

BIBLIOTHÈQUE ANARCHISTE

ORDER

through

Anarchy

I call just laws
those laws that are inevitable.

BY

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FORWARD

There is a form of servitude that we wish to avoid. Indiscernible habits too often govern human actions and, without our knowledge, guide us according to errors whose long expiation history recounts. Humanity has become more complex as it has unfolded; memories that could disappear now disguise its eternal purity.

The unscathed man is nowhere to be found; around us, man is alive, living the life he has already lived. The past continues in the present and prepares the future. History chains us; we are the slaves of our fathers, obliged to repeat their frequent tendencies. The successive moralities demanded by circumstances prevent our spontaneity, hinder our normal expression, the one in which our reality could be fully realized.

Now, we want a future truly free from the past; we want a simply present society, a society where our entire humanity can move freely without encountering too many cumbersome corpses. Psychology, more or less internal, historical observation, statistics entangle me in lies; atavism, which is not irremediable, weighs with all its weight on the various human manifestations of which these things are the account.

Abstraction is therefore necessary; — the abstraction of contingencies too provisional to contribute to eternal morality, to the definitive society. We must seek elsewhere than in life a pivot-point to escape from life, for this life is perhaps not sincere. To build the future with the present, with the materials gathered in the abnormal society that oppresses us, is to prolong the past, to eternalize misfortune.

However, we will not depart from reality; our society will not be an ideal perched on a dream, inspired by a fragile moment swept away by incessant progress. One fact will remain our starting point, but an undeniable fact, impervious to all criticism: the fact of our Strength, our Force, without any other attribute whose certainty we could not verify.

We are forces that seek to expand; all of our humanity is thus summarized, and also eternal humanity, that which was, that which will be. We do not disdain the other facts whose countless complexity is expressed around us; but, for the construction of social morality, for the rule of human conduct, we wish to disregard in these facts their contingent element, the simple, non-inherent form, which is therefore of no use for our consideration. Any given fact always reveals human strength; expansion is at the root of the diverse appetites in which the empirical sociologist too often goes astray; the laws of force, the laws of expansion, therefore govern any given fact, the universal appetite. To study human

mechanics, without concern for the particular theorems whose realization history has witnessed; to seek humanity at its source, before the deviations its course may have undergone; such is the first condition of sociology, and perhaps the whole of sociology. The rest is indefinable, at the mercy of circumstances, of individuals; the rest is optional society.

And the framework alone will remain unshakable, beneath, supporting all individuals, witnessing the most diverse circumstances; it will be the eternal center from which the rays will emanate, at the call of events, but always directed, eternally connected to the definitive morality, to the universal synthesis!

Order Through Anarchy

Faced with a Present burdened by the Past, Anarchy, relying on simple evidence, denies the authority of man over man and affirms the exclusive sovereignty of the Self over the Self.

The Will manifests individuality; all particular wills that emerge from the human mass can only be reduced to a single, supposedly unifying will through Force. Anarchy is the return to mutual and natural independence. It is not disorder, for these wills are guided by the identical Being from which they proceed; but the order it establishes is spontaneously willed by individuals, the human Substance imposes upon it healthy liberty, and not the capricious will of a few.

I

A centuries-old distrust prevents its emergence and sustains, alone, the heavy edifice of the governmental institution.

Man fears man; individuals fear each other and organize themselves to protect themselves from one another. My enemy is you; I have painstakingly developed an entire Penal Code, a whole body of civil laws against the violence and bad faith of which I believe you capable. Society — the current one, the one that centuries have perpetuated in practice — is eminently unsociable; it directs its wrath against the other, the neighbor; it is man that it seems to fear, and this fortress with which it protects the individual is above all a prison!

Thus, men hinder each other unnecessarily; their spontaneity is hampered by the prescriptions of all kinds that they must respect; laws accumulate, stemming from the same anxiety, overburdening human action, emasculating energies, delaying progress, free development into the unknown.

The common enemy is almost forgotten: Nature, which should be utilized. Man expends himself on this mutual surveillance; too often hatred sterilizes his activity; he is preoccupied with surpassing the other, with arriving faster and all alone. He fears sharing and jealously isolates himself from his fellow men.

If, however, some conquest is achieved from which all of humanity can rejoice, if the common heritage has sometimes been increased, it is indirectly, and despite *social* law. The invention belongs strictly to the apparent inventor;

discoveries always have to be remade; men progress in stages without helping each other; evolution is never immediately complete, but carries individuals along successively.

Society allows — almost recommends — exclusive use; if a new process appears to me, a more favorable outlet for my activity, my current interest is to carefully reserve the possibility of it for myself. It is better, for me, to be the only rich person; universal productivity would bother me; the well-being of all would be the relative poverty of each, and no one wants that. Deep down, even the most unfortunate person virtually approves of this paradoxical organization; what he now despises, he will adore if the variable circumstances that create the accidental hierarchy shift to the point of placing him at the very top of the ladder that crushes him.

Thus, inequalities are accentuated; each person seeks only for their own benefit and, first and foremost, paralyzes the actions of others, whose competition they fear. Progress is a rat race; it is achieved in defiance of equality. Everyone strives to escape the community; the network of social laws is violently stretched in the direction of a few more skillful individuals, and compression results elsewhere, from which others suffer. Man repels man, and if an individual rises, he always triumphs over the inevitable victims of his glory.

This is the fact revealed by the most superficial observation, and also confirmed by an in-depth study of current economic conditions. Usable values, the means of living and enjoying life, are bought from men; it is therefore essential that the seller's needs be considerable, that the seller be unhappy, so that the buyer can obtain them more cheaply. Man is reduced to living off man; he profits from the losses of his fellow men; the weakness of one constitutes the entire strength of the other.

The exclusive cult of the Self — moreover, variously disguised — was certainly at the distant origin of this complex organization. Egoism is responsible for all social ills and, therefore, also for vices.

But the error of this egoism was to see an inevitable obstacle in the egoism of others. The Self was frightened by other Selves, and immediately set about reducing their means; it oppressed so as not to be oppressed, took the initiative for fear of being overtaken.

Now this opposition was never inevitable. Selection within the species is not the most radical expression of the great universal fact: Being wants to be, Life wants to live, and Being persists, Life continues until the moment of sufficient resistance that stops it and forces it to take a detour. The path of least resistance is the true fundamental law.

The enemy is the weak. Woe to the one who is too feeble, whose obstacle can be overcome; they will certainly be crushed by the irresistible expansion of life in its combined force. The law of the Universe is against them. Man does not escape this essential necessity; he marches inexorably forward, struggles with all his might against the surrounding resistances... but not necessarily against other men.

And never again..., at least not in the future, and almost not even in the present. For individuals are increasingly approaching equality. Their animal nature distinguished them for a long time. One ox might have sharper horns; one horse an iron hoof; one lion a more formidable jaw; human muscles long exhibited — and still do today — differences that could justify conflict. But these distinctions are gradually fading under the identity of the true human instrument: intellectual ability. This ability is not yet equally realized; geniuses, though rare, and mere talents, still surpass the rest of humanity; but the awareness of sufficient possibilities is increasingly penetrating all individuals. An intellectual capital has been amassed, whose inevitable diffusion will soon allow for equal activity. Some will always be higher, inaccessible to the crowd; but their exceptional nature will hardly contradict the rule. In any case, their abnormal faculties will generally be exercised in spheres too superior to hinder any other activity. They will not be a weapon against their neighbor and will most often contribute to the advancement of all. The collective, moreover, will always be able to contain and counterbalance their excessive influence, their possible oppression.

Machines are the principal means of this approximate equality. They serve any individual indiscriminately. The rifle is a weapon available to everyone, and two rifles are very nearly equivalent... Individual skill is a differentiating element that becomes less and less significant as the weapon improves, almost rendering personal intervention unnecessary.

The same applies to beasts of burden, the jack and other devices from which the weakest can derive the same benefit as the strongest. Tomorrow, machines will completely dispense with the individual; an initial impetus will suffice, one that will not exceed anyone's capabilities.

Thus, science lowers itself to the level of the least intelligent minds, raising the weak to the dignity of the strong, leveling humanity. The struggle against man will soon appear a useless expense; defense being as vigorous as attack, the two efforts would neutralize each other without profit. Man will struggle to live, but his life will no longer cost the lives of others, until the still improbable moment when usable resources remain strictly limited, forcing the sacrifice of a certain number of desires.

The numerous inequalities that we observe in the current social order are already without serious justification. History has transmitted them to the present, and the situation perpetuates itself because it exists, moreover consolidated by our long-standing acquiescence. We have willingly accepted these superiorities that crush us; we ourselves have hoisted onto our shoulders these authorities that now weigh so heavily, almost intolerably; they are strong because of our patience, because of the surrender, for their benefit, of a part of ourselves. Let us refuse our complicity, and they will collapse, lowering their few arrogant peaks to our level, which will be immediately elevated.

