

**Théophile de Giraud**

***The Art of Guillotining Procreators***

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***An Antinatalist Manifesto***

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**Introduction + CHAPTERS I, II, IV, V and VI**

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A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR: This book, of which the introduction and 5 chapters are available in this PDF, was originally written in French and published in 2006, the same year as David Benatar's famous *Better never to have been*, without any influence of one book on the other. Its French title is: *L'art de guillotiner les procréateurs : manifeste anti-nataliste*. This English translation is extremely close to the original French version. Only minor changes were made, and a few new quotes added. The translation of the other chapters will follow. Warm thanks to the admirable AN activists Amanda Sukenick and Andreas Nilssen Möss for their precious help and continuous friendly support. All my gratitude also goes to each person who contributed to the crowdfunding campaign launched by Andreas in order to translate this monograph as well as my friend Karim Akerma's prodigious reference work: *Antinatalismus – Ein Handbuch*. With special thanks to Ronny Reinli, whose generosity was beyond all reasonable hope. Finally, I would like to express my intense respect and sympathy for their AN work or involvement in the AN cause to François Tremblay, Piotr Miron, Karl White, Laura Carroll, Corinne Maier, Roland Jaccard, Michel Tarrier, Laure Noualhat, Philippe Annaba, François Faucon, Emile Berlherm, David Benatar, Les U. Knight, Sarah Perry, Ann Sterzinger, Patricia MacCormack, Jim Crawford, Julio Cabrera, Miguel Steiner, Rafael Tages Melo, Katerina Lochmanova, Frédérique Longrée, Ludmila Finsternis, Sereb YBlues, Chip Smith, Tim Oseckas, K. Kalvall, Lu Lu, Michael Holbek, Eudin Lee, Manuel De Pool, Raphael Samuel, Pratima R K Naik, Laith Malek Reem, Mark J. Maharaj, Dana Wells, Glynos, Matt (Life Sucks), Jasi Kumar, Marcus Dredge, Di Brandy, Irina Uriupina, Terry Grigg, Kevin Pinkerton

and more generally to all those who endeavour to make antinatalism a more widely known and better understood philosophy.

In grateful memory of  
Jiwoon Hwang, Kirk Neville and Ken Coates.

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– whose French version is available here :

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**INTROMISSION**

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- b. The Pain of Life. The Bionomic Decalogue*
- c. The Pain of Death*

**POSITION II: (FLACCID) ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF PROCREATION**

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**INFORMATIVE PILL**

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#### A NOTE ON THE TRANSLATION

With respect to non-sexist language, the choice has been made to generally use *it, its, itself* as gender-neutral pronouns instead of the antinomic “singular” *they, their, them, themselves* or the sometimes hardly readable *s/he, his/her, her/him, himself/herself*. In addition to its simplicity, the main argument for this choice is that *it, its* and *itself* are commonly used to refer to animals. Even if religious minds, believers, mystics, poets, dreamers, escapists and other Pollyannish philosophers do not accept this painful truth, human beings are nothing more than animals, not only from an antispeciesist perspective but also from a mere scientific standpoint, and thus deserve to be grammatically treated as such.

## *Intromission*

The time has come to make the accusation against the true architects of all the misfortunes that day after day excruciate our miserable humanity: the progenitors!

Philosophy has discussed all questions that haunt the human mind, except one: *the ethical validity of Procreation*. No monograph was ever written in order to dissect its purported merits, or to demonstrate its criminal nature. Supreme taboo! Absolute scotomization. As if procreation were our ultimate idol, our terminal illusion, the armoured sanctuary where questioning seems to have no right to be exercised! And yet, behind this strange sacredness of fertility, dwell many perversions that any attentive observer should be able to discover...

This book will therefore have the ambition to help to fill a gap in the history of thought by proposing to the reader a bunch of anti-natalist arguments that, albeit not exhaustive, will at least draw the main lines on which any future debate on the right or not to impose life on an uncreated will have to be based, a life that the uncreated would probably refuse if it knew in advance all its inexpugnable difficulties.

If very few books have ventured to dismantle piece by piece the unhealthy sophistic edifice where the acclaimers of Birth entrench themselves, cohorts of authors, on the other hand, in every age, on all continents, have expressed with endless prolixity striking lamentations about our painful condition!

Countless are, in literature and philosophy, the vigorously pessimistic clamours or scathing protests against having been brought into the world. A few quotes emanating from some of the greatest minds will easily illustrate this assertion.

*This is the lot the gods have spun for wretched mortals, that they should live in pain.*

HOMER, *Iliad*. Greece, 8<sup>th</sup> century BC

*Best of all for mortal beings is never to have been born at all  
Nor ever to have set eyes on the bright light of the sun  
But, since he is born, a man should make  
utmost haste through the gates of Death  
And then repose, the earth piled into a mound round himself.*  
THEOGNIS. Greece, 6<sup>th</sup> century BC

*Birth is suffering, sickness is suffering, old age is suffering, death is suffering; pain, grief, sorrow, lamentation, and despair are suffering. [...] This, O Monks, is the Truth of the Arising of Suffering. It is this thirst or craving which gives rise to rebirth. [...] This, O Monks, is the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering. It is the utter cessation of that craving, the withdrawal from it, the renouncing of it, the rejection of it, liberation from it, non-attachment to it.*  
GAUTAMA BUDDHA, *Four Noble Truths*. India, 6<sup>th</sup> century BC

