

When they had ceased to understand this, the bourgeois were self-conscious at least in their pride at owning wealth. Today self-consciousness no longer means anything but reflection on the ego as embarrassment, as realization of impotence: knowing that one is nothing.

In many people it is already an impertinence to say 'I'.

The splinter in your eye is the best magnifying-glass.

The basest person is capable of perceiving the weaknesses of the greatest, the most stupid, the errors in the thought of the most intelligent.

The first and only principle of sexual ethics: the accuser is always in the wrong.

The whole is the false.¹

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- *Pro domo nostra.* – When during the last war, – which like all others, seems peaceful in comparison to its successor – the symphony orchestras of many countries had their vociferous mouths stopped, Stravinsky wrote the *Histoire du Soldat* for a sparse, shock-maimed chamber ensemble. It turned out to be his best score, the only convincing surrealist manifesto, its convulsive, dreamlike compulsion imparting to music an inkling of negative truth. The pre-condition of the piece was poverty: it dismantled official culture so drastically because, denied access to the latter's material goods, it also escaped the ostentation that is inimical to culture. There is here a pointer for intellectual production after the present war, which has left behind in Europe a measure of destruction undreamt of by even the voids in that music. Progress and barbarism are today so matted together in mass culture that only barbaric asceticism towards the latter, and towards progress in technical means, could restore an unbarbaric condition. No work of art, no thought, has a chance of survival, unless it bear within it repudiation of false riches and high-class

1. Inversion of Hegel's famous dictum: *Das Wahre ist das Ganze* – the whole is the true (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, p. 24; *The Phenomenology of Mind*, p. 81).

production, of colour films and television, millionaire's magazines and Toscanini. The older media, not designed for mass-production, take on a new timeliness: that of exemption and of improvisation. They alone could outflank the united front of trusts and technology. In a world where books have long lost all likeness to books, the real book can no longer be one. If the invention of the printing press inaugurated the bourgeois era, the time is at hand for its repeal by the mimeograph, the only fitting, the unobtrusive means of dissemination.

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Cat out of the bag. – Even solidarity, the most honourable mode of conduct of socialism, is sick. Solidarity was once intended to make the talk of brotherhood real, by lifting it out of generality, where it was an ideology, and reserving it for the particular, the Party, as the sole representative in an antagonistic world of generality. It was manifested by groups of people who together put their lives at stake, counting their own concerns as less important in face of a tangible possibility, so that, without being possessed by an abstract idea, but also without individual hope, they were ready to sacrifice themselves for each other. The prerequisites for this waiving of self-preservation were knowledge and freedom of decision: if they are lacking, blind particular interest immediately reasserts itself. In the course of time, however, solidarity has turned into confidence that the Party has a thousand eyes, into enrolment in workers' battalions – long since promoted into uniform – as the stronger side, into swimming with the tide of history. Any temporary security gained in this way is paid for by permanent fear, by toadying, manoeuvring and ventriloquism: the strength that might have been used to test the enemy's weakness is wasted in anticipating the whims of one's own leaders, who inspire more inner trembling than the old enemy; for one knows dimly that in the end the leaders on both sides will come to terms on the backs of those yoked beneath them. A reflection of this is discernible between individuals. Anyone who, by the stereotypes operative today, is categorized in advance as progressive, without having signed the imaginary declaration that seems to unite the true believers – who recognize each other by something imponderable in gesture and language, a kind of bluffly