Man was not wrong to fear; authoritarian society was the sincere expression of an era; it prevented a real danger. Antagonism was probable between individuals, so scattered at the beginning, and with such different capabilities. Man was formidable to man; society, by organizing individuals, paralyzed this potential enmity. Man consented to domination in order not to suffer it; he accepted a leader in order not to suffer a master; he became a subject for fear of being a slave.

Society, moreover, was a means of struggle; it greatly aided in the primitive victories. Isolated man was still too weak; his effort, lost in the Universe, was crushed between the gigantic resistances he encountered. Hostile matter remained too often unyielding, barely affected by all individual action.

Then man encountered man, and recognized himself in the other. The alliance was entirely natural; the physical resemblance, the only one initially apparent, revealed similar needs and therefore led to the same intention. Man joined forces with other men; his fellow man was his first conquest, and humanity, now united, set out all the stronger against the opposing forces of Nature.

Not strong enough, however, not as strong as it could have been!

As soon as a few individuals gathered together, an authority, a government, began to take shape, pooling forces for effective resistance. But, after the immediate satisfaction of the most pressing needs, man neglected his other enemies, whose constant defeat would have meant progress. Man, above all, preoccupied him; his means, intellectual or otherwise, were almost entirely wasted on organizations that could satisfy current ambitions, fleeting whims, but which collapsed the next day in the painful convulsions of a revolution. And Sisyphus rolled his rock uphill again! The arduous game began anew, preparing new disappointments, exhausting all human energy.

It was a question of conquering all of Nature; again and again, to advance humanity; instead, it was man alone that man sought to dominate; it was his fellow man that man tried to crush. And to annihilate the individual, to protect

the collective from a few momentarily stronger personalities, all remedies were tried, often proving worse than the disease. Prophets succeeded one another; brutal legislators imposed their will; others, more dangerous, expounded their daydreams, adapting social difficulties to their sometimes sincere, but too often seductive, illusions. Politics was born, unduly monopolizing attention, and also human intelligence.

Thus, for centuries, man played at government, like a child playing soldier; happy with each new combination; soon tired, then overwhelmed, and thrown far back into the past, when inevitable progress violently clashed with the limits within which he had stupidly confined himself.

Society was not an end in itself, but a means; the individual was paramount, it was he who struggled, and for himself. The social state was merely a better fighting stance, a more convenient weapon, reducing the necessary effort. The benefit is undeniable; Since the initial barbarity, history has recounted almost exclusively the progress made. By limiting activities, authority imposed an artificial equality, defending the weak against the strong.

Today, weapons are already a cumbersome burden; tomorrow they will be dangerous. For natural equality is establishing itself; the individual protects himself, and he is almost sufficient to counter any potential antagonism; he would already be strong enough if the hierarchies of the past did not perpetuate deceptive distinctions, if a flawed organization did not allow for a social inequality disproportionate to the few real differences that may persist.

The State, guardian of the individual, is becoming increasingly obsolete. Society can continue to offer other advantages. A new force for progress can emerge, a force that we have not yet been able to appreciate, because the social intention has been merely defensive. Society has remained a system of mutual insurance; it must become an organization of reciprocal assistance, or it will disappear like a cumbersome superfluity — a painful memory of a vanished past and a condemned present.

Men are striving for equality of means; their tendency is clearly defined, if not yet realized. Order exists virtually; our false society prevents it — as does a false inspiration. It is on the eternal that the eternal must be founded, instead of accidental sensibility too often being the rule of law. Deep within every individual are definitive tendencies, which a solid unity binds together in the universality of the human mass. Let the will express them simply but exclusively, determined by their sole reality, and Order will flourish spontaneously on the surface of a liberated humanity.

II

Every contingent reality presupposes certain determinations, which are *laws*. To deny all laws is to proclaim the absolute, to affirm the unknowable!

Man, therefore, does not escape all necessities. The Self is limited by superior forces; it cannot exceed its potential, and this potential depends both on the Self and the environment. Hunger, thirst, some illness, are oppressions that man must obviously endure; he must obey these inevitable authorities, and the individual's independence stops at least there.

There are thus laws that we are unaware of because they constitute us, because the directions they imprint on our individual being are our form, our condition. These laws do not emanate from any particular will; they do not impose themselves on our power to restrict it, but are, on the contrary, the very expression of this power, the measure of our necessary action. They cannot hinder, for they cannot surprise; they are accepted — necessarily — since the beginning of humanity, and their eternal predictability spares us unpleasant clashes.

We know that we will die if a certain accident befalls us; we know that certain energies stored in our being are necessarily expressed in one way or another; we know — or could know — all the requirements of our individual being. These requirements do not need an imperative formula; a code that would prescribe death when the physiological conditions are met would be, to say the least, ridiculously useless. Necessity dispenses with our approval.

Such laws obviously escape our control; they dominate our lives and govern every moment. There is a relationship of compelling causality between a certain situation and a certain act; the act will inevitably result from the situation. Whether metaphysics admits or denies liberty, it is never a matter of whim. The free man is always guided by rational laws — by the awareness of their necessity; — unless hindered by ignorance or social constraints. He will always act soundly, according to his inner being, if he knows and if he is able... if accidental sensations do not overwhelm him and if a false governmental system does not hinder this sincere expansion.

Thus, there are laws that constitute us, much more than they obligate us, which are *us* and not an obstacle to our individuality. These laws are respected and, moreover, necessarily so. These necessities that confine us are our own limits; we cannot exceed them, act against them. We consent to them, as we consent to breathing the air around us! Rebellion, here, is impossible; it would be absurd, because it would signify rebellion against oneself, the hypocritical denial of one's Being.

Can these laws, which no one has established, contribute to social order?

If humanity were merely a juxtaposition of chance, the fortuitous encounter, in space, of dispersed elements from so many origins; if a single trunk did not solidly unite the scattered branches that intertwine in present-day society..., convention, prior agreement, would obviously be the only way to organize the community. Mutual concessions alone would allow for unity — the abstraction of all particular differences. An arbitrary social contract would be necessary and would truly establish the order of this artificial association.

Now, *humanity* is a reality. It is not willed by men; it first imposes itself on their consent. Impulsive sympathy is not a mistake; even before it united men, we had always suffered the same great sufferings and trembled with the same emotions.

Physically, our common characteristics have allowed science to precisely define the human species and to formulate its definitive unity.

Morally, the same great motives have always and everywhere stirred the human mass. Man has remained at the mercy of the same feelings, whose expression may have been modified by individual upbringing, but which even the least attentive observer can recognize as identical, despite the deceptive appearances. A common language has always been possible, and there is none in the current diversity that a foreigner cannot penetrate to its very soul, resonating with all the pulsations that are those of the people who created it.

Intellectually above all, Reason has never lost its universal dominion. It remains the supreme recourse to which all peoples can attain; its unity dominates our multiplicity, which it synthesizes. It rises, inaccessible to ambient influences, the last refuge of eternal human identity.

The laws of any individual — the essential laws — are therefore the laws of humanity; the law of society is deep within us; to know the definitive conditions of our Being is to know the definitive form of society; to obey its reality, to be what one is, is to act according to other human realities, it is to be fundamentally sociable.

However, not all individual laws are those of society. If identity encompassed the whole man, if the same unity, indefinitely and very precisely repeated, constituted all of humanity, particular wills would coincide absolutely and in all their deviations. The law, the whim of one, would immediately express the law, the whim of the other; monarchy would be the government of all.

Now, we differ; the individual isolates himself in the crowd; the Self never gets lost in the other Selves that surround it; *personality* distinguishes fundamentally identical units.

The first glance of man is enough to tear him away from the homogeneous mass where he cannot be absolutely confused; it is only by penetrating more deeply, below the acquired superficiality, that humanity, that is to say, identity appears.

For a long time parallel, the tendencies that make man diverge at a given moment; the diverse circumstances of the environment modify its direction, precisely at the point of contact where they interact with this environment... at the limit of man, on the surface.

Two elements compose the normal man; two elements that sociology must take into account. Below the *individual* is the *man*; and the same *man* supports all *individuals*. A definitive element is present in our artificial evolutions; something within us persists despite the centuries, and traverses space to repeat itself in all peoples; but something changes, and peoples appear within humanity.

The environment in which we live has gradually influenced our native constitution; a layer of alluvium has been deposited, which time can carry away, which circumstances can modify. We differ by this added, and not definitive, element; under the pressure of the environment, our individuals have emerged from the common identity, and each of us has isolated themselves in a form that distinguished their appearance from all others.