*Not to be born at all  
Is best, far best that can befall,  
Next best, when born, with least delay  
To trace the backward way.*  
SOPHOCLES, *Oedipus at Colonus*. Greece, 5<sup>th</sup> century BC

*The whole of human life is full of pain, and there is no rest from trouble.*  
EURIPIDES, *Hippolytus*. Greece, 5<sup>th</sup> century BC

~ *The birth of man is at the same time the birth of his sorrow.*  
~ *Life is a loan with which the borrower does but add more dust and dirt to the sum total of existence.*  
~ *In the night, he dreamt that the skull appeared to him and said, "You speak well, Sir; but all you say has reference to the life of mortals, and to mortal troubles. In death there are none of these. Would you like to hear about death?" Chuang Tzu having replied in the affirmative, the skull began: "In death, there is no sovereign above, and no subject below. The workings of the four seasons are unknown. Our existences are bounded only by eternity. The happiness of a king among men cannot exceed that which we enjoy." Chuang Tzu, however, was not convinced, and said, "Were I to prevail upon God to allow your body to be born again, and your bones and flesh to be renewed, so that you could return to your parents, to your wife, and to the friends of your youth, would you be willing?" At this, the skull opened its*

*eyes wide and knitted its brows and said, "How should I cast aside happiness greater than that of a king, and mingle once again in the toils and troubles of mortality?"*

ZHUANGZI (CHUANG TZU). China, 4<sup>th</sup> century BC

*To the one who possesses discernment, everything is suffering.*

PATANJALI, *Yoga Sutras*. India, 2<sup>nd</sup> century

*Nothing is so deceptive, nothing is so treacherous as human life; by Hercules, were it not given to men before they could form an opinion, no one would take it. Not to be born, therefore, is the happiest lot of all, and the nearest thing to this, I imagine, is that we should soon finish our strife here and be restored again to our former rest.*

SENECA, *Consolation to Marcia*. Rome, 1<sup>st</sup> century

*The living being [...] during the state of his life is plunged and saturated in pain. Now the state in which there is no pain is obviously more salutary than the state in which pain exists; death is therefore more salutary to man than life.*

RAZI (RHAZES), *The Spiritual Physick*. Persia, 10<sup>th</sup> century

*~ The stay in this earthly jail inflicts on me, alas, an infinity of evils!*

*~ Living is for me such a long and heavy nuisance that I call for death.*

PETRARCH, *Canzoniere*. Italy, 14<sup>th</sup> century

*~ Ah! Death, the common haven, mankind's comfort,  
Come and bury my ills, I beg you with clasped hands!*

*~ Happy is he who never existed.*

Pierre de RONSARD, *Sonnets*. France, 16<sup>th</sup> century

*Comfort's in heaven; and we are on the earth,  
Where nothing lives but crosses, cares, and grief.*

William SHAKESPEARE, *Richard II*. England, 16<sup>th</sup> century

*My mother bore me maliciously;  
I wish I had never been born!*

Francisco de QUEVEDO, *Pariome adrede mi madre*. Spain, 17<sup>th</sup> century

*Men should be bewailed at their birth and not their death.*

MONTESQUIEU, *Persian Letters*. France, 18<sup>th</sup> century



*~ So Being like a load on me is pressed,  
I long for death, existence I detest.*

*~ Oh! had I never been born!*

J. W. von GOETHE, *Faust*. Germany, 19<sup>th</sup> century

*On one particularly nasty evening, I had the misfortune to be born.*

LERMONTOV, *A Hero of our Time*. Russia, 19<sup>th</sup> century

*After the misfortune of being born, I know none greater than that of giving birth to a human being.*

CHATEAUBRIAND, *Memoirs from Beyond the Grave*. France, 19<sup>th</sup> century

*Life is evil.*

August STRINDBERG, *Coram Populo*. Sweden, 19<sup>th</sup> century

*I've cut away the sun and moon, they pull at me no longer; I've pulverized both Heaven and Earth, and I'm drifting off and away into some unknown endlessness of peace. I am dying [...]. Through death I'm drifting slowly into peace. Only by dying can this divine quiescence be attained. May one rest in peace!*

NATSUME Soseki, *I am a Cat*. Japan, 20<sup>th</sup> century

*The dream, the only dream is to have not been born.*

André BRETON, *The Immaculate Conception*. France, 20<sup>th</sup> century

Needless to insist, we could multiply by tens of thousands these accusatory grievances – that should, in an ideal world, make every baby maker feel guilty, ashamed and remorseful... For a more extensive sample, the reader is invited to browse through the APPENDIX I: it shows to what extent the collective psyche is indignant at being forced to be born only to swim incommensurably more often under an ice pack of dissatisfaction than in a lagoon of completeness.

As we can see, the pleasure of living seems, to put it mildly, far from achieving unanimity... What an illusion, therefore, to think that our parents give birth to us for our own good! They are only concerned about the enjoyment they will derive from our presence. In truth, we exist only to fill those profiteers with comfort, profiteers who moreover have the unthinkable hypocrisy of posing as our benefactors, and push the inhuman brashness to

the point of claiming gratitude, obedience and filial piety from us, not to mention the various gifts supposed to honor the incomprehensible Mother's and Father's Days!

