataille, Alexandre Kojève, Michel Leiris, Jean Paulhan, Denis de Rougement, Jean Wahl and others.

4   See Klossowski's retrospective reflections, 'De Contre-Attaque à Acéphale' ('From Contre-Attaque to Acéphale'), in TV 91–5.

5   Pierre Klossowski, *La Vocation suspendue* (Paris: Gallimard, 1950).

6   Pierre Klossowski, *Sade, mon prochain* (Paris: Seuil, 1947). A revised and expanded edition of the book appeared in 1967, which is the edition translated into English by Alphonso Lingis.

7   Pierre Klossowski, *Les Lois de l'hospitalité* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), with a new preface and postface. *The Laws of Hospitality* is a trilogy that includes three previous published works, *Roberte, ce soir* (Paris: Minuit, 1954), *La Révocation de l'édict de Nantes* (Paris: Minuit, 1959) and *Le Souffler ou le Théâtre de société* (Paris: Pauvert, 1960). The first two volumes have been published in English as *Robert Ce Soir and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (London: Marion Boyars, 1969). For an analysis of the *Laws of Hospitality*, see Tracy McNulty, *The Hostess: Hospitality, Femininity and the Expropriation of Identity* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

8   Pierre Klossowski, *Le Baphomet* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1965). English translation: *The Baphomet*, trans. Sophie Hawkes and Stephen Sartarelli, with a foreword by Michel Foucault (Boston: Eridanos Press, 1988).

9   Michel Foucault, 'La Prose d'Actéon', in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 135 (March 1964), 444–59. English translation: 'The Prose of Actaeon', trans. Robert Hurley, in Michel Foucault, *Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: New Press, 1998), 123–35

10 Maurice Blanchot, 'Le rire des dieux', in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* 151 (July 1965): 91–105, which is an analysis of *The Baphomet* and *The Laws of Hospitality*. English translation: 'The Laughter of the Gods', in Maurice Blanchot, *Friendship*, trans. Elizabeth Rotenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 169–82.

11 Gilles Deleuze, 'Klossowski ou les corps-language', in *Critique* 214 (March 1965): 199–209. English translation: 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language', in Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense* [1969], trans. Mark Lester; ed. Charles Stivale and Constantin Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 280–301.

12 Michel Foucault, *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*, trans. R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito (New York: Semiotext(e), 1991), 28–9.

13 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 312 n.19.

14 Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche et le cercle vicieux* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1969). English translation: *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997; London: Continuum, 2005).

15 Michel Foucault, letter to Pierre Klossowski, 3 July 1969, reproduced in *Cahiers pour un temps* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1985), 85–8.

16 Michel Foucault, letter to Pierre Klossowski, Winter 1970, included in this volume. Despite his frequent praise, however, Foucault soon lost touch with Klossowski. David Macey, in *The Lives of Michel Foucault* (New York: Vintage, 1993), provides the following explanation, drawing on a conversation with Gilles Deleuze, as reported by Claude Mauriac: 'Early in 1973, Klossowski had a conversation with Foucault in which he suggested how to deal with the CRS on demonstrations. A platoon of thirty very handsome young men armed with sticks would, he claimed, immobilize the police, so struck would they be by their beauty. Foucault's reaction is not on record, but it is clear that his political trajectory had by now taken him far away from Klossowski's world' (341). 'CRS' refers to the Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité (Republican Security Companies), a reserve of the French National Police devoted primarily to crowd and riot control and the re-establishment of order.

17 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* [1972], trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Penguin, 2009).

18 Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy* [1974], trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

19 Jean Baudrillard, *Impossible Exchange* [1999], trans. Chris Turner (London and New York: Verso 2001), esp. 122–33. One should note that Baudrillard's (and Deleuze's) concept of the 'simulacrum' have different components than Klossowski's, and should not be conflated.