But humanity — the human minimum, the irreducible anxieties, the profound determinants, the essential components of the species — has resisted this differentiation; its identity has been perpetuated; it is still traceable — and easily so — at the core of the individual.

Now, the legislator is a man, and also an individual. His act can express the eternal human aspiration, or the variable element that complicates it. Positive law can thus formulate the inevitable laws or simply the will arising from circumstances that will disappear tomorrow, unknown elsewhere.

It can only be a useless superimposition on the eternal law or a dangerous complication of the conditions that constitute us. The legislator repeats Nature or he hinders it.

Why repeat natural laws, and reinforce their formidable imperative with a ridiculous human sanction? Our consent matters little to them; they confine us unknowingly, or against our will.

Why add to these natural laws and collaborate in the divine work of fate? Your particular will, determined by circumstances I am unaware of, can only conflict with my own. Do not impose your individuality upon me; my individuality has the same right to exist; your law would clash painfully with it. The circumstances surrounding me also dictate certain actions; let me act according to my environment, adapting myself to the demands of my surroundings; do the same on your side, but for yourself alone and without striving for an impossible assimilation.

We are both identical and diverse; pre-existing laws govern our identity and safeguard our *human minimum*; the surplus, the element of differentiation, can only belong to each of us individually. If a so-called law arises alongside these, dictated by the temporary power of a majority, resistance immediately becomes legitimate, because it becomes possible.

Why this law? Because you want it! Why do you want it? Because your current feelings make it desirable to you! But what if my feelings don't accept it? And what about your own feelings — the very ones that determine you — you who guarantees their persistence? What assures you that, in a moment, your feelings having changed, this law will not seem too burdensome and unjustified to you?

One of two things must be true: either you have found the reason for it in your humanity, in the element common to all of us, which constitutes the unity of our species; in that case, your endorsement was not necessary, this law bound me before your formulation; I obey, but to myself.

Or, on the contrary, it is your *individual* self that must be held responsible, that is to say, what makes *you* distinct from *me*, the superficial and variable element; in that case, the law usurps its universal character, it is abusively applied to me, your current power is its only justification; — you are my enemy, and you will soon be your own enemy, when the temporary attitude of your individual self is modified.

Thus, let each person act according to their own being, and be their own sole authority. Our action is always a result; it is not the absurd emanation of Nothingness, a reality always lies beneath it, determining and justifying it. Our action is a response to the demands of the outside world, a reaction, an adaptation to the environment; the response will be accurate, the reaction sufficient, if the demands of the outside world remain *sincere*, if an artificial law, an arbitrary supplement of obligation, does not come to disrupt the balance.

A law desired by me, by us the majority, by all of us unanimously, a law that we would immobilize through an act of will, that we would project into the future to govern future actions, would certainly be an embarrassment, an

obstacle to our inevitable progress. Tomorrow, we will act to satisfy the demands that may arise; if these demands are new, we will act differently than today, and this law desired today, according to our current actions, will inevitably be our enemy.

Thus, no more human laws, generalizing the individual, eternalizing the elusive moment; let us refrain from predicting the future or from directing anyone other than ourselves. Let us act for ourselves alone and for the present. The future will come, with its new laws, which those of the previous day might contradict. The law is within us, let us not externalize it; it would be immobile outside of us, without the Life that carries us along; our evolution would no longer carry it along, modified with us, always appropriate; it would remain, soon lagging behind our fleeting present, — soon, then, dangerous.

Let us live, let us move forward, and our law with us; everything that is not within us is against us. The Code is an anchor to which we have imprudently attached our individual selves of a single day; it holds us back now, prevents progress. Let us cut the cable and, immediately setting off again, we will soon no longer perceive, far, far in the past, the contingent laws in which we had pretended to confine Life.

Before inaccessible perfection, humanity passes through progressive phases whose memory slows down its progress by perpetuating the past; let us erase our laws, we will obey them if they remain necessary, we will no longer be hindered by them if they become arbitrary.

Any law that each individual would not find within himself, that would not be the pure deduction of his integral reality — moreover, modified by the environment; — any other law than his personal indications would be abusively imposed upon him. Rebellion against it would always be permitted, because Force can always be met with Force...

III

Thus our method becomes clearer: Human identity has varied through contact with diverse Nature; the environment has provoked reactions that could not transcend the fundamental possibilities of eternal man, but which molded him differently. Man adapted to circumstances, but he remained man while becoming an individual. We are identical and diverse, eternal and temporary. Legislation, the science of human laws, will therefore be identical and diverse, eternal and temporary, deductive and inductive.

Deductive first of all, and perhaps exclusively so.

The law expresses the necessities of Being; it is therefore common or particular, according to its principle. From the common reality where our individuals converge, arises the common law, the irrevocable morality in which Being is definitively enclosed and to which it obeys without departing from Anarchy — for Anarchy cannot be impossible independence, the unrealizable absolute.

Individuals constructed according to the accidents that shaped identical humanity — the diverse peoples, the defined eras — will also have their laws, but exclusively personal ones, deduced from their particular tendencies and a determined environment, limited, therefore, to these tendencies, to this environment.

Society, the one that respects all of reality, is therefore imperative and optional; it is both an order and a counsel. It is constituted first of all by universal laws that no man can ever transgress without contradicting himself; but it is completed by individual indications that cannot be generalized without abuse. On the definitive basis of a morality deduced from our evident essence, the sociologist arranges the social edifice according to the centuries, according to the groups; he attempts the integral and harmonious utilization of individual forces, their perfect adaptation to the environment. He knows the eternal possibilities of humanity, the eternal limit, the inflexible morality; it remains for him to know the current conditions of Nature in contact; this double consideration will sufficiently indicate the organization.

Thus, the prior search is for the common law, the deduction of definitive humanity. The man always dominates the individual; in any case, he precedes him and persists at the heart of successive appearances. Similarly, morality must dominate sociology and found the society that aspires to eternity — or at least, to universal consent. This morality resides in every man, therefore in me... but in the man whose accidental characteristics are abstracted, in universally

adaptable, not yet adapted man. The rules of particular adaptation must be inspired by it, as well as by the environment; they depend in part on eternal laws, just as the individual depends on the man to whom he is added.

For our deduction, we want an irreducible basis, a starting point prior to all certainty. We will therefore descend to the ultimate reality; indisputable intuition will ascertain the undemonstrable, and imperturbable Reason, bound to Truth, will continue the explanation.

Now, the most immediate of certainties, that which nothing precedes and which supports all science, is the very affirmation of our activity. We feel ourselves acting at every moment of our consciousness, and, as a result, resistances appear around us, hindering us. Man is a force in conflict; the affirmation is unshakable, intuition imposes it upon us, and every progress of the various sciences confirms it. Two principles oppose each other in the Universe: the Self and the non-Self, man and Nature.

Human satisfaction is essentially reduced to victory over the non-human, to the extension of man despite Nature. Man is a compressed force; his happiness lies in surpassing the limits that oppress him, in expanding his being, in overflowing around him. The great eternal struggle has no other purpose. Man, little by little, is conquering the Universe, that is to say, he is assimilating it; the forces of Nature are successively subjugated and compelled to serve human purposes. Man is augmented by Nature, he uses it against itself, overcoming its resistance daily, appropriating and humanizing matter, however stubbornly rebellious it may be.

This is the evidence; this is the truth.

Our vanity has not found this sufficient. Man did not want to be lost in the totality of the universe; he asked ingenious metaphysical systems to endow human power with a dignity that would distinguish it from the common mass. His desire soon convinced him of an inherent superiority that elevated him far above the countless forces intertwined around him.

The illusion was easy for primitive egoism. Man discovered rights for himself; and immediately, their proud enumeration was placed beyond all question.

They were proclaimed self-evident; and anyone who dared even to reinforce them with a demonstration they didn't need would already be committing sacrilege. There is no doubt about the *rights of man*; they exist, and one bows before them, under penalty of the most cynical immorality.

And, for centuries, science and social practice have striven to realize this sacred formula, with, moreover, a variety of means that should have at least cast doubt on its supposed precision.

If this affirmation of our greatness had no serious drawbacks, we could leave this innocent toy in the hands of those whom it still delights. Unfortunately, the social ambiguities from which we suffer have no other pretext. This prejudice hinders sociology; it underlies all the errors into which economists, and governments following them, fall. The illusion, however sweet it may be, is a little too expensive at this price.

First, it burdens us with an unfounded morality that stifles human spontaneity and overwhelms us with debilitating anxieties.