Yet, one of humankind's most perspicacious spiritual monarchs, Gautama BUDDHA, had sternly warned us by proclaiming his famous "*Sarvam Duhkham: Everything is Suffering*", not only birth, illness, labour, old age and death, of course, but even happiness since we will not avoid the tragedy of losing it and mourning its loss...

Answer without evasion: if there existed a solution capable of abolishing the *totality* of evils under which groans our disastrous humanity, if it were possible, by means of a simple remedy (not only simple but also immensely inexpensive, immediately accessible, scrupulously harmless, definitively and absolutely efficient ), to put an end to every distress, to every tear, to every cry of pain, to every pathology, to every protest of unhappiness, to every despair, to every cataclysm, to every anxiety, to every problem, to every drudgery, to every misfortune, to every torture afflicting the human species, would you have the macabre mindlessness to disdain such a remedy, to despise such a miraculous panacea? No, that goes without saying. Well, this solution exists, and its arcana are now unveiled: it consists merely, in its holy and soteriologic simplicity, in ceasing to procreate...

As of now stop breeding like any tribe of arboreal primates and, in less than a century, all human suffering will have disappeared from the face of the earth! Alas, a grimace twists your nose: you would like to persevere in existence, but without having to pay the price for its inconveniences. To our deepest regret, we must announce to you that the dream of an existence full of perpetual delight is highly unreachable: living is, inescapably, suffering, since happiness can only be bought at the cost of thousands of unpleasant efforts, and is more fragile than a rope made of ice...

What? A solution is offered that has the power to eradicate all the afflictions about which humans ceaselessly complain and you hesitate, then decline, to grasp it? Such a refusal identifies you as sado-masochistic: not only do you indulge in this vain suffering that we call existence, not only do you endorse, like an evil worshipper, the presence of such suffering, but moreover, with major cruelty, you claim the right to impose it on others, who do not claim this existence and its sufferings!

You want to reproduce, but do you really merit it? Is it the nobility of soul that leads you or just the most bituminous selfishness?

No need to pretend: the child is a gift that parents make to themselves. We will come back to this later.

## POSITION I

### *The Three Pains*

*They say that there was a race of men  
tried upon the earth once,  
who knew the future better than the past,  
but that they died in a twelvemonth  
from the misery which their knowledge caused them;  
and if any were to be born too prescient now,  
he would be culled out by natural selection,  
before he had time to transmit  
so peace-destroying a faculty to his descendants.*  
Samuel BUTLER, *Erewhon*. England, 19<sup>th</sup> century

Celebrating the gift of life would be forgivable if life was not a booby-trapped package, *a priori* crammed with all the possible turmoils. For sure, Three Pains impregnate apodictically, with no escape other than illusory, the structure (the skeleton, should we say) of our earthly journey: the *Pain of Birth*, the *Pain of Life* and the *Pain of Death*. Let us quickly review them, while keeping in mind that only one of them should logically send into prison, if not under the guillotine, those who inflict so many pains on their unfortunate fellow human beings.

#### *A. The Pain of Birth*

*Inter faeces et urinam nascimur:  
We are born between excrement and urine.*  
PATRISTIC APOPHTHEGM.

Supreme symbol, we are all born in filth and suffering, the suffering, undoubtedly, of our genitrix, who cannot complain about it if it was her choice to get pregnant, but especially the unspeakable suffering experienced

by us, the victims, hapless creatures exiled from Nothingness, when we are expelled from a paradisiacal pelagic darkness where peace is the rule and suddenly find ourselves struggling – monstrously compressed, almost crushed, on the verge of asphyxia and syncope – with an obstetrical canal very poorly designed by this incompetent handyperson that we call Mother Nature.

Let us not minimize this dramatic event of the coming into the world: anyone who took the trouble to read Otto Rank or Sandor Ferenczi knows that birth is a real cataclysm, a major trauma that cannot be erased nor cured and that will haunt our entire existence. A brutal confrontation with a hostile world, radically different from anything we had known before, let us note it well: birth is our first injury.

*In reality it seems as though life had always to end catastrophically, even as it began, in birth, with a catastrophe.*

Sandor FERENCZI, *Thalassa: A Theory of Genitality*. Hungary, 20<sup>th</sup> century

*~ The most painful of all “memories”, namely the birth trauma.*

*~ The pleasurable primal state is interrupted through the act of birth [...] in unwished-for ways, and [...] the rest of life consists in replacing this lost paradise.*

*~ The primal anxiety-affect at birth, which remains operative through life, right up to the final separation from the outer world [...] at death, is from the very beginning not merely an expression of the new-born child’s physiological injuries (dyspnœa–constriction–anxiety), but in consequence of the change from a highly pleasurable situation to an extremely painful one, immediately acquires a “psychical” quality of feeling.*

Otto RANK, *The Trauma of Birth*. Austria, 20<sup>th</sup> century

Life can hardly start in a worse manner than by birth. Would nature have wanted to dissatisfy us from the outset and stir up our anger toward it, it would not have made the coming into the world more painful. A little more painful, by the way, would have been to take the risk of giving birth only to corpses or cripples: some babies, incidentally, still have the exquisite privilege of dying suffocated by the vagina of the bad soul who delivers them. But even if most newborns have to deal with the misfortune of surviving the process, their corporal appearance, awfully deteriorated, wrecked, damaged and hellishly repulsive, testifies to the unthinkable violence of the parturitional tragedy.