20 The phrase 'libidinal economy' first appears in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, which uses the term on three occasions, in each case contrasting it with 'political economy': 'Abstract labor on the one hand, abstract desire the other: political economy and libidinal economy' (303); 'Libidinal economy is no less objective than political economy, and the political no less subjective than the libidinal' (345); 'Schizoanalysis makes no distinction in nature between political economy and libidinal economy' (381).

21 Roland Barthes, 'Réponses', in *Tel Quel* 47 (Autumn 1971): 16, as quoted in Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 172.

22 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 63.

23 Gilles Deleuze, letter to Pierre Klossowski, 21 April 1971, as cited in Sarah Wilson, 'Pierre Klossowski: Epiphanies and Secrets', in *Pierre Klossowski*, ed. Anthony Spira and Sarah Wilson (London: Hatje Cantz, 2006), 4–17: 15.

24 For this latter phase of Klossowski's career, see *Pierre Klossowski*, ed. Spira and Wilson, the superb catalogue to the exhibition of Klossowski's drawings that took place at the Whitechapel Gallery in London, the Museum Ludwig in Cologne and the Centre Pompidou in Paris in 2006–7. One should also note that the directors Raul Ruiz and Pierre Zucca made films based on Klossowski's work, and they form an equally important part of Klossowski's work in images. See Gilles Deleuze, Letter to Pierre Klossowski, 1979, in *Europe: Revue Litteraire mensuelle* 1034–5 (June–July 2015), special issue on Klossowski, 61–2: 'It seems to me that, at the moment, there are four great authors who are truly thinking the image – not only theoretically, but through its practices as a modern element of the present world: yourself, Godard, McLuhan, and Burroughs.'

25 Portions of this section are adapted from Daniel W. Smith, 'Klossowski's Reading of Nietzsche: Impulses, Phantasms, Simulacra, Stereotypes', in *Diacritics* 35/1 (2007): 8–21.

26 The archaic French term *suppôt* translates the Latin term *suppositum*,

which in scholastic philosophy generally indicated a substantial reality considered in its totality, and specifically, a being endowed with reason; as such, it was used as a synonym for 'person' or 'individual'. For a late usage, see Leibniz, *Theodicy*, trans. E. M. Huggard (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1985), I, §59, 155: 'Many moderns have acknowledged that there is no *physical communication* between soul and body, despite the *metaphysical communication* always subsisting, which causes soul and body to compose one and the same *suppôt*, or what is called a person.' The term is not in current usage in contemporary French, apart from phrases where the word has assumed the meaning of an 'accomplice' or 'partner in crime', such as *suppôt de Satan* (agent of Satan), or *suppôts du dictateur* (the dictator's henchmen). Klossowski always uses the term in its scholastic sense.

27 Klossowski, *Sade My Neighbor*, 14. See also Pierre Klossowski, 'Protase et Apodose', in *L'Arc* 43 (1970), 19: 'In the domain of communication (literary or pictorial), the stereotype (as "style") is the residue of a simulacrum (corresponding to an obsessional constraint) that has fallen to the level of current usage, disclosed and abandoned to a common interpretation.'

28 On all these points, see Alain Arnaud, *Pierre Klossowski* (Paris: Seuil, 1990), 7–10. Arnaud's concise book is one of the best studies available on Klossowski's work.

29 Pierre Klossowski, 'Postface', in Jean Decottignies, *Klossowski* (Paris: Henri Veyrier, 1985), 137, emphasis added.

30 See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967): 'The body and physiology as the starting point. Why? … The phenomenon of the body is the richer, clearer, more tangible phenomenon … Belief in the body is more fundamental than belief in the soul' (§§492, 489, 491).

31 In English, the only treatment of Nietzsche's conception of the impulses comparable to Klossowski's is Graham Parkes' marvellous book, *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche's Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

32 This is the conception of desire critiqued by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*.

33 See Gilles Deleuze, 'Schizophrenia and Society', in *Two Regimes of Madness, Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), 17–28: 'A chemistry at once intensive and experiential seems able to go beyond the traditional organic/psychic duality, at least in two directions:

(1) the experimental schizoid states induced through mescaline, bulbocapnine, LSD, etc.; (2) the therapeutic initiative to calm the anxiety of schizophrenics, while dismantling their catatonic shell in order to jump start the schizophrenic machines and get them running again (the use of "major tranquilizers")' (26).