Moreover, and above all, it is an illusion; provisional by its very nature, subject to a more or less fleeting sensibility. A starting point for such a confused determination, taking refuge in the obscure mists of consciousness, does not compel deduction to the rigorous path of truth; all detours become possible; the *right* can be perceived at the origin of almost any action. And in fact, there is not a single institution that does not invoke the *rights of man*. Every government claims to realize them and calls itself their protector.

This elasticity leads to their condemnation. Society needs a more solid foundation, one where all men can find common ground. The harmony of humanity cannot be tuned to the uncertain pitch of a faith that weakens and changes according to individuals. Another foundation is necessary, upon which the definitive society, and also the universal society, can be built; another certainty must guide sociological deduction, one that no one can ever contest, that remains unshakable in time and space, among all peoples of the present, in all possible generations of the future!

We possess this certainty. Man is a system of forces in a more or less unstable equilibrium. From where could law have been introduced, and what could it signify?... Forces are distinguished by their quantity; any other hierarchy would be illegitimate, and, moreover, inconceivable... We observe human force and the forces around it; this is the certain fact; the rest is merely a hypothesis, too easily accepted by our arrogant childishness...

Thus, no right; we exist because we can; nothing connects us to being except our power. Whether a greater force strikes and crushes us, or whether our force, on the contrary, surpasses that of the weaker ones — the fact remains absolutely the same, the slightest distinction is truly unjustifiable.

No duty either; at least, not in the sense understood by most moralists.

Force is a radiating center; all directions are equally legitimate, provided that my force expands, my energy develops. Moral consciousness can only be a habit of force; the directions it forbids me are those that my force has long ignored. And, indeed, morality varies according to peoples and centuries; its prohibitions therefore do not stem from an internal principle, immanent in all individuals, but from an adaptation to the environment, so different in the varied Universe. An immoral act is reduced to an unusual act, whose surprise alone frightens the conscience.

Man remembers the successive states in which humanity has rested. The countless accidents accumulated throughout history compelled reactions whose traces now complicate the unity of the Self, and sometimes even appear inherent to it. Man has never been anything but a force — a bundle of multiple components; all his needs are included in his being; they are the immediate consequence of this Force, which is moreover modulated as is evident in the Self.

Eternal morality is therefore deduced without going outside the Self; external occurrences, added memories, are the provisional element that its eternity cannot accommodate. The Self — the Being within the Self — is the absolutely certain legislator; Anarchy refuses to accept any other.

Thus, force is the common element of the Universe; the ultimate condition of the human being, as well as of any being whatsoever. In Force, all realities converge; it is the ultimate substance, the seat of all specifications; it is therefore to force that we must look for the laws of human action in the dialectic of universal conquest.

The social question is nothing more than a problem of mechanics; the only laws of Being to which we are subject are the laws of Force. These laws escape the whims of interpretation; they persist beyond contingent sensibility, impersonal like their object. They stand, definitive, above individuals, obliging any Self as they oblige the universal Force.

They are the supreme and inevitable authority. Before them, one must bow, and one does bow, because they are inherent in us, because we obey only ourselves by respecting them.

And yet, they do not entirely bind us! Let a wretch crushed by necessities rashly defied, rise to some ideal and find in his ideal the justification for the violation he is expiating; nothing forbids him from rising up and cursing this

merciless law, the only one, however, that governs the Universe and limits human action.

Thought can go beyond and transcend the irremediable fate that confines us. Man retains the right to glimpse something better; the Being that compels his action does not command his admiration. Humanity, bowed under the merciless embrace, can conceive of a more perfect order and disapprove of the present Nature that leads it to inevitable misfortune.

It can, at least, weep without guilt — and forever!

IV

The Self is a Force, subject to the laws of Force.

Now, Force immediately leads to action. To be is to act. An inert force would be inconceivable; activity is inevitable, constitutes the entirety of Force, of which it is, moreover, the sole aspect.

The imperious logic of our Being therefore imposes action upon us, that is to say, expansion, for to act is to strive to develop one's Being in space.

Expansion thus becomes a necessity; only the most effective action satisfies the implacable demand of our reality. A true duty arises towards ourselves; the only one that sincere analysis reveals. We *must* develop ourselves as efficiently as possible; for we will necessarily develop ourselves, and the most evident logic commands us to reduce those obstacles against which we would be condemned to exhaust ourselves.

If I set down two plus two, I must conclude that it is four; similarly, if I exist, I must act, unless there is a contradiction, an absurd conflict with my reality. No evident obligation subordinates man to an external authority; but man is bound to his being, and cannot fail in the *obligation to act* without betraying his nature.

Above or alongside this duty, no other can take its place; all the obligations that will constitute the social order can have no other origin. Reason alone — the intuition of our profound conditions — commands faith here. The necessity of utmost effort is a justified duty, logically demonstrated; before it alone we bow our liberties, and only that society will be respectable which is not complicated by any other requirement.

But the whole man must converge towards action. Now, man is a free and intelligent force. Force, in the Self, is completed by these two attributes. Man can *know*, he can *choose* and *wait*; here again, intuition grounds our conviction, it compensates for the impossible demonstration.

The attributes serve the Being they modify; intelligence and liberty are added to strength in man; they are therefore means of human strength, subordinate to the same end, carried along by the same destiny. Action always remains the law — but the intelligent action that freedom allows. Intelligence fails, liberty contradicts its essence, if they do not contribute to this necessity of the Being they affect.

Intelligence must illuminate the path of Action, and liberty must guide man along it. Man must perform the most effective action; he can know it, therefore

he must seek it among the possibilities; he can also choose it, therefore he must perform it alone, despite the pressure of circumstances.

What is this action, and how is it to be performed? That is the whole social problem.

Thus, the deduction unfolds in the clear light of evidence. Duty results from the most immediate certainty, without any suspect intervention.

If I exist — and I cannot doubt it — my reality, contemplated by my Reason, dictates the most effective action possible; I cannot refuse without contradicting far more than a merely receptive sensibility, at the mercy of all influences; far more than a will clinging to a present and fragile desire... but Reason itself, which imposes its laws, Reason which clearly observes the conditions of Being and formulates them, as certain as any reality.

This morality therefore rises above contingencies, even the most respectable ones; it transcends the relative solidity of the most universally human sentiments; an eternal evidence supports it, which anchors it, far beyond caprice, undeniable and definitive, necessarily applicable and, moreover, spontaneously applied.

Only that which is necessary is obligatory. The normal action of the Being is moral because it is logical, in conformity with reality. The Being continues itself in action, which means that inaction would be annihilation. It unfolds quite naturally amidst the resistances; it struggles with all its reality against opposing realities; all its attributes point in the same direction, and any human intention, free from any acquired preoccupations, is merely the confirmation of this unanimous tendency.

Immorality is nothing more than illogic; it is the Being obligating itself. Duty is deduced from reality, not from a questionable authority; it is simply the awareness of our necessities, the free acceptance of our destiny.

Duty brings us closer to the ideal, it facilitates the inevitable, it aids in our true achievements. We will always act, no matter what; let us therefore act as effectively as the knowledge of our circumstances allows; necessary progress will be faster, the long road of our evolution will be traversed more quickly, and we will thus avoid the fatigue imposed upon us by the eternal struggle, the painful oppression of opposing Nature.

V

The first intellectually imposed step, the first duty of anarchic morality, is obviously *negative association*, respect for human activities whose direction may intersect with my own.

Men easily recognize the approximate equality of their strength. The brute force of one individual hardly surpasses that of any other; in any case, we have seen this equivalence established thanks to the rational instrument that all men can enjoy equally.

My expansion is possible — permitted — in all directions; I can therefore clash with my neighbor if the resistance is currently weaker on his side; he is a value offered, which I have the right to choose, I can do so. The struggle would therefore be legitimate, nothing would oblige me to respect my fellow man..., if intelligent Reason did not intervene!...

Now, it does intervene, and orders abstention.

My neighbor is my fellow man; he can therefore resist me, he can even attack me. His potential is not inferior to mine; our resources are the same, as is the desire to live that will put them to work...; he can therefore do as much as I can, or nearly so, the difference is generally imperceptible. What I might gain from him, he might gain from me; our two *rights*, our two possibilities — *destroy one another!*

I understand my true interest; the struggle would oblige me to resist; a part of my energies would be unnecessarily immobilized, reprisals would be to be feared, oppression to be dreaded, and precisely equivalent to the eventual benefit of my act of violence.

I necessarily understand this; my intelligence therefore concludes in favor of neutrality. I abstain from harming others, so as to be spared myself; I avoid a useless struggle, a gain that I would have to repay. We agree to respect each other mutually; we agree to this, without any possible hesitation, determined immediately by the most compelling common sense.