PLUTARCH had already suspected that the coming into the world has nothing in common with a moment of relaxation, let us listen to him in his treatise fancifully entitled *Of the Natural Love or Kindness of Parents to their Children*:

“Of creatures all which breathe and walk upon the earth in sight, none is there wretched more than man new born into this light.”<sup>1</sup> *And whosoever saith thus of a young infant newly coming forth of the mother’s womb, maketh no lie at all, but speaketh truth; for nothing is there so imperfect, so indigent and poor, so naked, so deformed, so foul and impure, than is man to see to presently upon his birth, considering that to him (in manner alone) nature hath not given so much as a clean passage and way into this light; so furred he is all over and polluted with blood, so full of filth and ordure, when he entereth into the world, resembling rather a creature fresh killed and slain than newly born.*

1. a famous quote from Homer’s *Iliad*

*Killed and slain*: it is very significant that similar terms reappear nineteen centuries later, under the pen of one of the most essential contemporary authors (worlds away from the disposable “feel-good” scribblers overpolluting the media): Frédérick Leboyer, a genuine specialist in obstetrics and a truly experienced practitioner, who had the rare courage to describe the fall-into-the-world in all its appalling brutality. Let us savour his denunciation, which, needless to say, raised a pretty scandal among blind-minded people:

~ *You call that a birth? But it’s a killing! And, in the face of such suffering, these ecstatic parents! It’s unbelievable!*

~ *Birth is suffering. And not only the labour and the delivery. Coming into the world is as painful as it was, not so long ago, to give birth. When the Buddha said “birth is suffering”, he was not talking about the mother but about the child.*

~ *Birth, what a calamity!*

~ *Even worse is the burning pain when the air rushes into the lungs. [...] This burn, yes, exceeds in horror all the others. In the child, everything balks, everything closes, everything spits out, everything tries to repel the enemy. And that’s the scream! This first scream is a no! It is the jolt of a being who is murdered, who is raped, it is an outraged, passionate refusal against what, precisely, is life!*

~ All dizzinesses, all anxieties bear the same signature: birth. [...] With all his strength, the child fights against it. [...] The child is crammed with terror. [...] Lost in this hostile, incomprehensible, insane universe, it is suffocating with fear. [...] It rejects its birth and the world.

~ Yes, such is birth: the massacre of an innocent, a torture, an ordeal.

Frédéric LÉBOYER, *Birth without Violence*. France, 20<sup>th</sup> century

Gasp! Killing, rape, murder, massacre, terror, calamity, burn, torture! What conclusion can we draw from this? Probably that between a woman (if she had the choice and possibility of not getting pregnant) who parturiates (it rhymes so well with *excruciates*) and an ordinary torturer, there is not the slightest difference, except that, strangely enough, the parturient is never dragged before the magistrates...

To see a newly-born, its body wrinkled (*cyanosed, oedematous, asphyxic*, as the medical literature admits...), to contemplate its face ploughed with cries, its eyes lacerated with anguish, its cheeks scratched with tears, who could doubt that it has just undergone the equivalent of a beating by a horde of apemen? What sadism on the part of parents to inflict, in full knowledge of the facts, such mistreatment, such abuses, on their "beloved"!

To hypocritical and cowardly souls who would be sceptical about the genuine *torture* endured by the infant at birth, let us recall the following few elements. Professional books, without daring to speak the truth as heroically as a Leboyer, readily evoke the *state of shock* in which the newborn finds itself and, in desperation, can only advise the caesarean section when *fetal distress* becomes *extreme* (to put it bluntly: when the agony through which the baby passes pushes it more and more towards pure and simple death); in the most serious way, some have ventured to compare the abrupt passage of the foetus from a protective aqueous environment to a hostile aerial environment to what an astronaut suddenly stripped of its spacesuit would experience! Finally, while a medical dictionary compares without hesitation the baby being born to a *screw (sic)* that must drill its way through the parturient's bony pelvis, other scientific texts admit that icterus is particularly frequent in survivors, as well as *haematomas* and *ecchymoses* due to extraction and various manipulations, injuries that are easily comprehensible since it seems that Nature has thought more about coitus, when shaping a vagina, than about the birth of a new being.

What!?! The toddler would suffer very little when coming into the world? It often has to *tear* the sex of its genitrix to get out of it and its skull, still malleable, constricted by a gigantic vice, would not be devastated by pain? Worse: in emergency cases, the obstetrician sometimes has to use *forceps* or the *vacuum extractor* to pull the “screw” out of the narrow nozzle where it is slipping into death! What more eloquent than the frequent necessity to *resuscitate* these miserable babies when they are released from the grinder! Who can ignore that some of them only emerge *dead* and their head duly crushed by the cephalotribe? As for those who survive the martyring vagina, they *scream* like slaughtered piglets, and one would doubt that the coming into the world is similar to the worst conceivable torments!

A nightmare, for sure! Not a midwife, question them, who does not acknowledge that birth is one of the most terrible things that can happen to a human being!