34 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Dawn,* trans. Brittain Smith, vol. 5 of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Alan D. Schrift, Keith Ansell-Pearson and Duncan Large (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), §119.

35 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §259.

36 Ibid., §481.

37 Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), esp. Ch. 2, 'Active and Reactive', 39–72: 'Qualities are nothing but the corresponding difference in quantity between two forces' (43).

38 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), §116.

39 Ibid. §354.

40 Nietzsche, *Dawn*, §115.

41 Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, 72. See also NVC 133: 'Nothing exists apart from *impulses* that are essentially *generative* of *phantasms*.'

42 See Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 213: 'What appears in the phantasm is the movement by which the ego opens itself to the surface and liberates the a-cosmic, impersonal, and pre-individual singularities which it had imprisoned.'

43 Pierre Klossowski, *Les Méditations bibliques de Hamann* (Paris: Minuit, 1948), 34–5.

44 Klossowski, as cited in Castenet, *The Pantomime of Spirits*, 296.

45 Klossowski, *Les lois de l'hospitalité*, 334–5.

46 Klossowski, Protase et Apodose', 10; and Jean-Maurice Monnoyer, *Le peintre et son demon: Entretiens avec Pierre Klossowski* (Paris: Flammarion, 1985), 61.

47 Cited on the back cover of Alain Arnaud, *Pierre Klossowski* (Paris: Seuil, 1990).

48 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §479.

49 For Klossowski's theory of the stereotype, see 'On the Use of Stereotypes

and the Censure Exercised by Classical Syntax', in 'Protase et apodose', 15–20.

50 Pierre Klossowski, 'Description, Argumentation, Narrative', in *Decadence of the Nude*, trans. Paul and Catherine Petit (London: Black Dog, 2002), 125–39: 129. See also R 103: 'No content of experience can ever be communicated except through the conceptual ruts that the code of everyday signs has hollowed out in minds; and conversely, the code of everyday signs censures every content of experience.'

51 Klossowski, 'Protase et Apodose', 16–19.

52 Virgile, *L'Énéide*, trad. Pierre Klossowski (Paris: Gallimard, 1964). In his introduction, Klossowski explains that, in the *Aeneid*, 'it is the voluntary juxtaposition of words that constitutes the physiognomy of each verse … The poem itself is a theater in which the words mime the gestures and states of the soul of the characters … It is the *words* that have an attitude, not the body; it is the words that are woven, not the clothing; that shine, and not the armor; that rumble, and not the storm; that threaten, and not Juno; that laugh, and not Venus; that bleed, and not the wounds … Beyond grammatical intelligibility, but by following its cadence, we can thereby descend into the shadows and rise at the dawn of the fable, a place where we can no longer tell if it is the gods who create the fervor of our souls or if it is an irresistible desire that takes on a divine physiognomy …' (xi–xii). Klossowski seems to have been following the translation technique advocated by Rudolf Pannwitz, as cited in Walter Benjamin's famous essay 'The Task of the Translator' in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 81: 'The basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue.' Benjamin himself, we might note, pointed to the 'enormous danger' of such an approach: 'the gates of a language thus expanded and modified may slam shut and enclose the translator with silence' (81).

53 Roger Caillois, 'Roger Caillois dénonce 'Le Baphomet' pour cause de style' ('Roger Caillois Denounces "The Baphomet" on the Grounds of Style'), in *Le Monde* 19 June 1965, 14. For an analysis of *The Baphomet* and Caillois's critiques, see Ian James, 'Evaluating Klossowski's Le Baphomet', in *Diacritics* 35/1 (Spring 2005): 119–35.

54 Klossowski, *Robert Ce Soir and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, 7: 'Some think there is solecism in gesture too, whenever by a nod of the head or a movement of the hand one utters the opposite of what the

voice is saying.' We are indebted to Deleuze's analyses of solecism in Klossowski, in 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language', 282–7.