Thus, a contract is at the origin of society, and alone establishes the right to existence, a right that is, moreover, entirely relative. I could only contract with those like myself; the rest of nature therefore retains the *right* to annihilate me; I cannot protest against the falling tile that crushes me; neither intelligence nor liberty could protect me from its force. But man, my equal, *must* respect me, because he *must* immediately understand the futility of mutual opposition. In the name of this law of expansion that governs his freedom, he must turn away

from me and seek elsewhere, because he must know that my strength is capable of repelling him. He is foolish, he denies his Reason, he denies himself, if this resolution does not result, irrefutably, from his clear intelligence. It is a logical necessity, which becomes a true moral obligation.

Without leaving itself, the Self finds itself bound to the non-Self; intelligent egoism already leads to respect for one's fellow man; tolerance of neighboring activities is the first indication of Reason. From the conflict into which universal forces rush, human life emerges, intangible, limiting, at least, the formidable possibilities of man. The environment partially disarms; man refrains from harming man, and reduces by one enemy the hostile mass that resists human Need...

A contract has previously been entered into, but a contract whose terms are in no way arbitrary and are definitively deduced from the clearest evidence: to act upon one's Self, to act effectively, therefore, to respect the foreign Self that would certainly resist to the point of rendering the effort of expansion useless.

Logic dictates it, that is to say, immutable reality; and its order persists, imperious in Time as in Space. Today and tomorrow, here and elsewhere, man must turn away from man and conquer other spaces with his insatiable strength. Logic is eternal; as long as humanity exists, the *Contract of Tolerance* must remain, binding all liberties, because it binds all intelligences...

But not everything in the man is necessarily respectable. The man is not an irrevocably fixed quantity; he searches around himself to grow; his Self is augmented by the non-Self, he assimilates, more or less, the natural values he can attain. Thus men separate; they diverge from the same starting point, and strive, in isolation, for incessant expansion, for indefinite appropriation... The force within them condemns them to progress, which they achieve differently, and according to the circumstances in which each finds himself involved. The contract of Tolerance cannot protect the individual entirely, after these conquests that have particularized him... The equality of individual forces was the sole foundation of this first duty; men can and must disarm each other reciprocally, because they are *fellows*. Similarity is the link between the premises and our conclusion. By it alone, association becomes a rigorous law that the Self imposes on the Self, and that Anarchy accepts.

Now, the consequence cannot exceed the cause; the social obligation therefore stops where similarity stops. Men should only associate their common part..., *their desire to live, their power to live*... The law is limited to the single fact on which it depends.

Beyond that, everything remains in dispute. Particular conquests are not yet guaranteed; the individuals who emerge from the mass may be of unequal persistence; their humanity has benefited differently from the surrounding Nature, from the values within their reach. Some are now stronger; in the possible conflict, they still have a chance of victory, the sacrifice of which cannot yet be demanded without imposing it, for the stronger Self, intelligently egoistic, would never consent to it.

Men have common needs that they bring with them at birth; and particular needs with which habit and arbitrary progress may have burdened them. It appears to be evident wisdom to consent to the mutual respect of these common needs; but, once this universal average is reached, man is still not satisfied. The needs arising from circumstances, and just as real as the others, remain unmet and demand their turn. Unless we attempt the impossible leveling, the complete assimilation of individuals; unless we undo the work of centuries by returning, along the path of the past, to primitive identity, we must take these demands into account and obey the requirements of the Present.

Now, these requirements are no longer in harmony, and the force at the service of my particular appetites may very well exceed that at the disposal of yours. If my strength chooses to invade the space that yours occupies, who will prevent me?

Here, identity is no longer self-evident; reciprocity cannot be deduced with the certainty of a duty. It seems that activities can be exercised freely and in all directions, human life being, moreover, supposedly protected.

Man is forbidden to harm man, but only the essential man, the common ground that individualities transcend... Everyone has the *right* to eat, to satisfy the fundamental needs of their being, and no one can surpass others before all of humanity has been raised to this *minimum*. Up to this point, logic pronounces its judgment without appeal, and morality follows suit. The bread of all is secure; no particular conquest is *moral* if it prevents this essential satisfaction; but the struggle is merely postponed, it will resume the day after universal equilibrium is achieved. Dry bread is no longer enough for the complex *man* of such an imperious *individual*; humanity, now unleashed, will therefore rush to conquer the superfluous.

VI

In the freely available space, appetites will rush in. Each *Self* is the center of an activity sufficiently distinct from the others; each will therefore fight for its own sake, initially ignoring neighboring activities, then respecting them to a certain extent, when Reason has dictated it, but retaining, beyond that, its selfish direction, and appropriating as much of the resources within its reach as possible...

Soon, the emancipated individuals will overflow, on all sides, the level of common satisfactions that appease humanity; inequality appears with it, and probable conflict. Some, faster or favored by circumstances, will quickly outpace the others, and diminish the usable resources of Nature through the excessive satisfaction of their exaggerated Selves...

Today, in fact, they occupy the space; the abusive extension of their Selves hinders the possibilities of the majority, who languish in cramped conditions in the overcrowded Universe...

What to do?...

Current society forbids the revolt of the oppressed. It sanctions the encroachment of a few, and now stops competition. The unconsciousness of troubled ages favored this usurpation. No one protested; no one, at least, could sustain their protest... The absurd consent of the crowd accepted private property, whose sole and pious safeguarding preoccupied centuries of humanity...

This very absurdity, moreover, constituted the entire strength of the institution. Man vaguely suspected the illogical nature of such a solution; Property did not initially appear to him as the necessary consequence of an inevitable situation; a confused question arose, to which nothing provided an answer. But the insolence of the fact disconcerted the timid intelligence of our ancestors. Faced with such a brutal, and almost universal, reality, man did not dare to deny it. The void in which property was isolated became a mystery; man did not understand, he simply *believed*; divine right supplanted insufficient human law. Property, so firmly established, could not have sprung from nothing; it therefore came from God; and religions, successively involved, acknowledged — and proclaimed — this crime of their divinities. Man worshipped property, as savages worship stones fallen from the sky; the proprietor was the divine representative, personally invested; only a God could justify the injustice of his exceptional position; and feudalism, absolute sovereignty over men and things, was merely the frank expression, the fatal exaggeration of the principle.

Modern criticism is more demanding; suffering, moreover, has awakened awareness and directed attention. The dispossessed of the current system are looking more closely at these merciless rights that are being used against them; they look... and see nothing; they cast aside the sacred veils where the idol hid its fragility, and the suspect God is annihilated in the cruelty, impossible for Supreme Justice.

Another obstacle is needed against exacerbated appetites; need only stops in the face of the inevitable, and the vague references of the old social morality are no longer sufficient for the impetuous demands of the present. Property totters on the metaphysical foundations that so long supported it. It abdicates its divine pretensions and now asks Reason for that justification which the blind adherence of faith had dispensed with.

If the proprietor argues, he is lost; his abuse exceeds human capabilities; a God is needed to support this Atlas!

Now, Reason refuses to be that God...

I possess and you have nothing; but you could have done what I did; men are equal, their possibilities are equivalent, or nearly so... You did nothing, while I worked; we are paid according to our merits.

The reasoning is unassailable; but it destroys the very property it claims to be establishing!

Certainly, force, — work in some form or another, — is at the origin of Property; you have what I could have had, if I had made the very effort that earned it for you... But the situation hasn't changed; nothing has intervened in the meantime, so I can still have what you have... You have wrested from rebellious nature the values you enjoy; my right will be worth yours if, in turn, I wrest them from you despite your resistance. Provisional force cannot establish eternal right; only the fact results from it, which remains at the mercy of force...

Anarchist morality — Reason — commands me, it is true, to respect you; it forbids me from fighting... but only with my fellow man, with the human element in you, the element as necessary to your humanity as to mine. I can dispute the surplus with you... A contract that my Reason accepts safeguards your minimum; it guarantees your life by guaranteeing mine; and with your life, the necessary means, what you need so as not to fall from humanity, everything that your normal appetites require; — beyond that, nothing stops me anymore, and I can go to the limits of my strength without exceeding my right!

By consecrating the definitive right of the first or strongest occupant, modern sociology has refused to see the ultimate contradiction of its institution; property, born of Force, suddenly found itself immobilized, by virtue of some

unknown investiture; it became forever inaccessible to force, and the mere will of an accidental possessor could henceforth legitimize its transmission!

Why?... Reason, frankly consulted, remained silent. You have it, why shouldn't I have what you have? You took it from somewhere, anywhere, why shouldn't I take it from your pocket?

Reason has not answered. The defenders of the present order have found nothing in the fertile resources of sound logic to support the fragile edifice of current property rights, and Force has remained the sole true dispenser of this right, stripped of the morality that so long gave it the illusion of legitimacy.