To eviscerate those who bury their head in the sand and euphemise the atrocity of being brought into the world, one would like to quote all the experts on parturition. Let us at least relish the confessions of a successful paediatrician who cannot be suspected of “dramatizing the drama”. When reading these lines of the famous Dr. Spock, one can only roar with laughter or rush to the nearest maternity hospital in order to exterminate – or at least to severely spank the bare buttocks of – those who inflict THAT on a newborn:

*A baby at birth is usually disappointing-looking to a parent who hasn't seen one before. [...] His face tends to be puffy and lumpy, and there may be black-and-blue marks from forceps. The head is misshapen from “molding” during labor – low in the forehead, elongated at the back, and quite lopsided. Occasionally there may be, in addition, a hematoma, a localized hemorrhage under the scalp that sticks out as a distinct bump and takes weeks to go away. A couple of days after birth there may be a touch of jaundice, which is visible for about a week.*

Benjamin SPOCK, *The Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*. USA, 20<sup>th</sup> century

It is patent that one will never make a woman who has just given birth feel guilty enough, and it is quite hard to understand why nobody has the good taste to castrate the barbarian who impregnated her. As a result of their conscious and deliberate guilt, a helpless baby has just suffered the



equivalent of a putting to death, the atrocious memory of which will haunt it for the rest of its life! How is it possible that the justice system does not punish such a sordid act of cruelty? How can it be possible not to indict the father, the inseminator, the most superfluous of men, who made himself an accomplice to such an infamy – such a butchery – were it only for “*failure to assist a very young person in danger*”?

The aborted ones are unaware of their luck, for there is no human creature who has not been the object of bewildering violence from its begetters. As soon as we are born, our parents are heavily indebted towards us. Henceforth, they have only one right: the right to do everything in their power to *compensate* us for having been forced to be born!

At the very moment when a mother extradites it from her womb, she becomes the torturer of her own child! Knowing that there are no police methods more brutal than those the “birth canal” uses towards the baby who, reluctantly, begrudgingly and with (forgivable) bad grace, transits through it, it would be more logical if the young parturient and her lamentable fecundator received a scolding, a spit of disdain, the medal of ferocity, or a severe fine for “*ill-treatment inflicted on a being for whom they were absolutely responsible*” (since they had the choice to refrain from conceiving it), instead of the theatrical congratulations and the ceremonial bunch of tulips celebrating the sinister “heroes” of the day!

A child was horribly *mistreated*, an infant has just suffered like a slug under the tyre of a bicycle, a frail suckling has just experienced one of the most terrifying catastrophes of its life, and, unbelievable thing, the whole assembly is busy rejoicing with the full approval of the judicial authorities... Unfortunate baby, into what world have you just made your painful entrance! As you can already notice, down here, victims are always wrong and criminals thrive under the applause of the (so-called) good citizens.

All these premeditated carnages  
give birth to at least one shearing truth:  
*From the very beginning,*  
living is tantamount to suffering...

## ***B. The Pain of Life***

*After having suffered, we must suffer again.*  
Alfred de MUSSET, *The Night of August*. France, 19<sup>th</sup> century

Let us not linger on the innumerable subsequent wounds, the nameless anxieties, the angers without remedy, that the necessary adaptive effort to our very unfriendly environment will inflict on us during our CHILDHOOD: nobody could count the physical pains (blows, injuries, illnesses,...) nor the motives for tears nor the psychological disorders more or less pronounced among the juveniles. Far from being a wonderful wander in the woods of happiness, Childhood is just the period of your life when you learn how to cope with hell.

And for many of us, even the privilege that a child soldier, or a child prostitute, or a child slave from the Third World envies us: *school*, for many of us, school was hardly less unpleasant than prison; although (if black humour is not a crime) convicts, these lucky people on permanent vacation, are at least exempt from the crucifixion of studying and learning lessons by heart.

Invariably, throughout our youth, growing up is tantamount to suffering. Each childhood is less a golden age than an interminable odyssey of conflicts, cries, injuries, tears, angers, frustrations and sickening submission to social and parental demands.

It would be wrong, once we have reached the ADULT AGE, to believe that we are immune to fate's bad jokes: adulthood will overwhelm us with the anguish of unemployment, or worse, the stress of professional life, the worries of family or love life, financial concerns, exasperating domestic chores, constraints of all kinds, disgusts, wearinesses, pathologies, disappointments and the polymorphous hardships that no human can avoid, whatever might be its destiny, woven of glory, or torn by defeats and broken dreams...

Thus, living our adult life is suffering again...

Then, here comes the OLD AGE and its infinite procession of boredom, aches, lamentations, remorse, monotony, regrets, diseases (unkillable decidedly, how healthy these diseases are!), weaknesses, malaises, discomforts,

impotences, more or less solitary sorrows, bodily pains (again...), bereavements and, above all, anguish in the face of the octopoid death, whose petrifying tentacles approach at high speed.

Alas, growing old is suffering more and more...

Such is the synopsis of all existence. But perhaps these are only opinions, only points of view (for life also includes some “good moments”: it is the least we can ask of it, will protest the exhausted pilgrims, given the exorbitant price at which these fleeting “good moments” are bought!), but beyond our subjective apperceptions of life, what exactly do the *structures*, the *mechanisms* that determine our survival, and control the distribution of joys and sorrows, reveal to us? We will see that these realities, these *facts*, admit no dispute.