55   No biography of Klossowski yet exists, but the catalog *Pierre Klossowski*, ed. Anthony Spira and Sarah Wilson (London: Hatje Cantz, 2006), contains a thoroughly researched and detailed 'Chronology' of Klossowski's life (133–64). For the events surrounding Klossowski's religious crisis, see 141–3.

56   For Klossowski's explicit critiques of the Christian church, see Pierre Klossowski, 'Reponse de Pierre Klossowski a Yves de Gibon' (1974), in *Europe: Revue litteraire mensuelle* 1034–5 (June–July 2015), 154–6: 'One of my complaints about the church is its moral behavior, by which I mean its revolt against the erotic wave. This stems from its refusal to recognize that religious belief is inseparable from Eros … Erotic manifestations are inseparable from the religious sentiment. Animality is the root of the religious' (154–5).

57   For Klossowski's interpretation of Hamann, which we here leave to the side, see his introduction to J. G. Hamann, *Les Méditations bibliques de Hamann*, trans. Pierre Klossowski (Paris: Minuit, 1948), which was subsequently published as a separate essay in *Les Écrivains célèbres* (Geneva: Mazenod, 1957), 238–41, and then as a separate book, *Le Mage du Nord* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1988). It was in this text that Klossowski first developed the themes of the incommunicability of the impulses and their expression in simulacra, though without using these terms. 'It is not so much that Hamann's writings have a style than that *their substance is found entirely in their style*. In everything that came from Hamann's pen, his personality is so insistent and predominant that the reader experiences it far more than the content, strictly speaking' (*Méditations bibliques*, 31).

58   Tertullian, '*Du sommeil, des songes et de la mort*, précédé d'une "Note sur le Traité *De l'âme* de Tertullien"', in *La Licorne* (Winter 1948), 103–8 (a translation of Chapters 43–7 and 52–3 of *De Anima*). The translation was reprinted in 1999 (Paris: Gallimard, Le Promeneur) with a new introduction by Jean-François Courtier, which replaced Klossowski's 'Note.'

59   Suétone, *Vie des douze César*, trad. Pierre Klossowski (Paris: Club français du livre, 1959).

60   Virgile, *L'Énéide*, trad. Pierre Klossowski (Paris: Gallimard, 1964).

61   Castenet, *The Pantomine of Spirits*, xx.

62   Augustine, *City of God*, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin,

2003), Book VI, §9, 247: 'In the whole of this careful examination [of Varro's *Antiquitates rerum humanarum et divinarum*], he never mentions or names any gods from whom eternal life is to be asked; and it is, strictly speaking, for the sake of *eternal life* alone that we are Christians.'

63 Augustine, *City of God*, Book VI, §4: 'From Varro's account it emerges that "human matters" preceded "divine matters" among the pagans … Divine matters were established by men: "the painter exists before the picture, the builder before the building; similarly, human communities precede their institutions" '… Here he [Varro] plainly admits that "divine matters" are of human institution, like pictures and buildings, but his account of what he calls "divine affairs" is a collection of frivolous fantasies' (232–3).

64 The classic analysis of the concept of the fetish is William Pietz's trilogy of articles entitled 'The Problem of the Fetish', in *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* (Part 1, Vol. 9, Spring 1985, 5–17; Part 2, Vol. 13, Spring 1987, 23–45; Part 3, Vol. 16, Autumn 1988, 105–24). For a contemporary interpretation, see Bruno Latour's important *On the Modern Cult of the Factish Gods* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010).

65 Bernard Lamarche-Vadel, *Klossowski: L'énoncé dénoncé* (Paris: Marval, Collection Galerie Beaubourg, 1998).

66 Augustine, *City of God*, Book VI, §5, 234.

67 Ibid., Book VI, §8, 243.

68 Pierre Klossowski, *Origines cultuelles et mythiques d'un certain comportement des Dames romaines* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1968). The word translated as 'sacred' in the English title [*cultuelles*] literally means 'cultic'.