Thus, no more sacred property. Everything belongs to everyone, or more precisely, to the one who takes it. The law of expansion justifies your possession; but this same law will justify my invasion. If our two *Selves* clash, the effort of mine will be no less moral than the resistance of yours.

No more property! It is not theft since there is no owner; but it is not yet a *Right*, since Reason does not compel us to consent to it. Why should I stop at the limits of your individuality? Why, if victory is possible, should I force myself to seek elsewhere the fruits so easily gathered in your garden?

Everything belongs to everyone, that is to say, to no one. I choose from what is around me; you pass within reach of my appetites..., defend yourself if you wish to preserve your advantages.

Thus, the struggle becomes an inescapable fate; everyone can take and retake, and, except for the life of one's neighbor, everything is at everyone's disposal. The safeguarding of human life does not sufficiently reassure humanity; war always threatens; it breaks out if the individual exceeds their minimum, if they venture for an instant beyond the only limits that the social contract has protected *until now*.

VII

But instability results from this, and its numerous drawbacks are evident. Only continuous effort allows for progress, and man's incessant striving for exclusive ownership, which he must then defend against latecomers, involves an expenditure of energy that prevents or slows down beneficial advancement. The future is built on the present; a solid foundation is necessary for the development of human activity.

The disorder is not yet too considerable; age-old laws supported by tradition systematize this race for property to some degree. An artificial order delays the upheaval. But enlightenment is dawning, Reason is dispelling prejudices and soon, evidence will lead the Revolution, sweeping away the absurd claims respected by popular ignorance. Tomorrow, everything will collapse, and no faith will cling any longer to private property, carried away in the debacle...

Then, no one will venture beyond the borders where man is safe; no one will want, from now on, to attempt a conquest whose profit would be snatched away the very day after the victory, when the fatigue of the pursuit would leave the victor defenseless against the greed of his neighbor.

Why make the greater effort of the first attack? Why exhaust oneself against untouched and too well-armed Nature? Everyone will wait for their neighbor to begin, before rushing in after them; all of humanity will wait, weighed down by the present, forever immobilized by the mediocre pleasures that prevent death without allowing life.

This will be Order in inertia!...

Now, Anarchy claims to achieve Order in activity!....

Let us recall the fundamental problem: to encourage the expansion, the growth of each individual; consequently, to reduce the resistances that oppose it.

Man is a particularly formidable enemy to man, and it is important to avoid his dangerous hostility. It is him, above all, who needs to be convinced; the consent of humanity is indispensable to individual progress. Reason alone is qualified to give this consent, universally and definitively, despite the unruly wills that would disregard their true needs. Reason understands the necessity of Order; it will compel sound liberty to attempt its realization. The right to existence has already been recognized and enshrined; but it is insufficient for the inevitable development of individuals.

If a contract is possible that avoids irremediable antagonism while guaranteeing to each individual their achievements, this contract, immediately accepted as the best means of Order, will thereby become the social law, the definitive charter of humanity...

The current organization of property would have been this means, if a truly equitable distribution had been achievable. The distribution of values would have to be the same throughout all of space, and that of present-day humanity, definitive for all time. These two identities could be reconciled; each person would receive a share representing the *maximum* of their possible achievements. Without this distribution, they could have acquired more, had they been accidentally stronger; but the same accident could have made them weaker; the average would therefore be acceptable, it should be accepted, short of an immoral absurdity; and humanity, thus endowed, would perpetuate itself without legitimate war, each at ease in their isolated sphere, all individuals enhanced, but always equal and always refraining from a useless struggle in which they would certainly neutralize each other.

Now, the irreducible diversity of places, the incessant emergence of new human unities, prevents this definitive transaction. Only it could have stabilized individual possession and ensured to each the limits of their activity; only it could have constituted private property. It is impossible, therefore, there is no more property; only the fact remains, which no incontestable authority can legitimize...

Something else, something better, is needed. The fortunate ones may be countless, those who are content with the Present... But from the depths of their being, Reason will soon amplify their voices with its power, and the timid complaint of a single individual, rising above the tumult of insolent complacency, will effortlessly scatter to the four winds of the spirit the elusive principles of cruel prejudice.

Now, these complaints are numerous; they loudly proclaim the social inadequacy of private property, whose fatal exaggeration is the source of all the suffering of the present time.

Let us look elsewhere, and quickly. Time is of the essence, crises follow one another, becoming more and more frequent, in which the breathless people violently express their suffering. Moreover, the malaise is permanent; catastrophe is at the mercy of a slightly too sharp wound, of a very probable incident in this universal state of anxiety.

Social relations are at extreme tension; it is essential to examine the system, to recognize and eliminate the principle of divergence that creates the growing antagonism between individuals necessarily in contact for the common conquest of bread!

The evil will indicate the remedy!...

VIII

The intention of any human act is obviously nourishment, the assimilation of one or another of the components of man. We eat; we love; we think; the stomach, the heart, the brain, are the three attractive centers through which the being is augmented, the three fundamental needs whose efforts summarize all human activity.

Now, assimilation presupposes several elements; the augmented being is a whole, a simple juxtaposition of the values that have allowed its growth. The nourishment of the Self is a supplement to its being, which it draws from somewhere, outside of itself.

A man labors; he increases his being with a fruit that his intervention extracts from the hidden riches of the soil. This increase therefore does not result solely from his own effort; Nature has contributed to it. If the man has gone to meet the fruit, nature has certainly done half the work. Labor is not absolutely creative; nature collaborates in the human effort. Man, it is true, appropriates it, he puts a little of himself into his *product*, but Nature puts even more of itself into it...

If this man were alone, he would have no claims to fear. But beside him, many others labor and would like to increase their being; conflict must be prevented...

This man takes nothing from others; he stays at home if he is content with the share of the fruit representing only his own effort.

One can even admit the inexhaustible productivity of Nature, which would allow the appropriation of the entire fruit. Fertile Nature is at the disposal of all; it remains the eternal ally, always used, always usable. My harvest bothers no one; it represents my personal effort multiplied by the perpetual coefficient of Nature. Up to this point, property does not hinder any activity; the values appropriated by each person are always within the reach of others. Everyone can always have as much; equality is not compromised; Men remain equal — therefore, mutually respectable. No one would lose from a contract that consecrated this appropriation; on the contrary, everyone could gain the security of their own activity. It is therefore rational — obligatory — to consent to it. My neighbor finds himself whole again after my harvest; and, around him, the Universe has not changed.

However, it would have changed if the harvester claimed to forbid, forever, the field where he harvests, and to reserve it definitively for his exclusive exploitation. Fertility may be unlimited, but not fertile space; to diminish it is to

restrict human potential! Definitive ownership is therefore an obvious usurpation; it provokes conflict, and even initiates struggle. The owner infringes upon my potential activity; he prevents me from choosing directions favorable to my action, he thus constrains this action which is nevertheless my law — the only one! — the fundamental requirement of my being. The owner is the aggressor; he leaves his home, he encroaches on others, he forces legitimate self-defense.

Where can I walk on a ground bristling with barriers? How can I develop within the increasingly narrow limits in which I am confined?

Yet, I must walk; immobility would be death, the negation of my essence. I therefore march against the enemy, at the risk of crushing my weakness against the all too solid ramparts of human selfishness.

Woe to this society where violence becomes necessary, where inevitable theft rises to the dignity of the most imperative virtues! Revolution is at its gates, and a revolution without end, always renewed from its ashes, until the final catastrophe, universal ruin, without justice, under an exasperated curse.

We suffer from this society, and it claims to be definitive! It believes that it can live with death, however imminent it may be — imminent since the very first day, which it has so far avoided only thanks to distractions that make one forget and illusions that sometimes make one love.

The Revolution is inevitable; it will be moral, as long as the usurpation persists, as long as it remains the only way to live, the only outlet for inevitable desires... as long as some prevent and complicate with new obstacles the natural difficulties that man already has so much trouble overcoming.

Plunder is not a society. Order will only return with Anarchy, the inviolable law to which everyone adheres, as to their own necessity.

Property is reasonably admissible, it must be admitted, until the moment it hinders the activity of others. No duty confines humanity, but self-interest dictates respect for one's neighbor; the similarity persists — and so does the obligation — whatever the use of human force; — the fruit that represents this force is therefore respectable.

Indivisibility must begin for the rest. If man borrows from the limited resources of Nature, if he increases his strength with a force acquired from outside, he will for a moment rise above others and be able to conquer them; but his conquest, this possible oppression, will remain temporary like the accident that allowed it. In my turn, I will soon be the strongest, and I will take my revenge...