Who would dare to deny that it is possible to demonstrate that life contains more evil than good? It is indeed very comfortable to establish that the *a priori* conditions for the appearance of evil are more flexible than the conditions for the appearance of good, and that the cogs that govern existence grate and screech so much that they substantiate the superiority of pessimism over natalist doctrines. Let us take a closer look at these rules.

## ***The Bionomic Decalogue, or the Ten Laws of Existence.***

This brief bunch of arguments will suffice to highlight the terrible ontological asymmetry reigning between the *certainty* of suffering and the mere *possibility* of delight!

### **1° We are born burdened with Needs which, unsatisfied, engender Pain.**

Finding quality food, getting a robust roof above your head, overcoming insomnia and achieving a sweet sleep free from nightmares (good luck), protecting yourself from violence, accidents, cold, heat, rain, insects, diseases and countless enemies, predators or problems, maintaining yourself in a decent state of health, building strong friendships, conquering pleasing

sexual/love partners (difficult task, troublesome quest, as most people know): so many heavy constraints that never cease boring you, annoying you, disturbing you, upsetting you, stressing you, tiring you, exhausting you, scratching you, irritating you, or even deeply hurting you, day after day. Unfortunately, anyone who, for the sake of tranquillity, tries to avoid these laborious innate obligations falls straight into the jaws of suffering...

**2° To satisfy our needs,  
constant necessity of Effort and Struggle.**

But any Effort, by essence, is unpleasant since it is the antithesis of Rest, of Nonchalance, of Indolence, of this marvelous Idleness that we court so much... There is no life without struggle, there is no struggle without displeasure. If we do not try to appease our needs, we suffer; if we fight to soothe them, we still suffer. “*No pain, no gain*”, as the Anglo-Saxon proverb so rightly threatens... Whoever is born therefore falls into the certainty of contrariety, into the ocean of difficulties to overcome, with no other hope than to be overcome by the ultimate difficulty: death...

**3° Misfortune abounds,  
Happiness tends to be rare  
and difficult to reach.**

It is incomparably easier to be unhappy on this planet of incessant struggles than to find happiness on it. Doing *nothing* is enough to overwhelm us with sufferings, while in contrast stubborn efforts are not always enough to guarantee us bliss! This law alone ruins, and definitively, any optimistic pretension.

**4° Pain is experienced  
more intensely than Pleasure.**

Compare an orgasm with a toothache or a broken rib, or with a simple indigestion or an ordinary cancer. We will not even mention the rapes, beatings and muggings, serious accidents and other extreme tortures that are always *possible*...

**5° The Temporality of Happiness is more brief  
than the Temporality of Unhappiness.**

Subjective time flows faster in delight than in suffering. Nothing slows down a clock better than a forefinger held over the flame of a lighter. From a psychological point of view, the life of the happy human is therefore always shorter than that of the unhappy human: what could be more dismaying?

**6° Pleasure only lasts as long as  
the pleasant stimulation lasts;  
Pain lasts much longer  
than the event that causes it.**

Well-being dissipates a few minutes after an orgasm or a good meal (worries rush back into consciousness very quickly...) but a car accident or a work accident, if not a holiday accident, sometimes makes you dramatically suffer throughout your lifetime...

**7° Health does not in itself procure  
any positive pleasure; Illness generates  
on the contrary very perceptible unpleasantnesses.**

Compare a healthy bone or a healthy stomach with a broken bone or a stomach lined with ulcers!

**8° The essence of desire is Dissatisfaction  
and its realization has no other flavor  
than Disappointment.**

To desire is to *suffer* from a lack; however, as soon as this lack is filled, another one arises, while each object of desire conquered turns out to be inferior to what we expected: nothing satisfies us durably. Observe newlyweds six months after their wedding...

**9° Prolonged happiness leads to  
two new sufferings:  
Boredom and Anxiety of losing  
this hard-won bliss.**

If, by a miracle, at the end of a myriad of constructive efforts, sometimes we feel happy, it is sufficient that *nothing* happens within this happiness for the torments of Weariness to insidiously destroy our illusion of well-being: disgust triumphs over love as well as over a too much prolonged stay on an islet reputed to be a paradise... And even if, at the price of a thousand diverting tricks, we succeed in maintaining ourselves for a while on the heights of plenitude, the slightest interstice left open in our mental space will confront us with the sinister and distressing certainty of one day having to lose these eudemonic privileges. Ultimately, no one can proclaim themselves happy as soon as they remember that the future, fraught with the lacerating laws of life, stands before them!

**10° Anxiety is the skeleton of every destiny.**

Even if we could (but how could we, since it was our first experience, the imprint, the pattern of all the subsequent ones?) free ourselves from the archetypal Anxiety inherited from our birth, how could we, keeping in mind the *ever-increasing* quantity of bad experiences and difficulties met in our past, not fear their resurgence, in a perhaps even more atrocious way, in a more or less near future?

In the face of all the potential aggressions that surround us, how can we not be afraid at all times that one of them might hit and harm us?

And finally, how can we silence the anxiety associated with our most intimate and least uncertain project: encountering and undergoing death?