69 For an excellent analysis of Klossowski's use of *theologia theatrica*, see Jung Eui-Jin, *Une Étude critique de la théologie théâtrale de Pierre Klossowski, Du point de vue de la poétique historique*, doctoral thesis, 2006, University of Paris 8, under the direction of Gérard Dessons.

70 Augustine, *City of God*, Book VI, §5, 234.

71 Ibid., Book VI, §10, 249.

72 WR 133. Klossowski frequently appeals to Tertullian's *De Spectaculis* [*On the Spectacles*], written between 197 and 202 AD, which examines the consequences of Christians attending the circus, theatre or amphitheatre ('the pleasures of public shows'). Spectacles such as the Liberalia, the Consualia, the Equiria and the Bacchanalia are pagan shows that 'always

lead to spiritual agitation', subjecting the attendees to strong excitements and passionate desire.

73 Augustine, *City of God*, Book VI, §7, 241.

74 The etymology of the term 'religion' is notoriously obscure, however. Cicero derived it from *relegere* ('to go through again', i.e., in reading or speech), though the derivation from *religare* can be traced back through Augustine to Lucretius. See Sarah F. Hoyt, 'The Etymology of Religion', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 32.2 (1912): 126–9.

75 See Pierre Klossowski, *Roberte et Gulliver* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1987), and the discussion in Castenet, *The Pantomime of Spirits*, 167–172.

76 Augustine, *City of God*, Book VIII, §24, 334, citing a surviving text from the Ascleipus: *Hermetica: The Greek 'Corpus Hermeticum' and the Latin 'Asclepius' in a New English Translation, with Notes and Introduction*, ed. Brian P. Copenhaver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 90. See R 95.

77 Curiously, Klossowski does not attempt to revive the concept of the angel in the same way he retrieves the concept of the demon. For one attempt to do so, see Michel Serres, *Angels: A Modern Myth* (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), which interprets angels as modes of communication.

78 R 95. Portions of this article were incorporated into the essay 'Du Simulacre' ['On the Simulacrum'] in TV 141–5.

79 See Jean-Paul Madou, *Démons et simulacres dans l'œuvre de Pierre Klossowski* (Paris: Méridiens Klincksiek, 1987), 49. Madou's book is one of the best studies of Klossowski's theological trajectory.

80 R 96–7. It is this demonic capacity of metamorphosis (the power of the Same) that Michel Foucault analysed in his essay 'The Prose of Actaeon' (see footnote 9).

81 See SDD 119–20n.: 'What we call theogony is nothing other than a necessary participation in the explications of being in divine physiognomies.'

82 See Friedrich Nietzsche, 'How the "True World" Finally Became a Fable: The History of an Error', in *The Twilight of the Idols* [1888], in *The Portable Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954), 485–6.

83 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Fourth Part, 'Retired', in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 373.

84 SDD 121. See Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Third Part, 'On Apostates', 2, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, 294.

85 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), First Essay, §10–13. *Ressentiment* is the French word for 'resentment' or 'bitterness' (against the pain and suffering of life), but is also derived from the verb *ressentir*, 'to feel or suffer the effects of something', implying that those whose dominant impulse is *ressentiment* can feel but not act.

86 SDD 8–10. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), §341.

87 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, §1038.

88 Deleuze, 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language', in *Logic of Sense*, 292.

89 Ibid., 293.

90 Ibid., 294. For an analysis of these five themes, albeit from a literary point of view, see Daniel W. Smith, '"A Life of Pure Immanence": Deleuze's *Critique et clinique* Project', in Daniel W. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 189–221.

91 Deleuze, 'Klossowski, or Bodies-Language', in *Logic of Sense*, 297.

92 The exception is the sixth chapter of *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, 'The Vicious Circle as a Selective Doctrine' (NVC 121–71), which anticipates several analyses in *Living Currency*.