The profession of landowner, already so difficult, will become much more so, as the prejudices that still surround this questionable right disappear. Universal indivisibility, the free and peaceful disposition of natural wealth, will sufficiently compensate me for this exclusive possession that is always threatened by the so legitimate envy of my neighbor... I prefer — I must prefer — this solution whose obvious advantage compels my Reason. I violate the law of expansion, I resist my destiny in vain, if my free being does not choose this intelligent means of expansion.

Therefore, let the current holders keep the fruits, but let them return the principal. There will always be fruits springing forth from human effort, but the resources could never suffice for all desires.

Let this indivisible resource be made immobile, and let it remain, entirely for all, without any particular allocation. Not everyone can possess it individually; therefore, all will possess it collectively. In this space, now free and unburdened by property, each person will be able to develop and act for their greatest good; and no reason will persist — not even a pretext — that could legitimize a complaint.

Nature may prove stingy, and full satisfaction will not be immediate; but for the coming struggle, humanity will have one less enemy...

However, the long experience of the centuries, and also the most reliable psychology, demonstrate the near necessity of localized and continuous cultivation.

A certain acclimatization is indispensable for good production, a thorough knowledge of the resources of one's land, which only assiduous familiarity can provide. Nature has preferences; it does not accommodate all demands indifferently; one must know it, and above all, ask of it what it most readily gives.

Moreover, if all space were perpetually available, conflicts would always be to be feared. Certain places, certain resources, appearing more favorable, would be overwhelmed with desires; and only war would decide between the competitors whom no particular right would arm!

Besides, man needs support; he is hardly sufficient unto himself in his solitude; the environment completes him, often even envelops him like a caress necessary to his sensitivity. In the harsh and relentless struggle, the distressed heart clings to all pretexts; it rests for a moment in the familiar contours of the habitual landscape; nature interests it, and seems to respond to this instinctive affection. The mountain has seen the father; it watches the son bent over the same soil where every step reveals the father's effort. The house witnesses both

sorrow and joy; it eventually comes to share in them... It is the setting where the family feels at ease; it endures, preserving in its nooks and crannies the memory and traces of those who are no longer with us. It is the eternal symbol, the link between the past and the present; its immobility provides reassurance amidst human transience.

Man always finds himself in friendly nature; with it, he fearlessly engages in the obscure future that each day renews.

Therefore, possession must be stabilized. I keep the land that suits me, but I return to society the exact equivalent of the loss it suffers because of me. My appropriation deprives humanity of a possibility that I must compensate them for. I am definitively the owner, subject to a perpetual annuity. I take nothing away from others, since I immediately restore the value whose use I deny them.

Because of the obvious advantages of *localization*, the community agrees to guarantee it, whenever no one will suffer from it; and no one suffers if I pay others for the faculty of which they are deprived.

Thus, individuals can choose and harmonize with the environment that suits their tastes. The owner is no longer eternally a prisoner of his land; he can change if new aptitudes emerge that would find better use elsewhere. A son is no longer condemned to inherit his father's legacy; vocations can now be pursued; everyone can try according to their inclinations, provided, of course, that they account to society for the capital whose exclusive use they request. Precise adaptation becomes possible; and efforts thus appropriately directed are all the more effective.

The incapable or inactive can no longer be the sole beneficiaries of a situation that would compensate for their powerlessness. No one works for them, not even nature, which works only for all; and only their own product remains theirs, after they have paid society the rent they currently use for their exclusive maintenance.

The solution is the same for everyone, regardless of the form in which they manifest themselves. Capital is, essentially, an active principle; it aids in production, but its productivity is inherent in it; it is not simply the transformation of the force that created the capital; there is something more, something that no one could have added: the multiplying power of numbers. 100 is worth more than five times 20; economic experience confirms this every day. The cohesive mass, the united multiplicity, is no longer simply the sum of its components; an element is added, whose calculation is not impossible, and which constitutes the enormous added value of the product, the indefinite extensibility of capital.

The monstrosity realized today is the eternal profit of the capitalist; his capital is indeed accumulated labor, but, however considerable the activity thus crystallized may be, it always remains out of proportion to the profits that will henceforth result from it. The capitalist has labored and preserved his product; let us respect in capital his transformed activity. If he lends us this accumulation to allow us an exploitation that our own forces alone could not accomplish, it will be just — deducible from the rational contract — to return his service to him, but only his service!

Now, the profit generated by capital far exceeds the effort for which the capitalist should be compensated. The reserved values have multiplied on their own; through the sheer power of its concentration, capital contributes very effectively to production. The capitalist will therefore receive his share, the simple remuneration for his previous effort, along with a variable supplement representing insurance against the risk of the capital invested. But the surplus, the tremendous increase, the inherent power resulting from its quantity, will revert to the community, for lack of a responsible claimant. It is logically contradictory, and practically unjust, that a finite quantity — the capitalist's labor — should generate an indefinite value, perpetual interest! The antinomy is irreconcilable if the productivity inherent in capital is not distinguished from the respective contributions of the borrower and the lender. There is a mysterious coefficient here, a naturally fertile force, whose product belongs to everyone, because any particular attribution of it would be abusive and susceptible to usurpation. The capital is successively repaid to the capitalist; it then remains at the disposal of all, working for the masses, offering its contribution to the community without preference, subject, moreover, to personally compensated utilization. It belongs entirely to everyone, unappropriable, unless there are incessant conflicts, shared, therefore, among the different individuals, like the land and all the natural resources with which man can arm his weakness.

Why shouldn't the day come when the forces of Nature, sufficiently harnessed, would spare all human effort and spontaneously provide the satisfactions that man is still obliged to painfully wrest from them? Machines already replace many muscles and thus facilitate the acquisition of wealth. The economy should benefit everyone, for Nature is indifferent to individuals and offers itself indiscriminately to all desires. The day it provides everything for free, no one will be able to take more than others without diminishing their potential share; according to the terms of the social contract, Reason,

preventing conflicts, must favor equal distribution over plunder, where each person could lose as much as they might gain.

Perhaps Nature already suffices for human needs; perhaps the total of its spontaneous contributions would be enough to satisfy the community. In any case, everyone would still be free to increase their share by personally contributing to natural production. Effort would always be rewarded, and society would lose nothing by guaranteeing this benefit. Thus, progress would remain possible: the audacious undertaking of certain activities venturing into the unknown at their own risk. Individuals could still rise above the rest, protected from effective jealousy. For they would never again rise at the expense of the community!

IX

Let's summarize our current conclusions:

The Self appears to us as an isolated center, therefore absolutely autonomous. A few links seem to connect it to the community, but their innate nature is not evident; the history that probably forged them could also break them, so they cannot contribute to eternal morality.

This center reveals itself as active: the Self is a quantity of force that other forces oppose; it therefore only stops at the limits of its power; the only laws that bind it are those that bind the force within it.

Now, force is condemned to incessant action; the Self must therefore act and expand. This force — in the man — is certainly free and intelligent; the expansion will therefore be free and intelligent.

This necessity is our only duty, and all the more imperative because it would still be realized anyway — but more slowly and more painfully — if science did not take heed. We are obliged to act out our entire reality; it is obviously better — since we can! — to avoid overly painful resistances, to choose the least defended path. No other obligation clearly emerges from the obscurity in which consciousness struggles. The same limit is imposed on the Being and on liberty.

The Self will therefore act, but, depending on the circumstances, it will refrain from acting if immediate expansion is merely an illusion.

Illusion! Expansion at the expense of the neighboring Self; therefore, refrain from interfering with the life of one's neighbor.

Illusion! Expansion at the mercy of natural resources; therefore, refrain from certain private property.

In the universal disorder of conflicting forces, human intelligence glimpses the certain means of order; a contract can ensure the benefit of each activity without causing the slightest harm to competing activities; this contract must be immediately subscribed to, by virtue of the law that man accepts by accepting life. Everyone has truly entered into this contract; Reason guides every man; it therefore pre-exists the individual. It has already given its consent for future generations, and only a foolish or capricious will can refuse its adherence.

Following this moral principle, positive law can be enacted without departing from Anarchy. Moreover, it will only have mnemonic value, clarifying the sometimes confused indications of a reason cluttered with sensations or

burdened with memories. The code will be the simple manual of rational life, of the life one would have lived in all sincerity, but whose conscience, thus clearer, will further increase its intensity.

This law is no longer hateful; it is no longer the will of a single person or a fleeting majority; it remains the eternal and unanimous will, the expression of evident necessity, the true divine right. The legislator no longer appears as the odious blasphemer who claims to command his fellow man and to impose his entire individual will on those who are accidentally weaker; he rises or falls to the simple dignity of a passive interpreter, a court clerk of Necessity; he records the Reasonable. The anarchist law is not at anyone's discretion; it implacably formulates the Inevitable. It stems from Reality, which is, moreover, being questioned, just as the fruit results from the tree that nothing can hinder.