Existing is thus nothing else than roaming in a forest of fears where the question is never *whether* Evil will strike us, but only *when* and *in what form* it will make us its terrified prey. For our subconscious life, every future is terror (as every past is an error): whether we survive the trials of fate or have to face the trials of death, each tomorrow has for all of us the tinge of anxiousness and we never start a day, if we examine the secret whirlpools of our soul, without fearing all the troubles that this new day will possibly

vomit on us... Certainly, living is suffering, but living is also constantly struggling against the anxiety of suffering!

CONCLUSION :

**SUFFERING is *consubstantial* with Existence,  
and the ANXIETY of suffering is the very texture  
of our Humanity!**

Such are the Ten Fundamental Laws that structure our experience of life: they border, it must be admitted, on the sinister and in any case obliterate any exaggerated enthusiasm for the “happiness” of existing. Above all, these laws radically disqualify any biophilic impulse: how can we deny that the worst is always more within our reach than the best? Depressing, irremediable and incriminating ontological asymmetry: we are always already more certain to complain than to rejoice...

### ***C. The Pain of Death***

*Vulnerant omnes ultima necat.*

*Every hour hurts, the last one kills.*

MOTTO INSCRIBED ON ANCIENT CLOCKS AND SUNDIALS.

At last, the moment to pass away stands before us like a wall of bloody fangs; nonetheless, we will have to go through the physical and psychological torments of agony (*αγωνία*: *struggle, anxiety, anguish*) to obtain the right to leave this thorny existence into which we did not ask to make our entrance...

Not content with having inflicted on us the violence of coming into this world, our parents, as true murderers, have the paradoxical delicacy to inflict on us the violence of leaving it. And yet, in view of the pain of existing, we would often be tempted to exclaim: “*Death, at last!*”, if at least death was not walking towards us loaded with a new dose of distress. Alas, any death is frightening, were it not so, we would gladly put an end to our life, even before we had the opportunity to reproduce...

Throughout our life, we must endure the instinctive fear of losing life, a loss that is nevertheless absolutely unavoidable. What a human dreads most, it will have to undergo it, inescapably!

Giving birth to a being not only forces it to always struggle to build a (barely) tolerable destiny, it also forces it to listen ceaselessly to the funereal background noise that whispers to it, hour after hour, from the age of reason: *“You too will die one day, and it will be neither funny nor festive!”*.

In short, all its painful labours will only have brought back to nothingness, at the end of a most grueling odyssey, a frustrated and harassed creature, unspeakably disgusted at knowing itself always already destined for this same non-existence from which its cruel begetters have stupidly snatched it...

Whether it be swift or slow, the process of death is full of unpleasantnesses (*pangs, spasms, throes, convulsions, torments* are agony's faithful semiotic friends...): death does not inspire an instinctive fear in us without reason; a dying organism is an organism that suffers, and that suffers all the more because it struggles to survive.

Out of the three main types of death: accident, disease, old age, which one deserves our enthusiasm, which one fills us with delight? None. They all repulse us, they all horrify us.

*~ The day of your birth is one day's advance towards the grave. [...] The perpetual work of your life is but to lay the foundation of death. You are in death, whilst you are in life. [...] You are dead after life, but dying all the while you live; and death handles the dying much more rudely than the dead.*

*~ Every day travels towards death: the last only arrives at it.*

Michel de MONTAIGNE, *The Essays*. France, 16<sup>th</sup> century

*Let us imagine a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death, where some are killed each day in the sight of the others, and those who remain see their own fate in that of their fellows, and wait their turn, looking at each other sorrowfully and without hope. It is an image of the condition of men.*

Blaise PASCAL, *Pensées (Thoughts)*. France, 17<sup>th</sup> century



Our parents have literally *condemned us to death* and we should express filial piety toward them? But my sweet Confucius, my adorable Moses, my syrupy Civil Code, you are kidding! Murderers deserve a jail sentence, how is it then that our fathers and mothers avoid it if not because most of us have in turn the sadistic desire to generate children? But a crime committed by all is no less a crime. Who dances with joy in the face of death? No one. We shudder in unison. We unanimously forefeel the inexpressible pain that existence will inflict on us one last time before finally freeing us from its grip...

Strictly speaking, death marks the hour when my parents kill me! I die *because* I was forced to be born, I die *because* my parents gave birth to me and, in full consciousness, with premeditation, infused with theomimetic malevolence, shaped me perishable, fungible, biodegradable, marcescent, nightmarishly mortal! Without tergiversation, I declare that my parents are homicides and should be incarcerated as such! I pass away *by their fault*, I leave this life undergoing, despite myself, an ultimate torment, imposed on me by them alone, and abjectly symmetrical to the inaugural one, since finally one dies as one is born: in an anguish and a panic and a distress and a tribulation impervious to description!

Living is dying, and dying,  
as much as being born, is suffering...

Just unbutton your eyelids:  
*birth is suffering,*  
*life is suffering,*  
*death is suffering,*  
and therefore procreation is a cruelty  
of first magnitude  
deserving as many slaps  
as there are bacteria in a rectum.

Decidedly, the Three Pains, which our parents deliberately bequeath to us and impose on us, fiercely indicate that life is more a burden than a jubilation...