93 Arnaud, *Pierre Klossowski*, 190.

94 LC 30, 68; Klossowski, 'Protase et Apodose', 13.

95 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 63, 346. Deleuze and Guattari use the term 'desire' as a shorthand to indicate the life of the impulses, and they follow Kant in defining desire as having the capacity to produce its own object ('a faculty which by means of its representations is the cause of the actuality of the objects of those representations').

96 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 29, translation modified. Deleuze and Guattari note that this question was first formulated explicitly by Spinoza in the preface to his *Theological-Political Treatise*, trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1981), 3.

97 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 30: 'If there is such a thing as two sorts of group fantasy, it is because two different readings of this identity are possible, depending upon whether the desiring-machines are regarded from the point of view of the great gregarious masses that they form, or whether social machines are considered from the

point of view of the elementary forces of desire that serve as a basis for them.'

98 Walter Benjamin, 'L'œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa reproduction méchanisée', trans. Pierre Klossowski, in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, Jahrgang V [*Journal of Social Research*, Vol. 5] (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1936), 40–68. English translation: 'The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproduction', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), 217–52. Klossowski later recalled that Benjamin was not satisfied with his French translation: 'Benjamin, estimating my first version to be too loose, had begun to retranslate it with me. The result of this was a perfectly unreadable text due to the fact that it copied exactly certain poor German expressions for which Benjamin accepted no transposition. French syntax often literally gave cramps to this unwavering logician.' Cited in Pierre Klossowski, 'Letter on Walter Benjamin', trans. Christian Hite, in *Parrhesia* 19 (2014): 14–21. For Klossowski's relation to Benjamin, see Hollier, ed., *The College of Sociology*, 219 and Paul Foss-Heimlich, 'Sade and Fourier and Klossowski and Benjamin' in this volume.

99 Richard von Krafft-Ebing, *Psychopathia Sexualis: eine Klinisch-Forensische Studie* [*Sexual Psychopathy: A Clinical-Forensic Study*] (Stuttgart: Verlag von Ferdinand Enke, 1886). To my knowledge, Klossowski never explicitly refers to Krafft-Ebing. For a historical and conceptual analysis of the origins of the concepts of sexual instinct and perversion, see Arnold I. Davidson, 'Closing up the Corpses', in *The Emergence of Sexuality: Historical Epistemology and the Formation of Concepts* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 1–29.

100 Pierre Klossowski, 'Sade et Fourier', in *Topique: Revue freudienne*, 4–5 (October–November 1970), 79–98. One might note that Roland Barthes' article 'Vivre avec Fourier' was published at the same time in *Critique* 281 (October 1970): 789–812, and was later incorporated into Barthes's book *Sade, Fourier, Loyola* [1971], trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976).

101 Saint-Simon, Owen and Fourier had become recognized as a utopian trinity by the 1830s, and Marx and Engels dubbed them 'utopian socialists' in order to differentiate their own position of 'scientific socialism'. See Friedrich Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* [1880] (New York: International, 1972). Fourier himself, however, did not consider himself to be a utopian thinker; indeed, he used the term negatively to characterize his adversaries, which included the followers of Saint-Simon and Owen.

102 Charles Fourier, *Oeuvres Complètes de Charles Fourier*, Vol. 7, *Le Nouveau Monde Amoureux*, ed., with notes and introduction, by Simone-Debout-Oleszkiewicz (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1967). In the years that followed, several anthologies of Fourier's work appeared in English; among these, *The Utopian Vision of Charles Fourier: Selected Texts on Work, Love, and Passionate Attraction*, ed. and trans. Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvenu (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971) contains extensive selections from *The New Amorous World*.

103 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Random House, 1970), chapter 8, 'Labor, Life, Language', 250–302.

104 For a detailed assessment of *Le nouveau monde amoureux*, see Jonathan Beecher, 'Parody and Liberation in *The New Amorous World* of Charles Fourier', in *History Workshop Journal* 20.1 (1985): 125–33. An expanded version of this article appears as Chapter 15 of Jonathan Beecher, *Charles Fourier: The Visionary and His World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), which is the definitive English-language biography of Fourier.