No individual is overlooked; everyone has their place in the new city. The space remains open to all; and, if some no longer find the assistance to which an overly indulgent past may have accustomed them, others — the vast majority — will no longer encounter the obstacles that, all too often, rendered their efforts futile. Some will lose something; but precisely what they took from others; and everyone will gain certainty in the present, along with confidence in the future.

Authority, currently at the service of a few selfish interests, will become nothing more than the infallible and respectable guardian of Reason, invested, moreover, with the profound will of humanity. It will protect the Self against the possible errors of sentimentality, and if the criminal persists — now without excuse — he will never suffer any punishment other than that pronounced by his own Reason, in his name, in the name of sound humanity!

Certainly, society is not complete with the contract whose essential terms we have outlined; countless details still need to be considered, a whole edifice remains to be built; but the definitive foundation has been found — natural law, which positive law must respect and simply derive from. Various circumstances will require solutions whose enumeration, necessarily limited, would inevitably be incomplete; therefore, the formula of principles is necessarily abstract; it is only sufficiently comprehensive on this condition. Fundamental morality, solidly based on ultimate reality, thus governs indefinite universality; if the principles are too lofty, if it is necessary to descend to anticipating the successive accidents of moral life, let it always be from their undeniable summit.

As for the difficulties of application, the few who are satisfied with the present believe they find in them the excuse for their selfish inertia. How can we

arrive at the rigorous evaluation of this natural contribution? at the equitable distribution of resources that are the work of no one?

How? Perhaps we do not yet know, but we will know, and we will be able to. Present-day society has accomplished wonders that would have seemed unlikely to our almost immediate ancestors. Taxation does not ignore the meager grain of wheat silently sown in the depths of a remote valley; it knows how to reach even the poor quid of tobacco of the sailor lost on the vast ocean. The new society will be easier to satisfy; we will never ask it for such skill.

Time is another excuse. Why shouldn't we wait? Social conceptions — and especially their realization — are the work of centuries; the past has profoundly imprinted them on each of us, so much so that the instinctive expression of the majority would exactly reproduce present-day society, if the Revolution could wipe the slate clean and annihilate the slightest external traces of the present!

A poor excuse! Man is free. While the past may facilitate the future, it does not dictate it; humanity, even when hurtling down a slope, can always react and climb back up.

Certainly, an effort is necessary, but who would refuse it upon seeing the gaping abyss into which society is about to collapse? Besides, even greater efforts will soon be required to defend—in vain—the ill-gotten gains threatened by immanent justice! Let us spare ourselves the brutalities of a Revolution. Progress is nothing more than a constant shedding of old habits; does this prevent progress? Centuries of ignorance have plunged us into disorder, but they have not been able to imprison free initiative forever.

And if old habits are too slow to break, let the laggards remember that Revolution shortens evolution. 89 quickly forgot the absolute monarchy, though it had been affirmed for centuries, and 93 already considered the king a figure of the distant past. The brutal shock immediately overrides ingrained habits; the imminent catastrophe will awaken dormant energies and accelerate progress; let the laggards remember this, and let them hurry!

X

The explanation is not yet complete. The future is not entirely contained in the certain predictions we have been able to deduce from eternal reality. Anarchy recognizes other laws; it is the result of the inevitable tendencies of humanity.

We have seen the negative society impose itself, which protects man from man, and spares him the formidable hostility of his fellow man. But this diminished state is not yet vanquished; Nature always resists; behind the overcome obstacle, another obstacle arises; need persists beyond any satisfaction; always, a refusal prevents complete human appropriation and irritates our activity. And the struggle will be eternal; the conflict will indefinitely persist, until the improbable reduction to unity, until universal *humanization*, the assimilation of other forces to human force...

Now, the isolated man can hardly overcome the environment that oppresses him; Nature remains merciless, and rarely yields to his insufficient action. Even reassured against the offense of his neighbor, even with guaranteed neutrality, the man, despite all his available resources, is still inferior to the stubborn resistances he would like to overcome. He necessarily struggles, and too often exhausts himself, without result, without conquering the space where his Being can voluptuously expand.

Meanwhile, beside him, others also struggle, and strive against the same obstacle. The same needs guide their efforts; in shared anguish, man encounters the man he no longer has anything to fear from. In fact, indifference is not possible; if men do not repel each other, they attract each other; soon, a shared sympathy envelops them, while a shared fate carries them along.

The individual is not as independent as he appears. An obscure link connects him to humanity, a memory, perhaps, of the primitive identity, where he was entirely one with it. The difficulties of the journey may have divided the human mass; each sought the solution favorable to their weakness; in the painful uncertainty of the early ages, men dispersed, forced into immediate effort that absorbed all their sensitivity. But consciousness gradually emerged, revealing to the man all his possibilities, all his needs; the individual strengthened himself, and, overcoming the obstacle, reassured men find each other again and extend their hands...

The original unity is reconstituted; accidental differences diminish with the circumstances that had caused them; man takes complete possession of Nature; soon his intelligence will have conquered the world, and, in truly free space, individuals will fade away, reintegrating into identity. Individuals go to the

crowd, as rivers go to the sea; for a long time they struggle, and painfully carve out the passage that circumstances allow their strength; then they reach the end, and, in the final peace of the Ocean, the diverse rivers merge. In the very near peace of conquered Nature, diverse men will recreate a single humanity.

In the meantime, alliance is easy; the difficulties are already less pressing, and men, if nothing separates them, can see and love each other. Faced with the common enemy, they can support each other and also organize the struggle.

Let us add that they must! Society is a logical duty. It is one of the means of expansion that intelligence imposes on the Will. It is always Reason — the definitive Self — that commands; the law is always within us, the simply sincere expression of our Being.

What does the historical origin of society, the true principle of human attraction matter? What does it matter that association is the answer to this or that temporary requirement, arising throughout the ages, and perhaps now vanished? Instinct merely confirmed Reason; present-day society was the very imperfect realization of the compelling deductions that an enlightened logic can now perceive. Accidentally dominant wills may have imposed it; they were merely the interpreters — unfaithful ones! — of a truth that their ignorance or caprice had infested with errors...

Anarchy accepts society if it is rational; but it rejects any ancestors whatsoever, the authority of the oldest traditions. Only the present commands the present; only the Self directs the Self. If Reason — my own, which is also yours — answers negatively to the anxious question of my conscience, nothing obliges me to society anymore. I can separate myself, renounce centuries of shared life, and begin my true rational existence anew in isolation.

Now, the most consistent experience, and also the certain conclusions of Mechanics, affirm the considerable added value of combined forces. The addition of efforts is a true multiplication. Coordination becomes possible; nothing is lost in this constant exchange, where the surplus of some can benefit others, where each individual is spared the often painful beginnings...

Man no longer wanders astray in trial and error, which experience now spares him; if a certain effort exceeds a desired result, the remainder is used for the next result!

The most diverse products, even those of chance or error, always find a corresponding need, currently gaping open in such a diverse humanity. The common effort, qualitatively improved, is increased by a formidable coefficient; and the sharing of the social benefit, if equitable, certainly leaves each

individual with a share greater than what their isolated effort would have yielded...

Ordered humanity advances, strong in itself and in its individuals, in the inherent strength of numbers, and in the unitary forces that compose it. Nothing resists it for long; for it knows, and this knowledge further increases its potential; it knows the dispersion of natural forces and the ease of their progressive appropriation... It is one against multiplicity; it can divide to conquer more effectively; and Nature, little by little, bows before rationally guided man. For it is powerless disorder against Order!

Thus, society is obligatory... It is logical, therefore moral. It should be desired if it didn't precede the will; it would be a duty if it weren't already a need. Man is served by this affective tendency; sensitivity here complements rational guidance and thus facilitates the duty of association.

Man walks alone, with no other guide than himself, the profound inspirations of his Being. On the path of progress, he meets his brother, and society begins; it soon flourishes through their simple juxtaposition in space. Society is at the point of convergence of individuals; it realizes itself if each person listens only to themselves and remains unyielding to the distracting solicitations from the outside.

Close your eyes, and you will see your likeness; act for your own good, and the common good will be found to result from your wisely self-interested action; remain within yourself and you will be in all; be selfish, and you will be charitable; be an individual, and you will be society.

Men are striving towards the same goal; let them not be diverted by the accidents of the road, let them frankly, but completely, deduce the Being that compels them, and they will arrive more quickly, and together.

Act according to your own Being, and you will act for humanity; truly act for yourself... you will act for all.

It is Charity that has delayed the world... the clumsy preoccupation with one's neighbor!

A WORKING TRANSLATION,
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