Summation of this algological introductory chapter. Existence having not only wrenched far more complaints from humans than unconditional acclamations, but above all proving to be permeable to the demonstration,

by means of a simple phenomenological analysis, of its transcendental harmfulness, one can hardly see on what basis of biomaniac bigotry one can ground one's desire for offspring!

If one were able to read in perfect lucidity the rules of the penitentiary which metaphorize all earthly destiny, who would really want to enter it of one's own free will? Certainly not a thinking foetus clearly informed of what awaits it!

## POSITION II

### *(Flaccid) Arguments in Favour of Procreation*

*To marry for the sake of children,  
so that our name may not perish,  
or that we may have support in old age  
and leave our property without dispute,  
is the height of stupidity.*

THEOPHRASTUS, *On Marriage*. Greece, 4<sup>th</sup> century BC

*So, full of mistakes that she deems legitimate,  
Her tranquil virtue preserves all her crimes.*  
Nicolas BOILEAU, *Satire X*. France, 17<sup>th</sup> century

Before analyzing, according to La Rochefoucauld's scrumptious rule, the vices proliferating under the supposed virtues of motherhood, let us first take the time to exterminate one by one the main arguments wielded by those who celebrate childbirth.

As we will see, not one of these arguments is consistent with the dual requirement of Reason and Ethics, that is to say with what constitutes the crux of philosophy...

#### *a. Love*

First, you will profess to give birth out of "*love*". Because you believe you love each other – you man, and you woman – it seems relevant to you to crown this love with a being who would be a kind of synthesis of you both and the materialization of the feelings that are supposed to unite you.

Very well. But before hastening to the bed in order to make a baby: *are you certain of the love that unites you?* Because, without wanting to depress you,

statistics indicate that a very considerable number of marriages (one in two in France or in the United States) or of romantic relationships (even more), certainly contracted on the basis of love – lethal illusion –, end in a divorce or a break-up! As for marriages that do not shatter, they rot in boredom much more often than they continue in bliss and glee...

Nothing is more absurd than to give birth supposedly out of love and then witness the slow disintegration of your couple through hatred, or lassitude... The child who resulted from your ephemeral and uncertain “love” will by contrast have the lasting certainty of suffering, forasmuch as it was born.

Countless children are likely to see their parents separate within ten years after their birth, and to bitterly suffer from this divorce. How is it possible to use a feeling (not to say a mood), of which nobody knows whether it will last or not, as an argument to throw a new creature into a world where difficulties proliferate, for their part, so faithfully?

What is more, even if, by exception, love between two people persevered long enough so that the pangs of divorce spared its fruit, how can one consider as a sincere proof of the truest love for one’s child the fact of catapulting it into a world where problems and misfortunes abound whereas happiness has a frustrating propensity to be long in coming, if not to remain forever out of reach?

To love, it seems to me, is to desire all the possible good for the object of one’s Love. However, life contains more evil than good: this has been proven enough. In the unlikely event that your personal experience would have been insufficient to dispel your worrisome blindness towards the tragedy of existing, read scrupulously Euripides, Cicero, Lucretius, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, Petrarch, Donne, Quevedo, Gracian, Milton, Pascal, Swift, Voltaire, Hume, Chamfort, Chateaubriand, Bonaventura, Foscolo, Byron, Schopenhauer, Leopardi, Lenau, Büchner, Kierkegaard, Lermontov, Leconte de l’Isle, Turgenev, Baudelaire, Dostoyevsky, Twain, Bierce, Lautréamont, Strindberg, Maupassant, Panizza, Kafka, Jean Rostand, Artaud, Ghelderode, Hedayat, Sartre, Beckett, Pavese, Ionesco, Cioran, Albert Caraco, Jacques Sternberg or Roland Jaccard, as coats of arms of myriads of others (for no castle would be vast enough to shelter all the thinkers that life despaired of itself), as well as Christian, Buddhist, Gnostic, Platonic or Brahmanic literature, to name but a few... An elementary chrestomathy of pessimism would still cover thousands of pages!

If you genuinely love your child,  
there is no other option,  
given all the sufferings and afflictions inherent to life,  
than to refrain from giving birth to it!

***b. The delicious adventure of living***

The boundless catalogue of human lamentations ruins straightaway the second argument advanced by the candidates for parenthood: “*the enjoyment of existing*”, which is supposed to evidence the correlative benevolence involved in the choice of making a non-existent exist. What enjoyment? Was it not established hereinbefore, in the previous chapter, that existence is *structurally* filled with more evils than goods?

Thus, to those who would be tempted by the argument, fraught with a staggering hypocrisy, of life as “*a wonderful adventure worth living*”, it remains easy to object that even if this were the case, even if existence and sufferance were not perfect synonyms, even if living, by some impossible chance, should lead us to the supreme enjoyment, the one who does not exist loses nothing by not existing, since, obviously, to experience such a loss, one must already be part of the existents!

What does not exist does not know what it loses, it does not even know what it gains – an absolute fortune! – by not existing. What does not exist does not feel any regret, any remorse, any trouble, any injury, and is not harassed by dilemmas such as “*to be or not to be*”: its divine non-existence protects it from any problem, disappointment, lack, need, or temptation, sometimes to live, sometimes to die.

There is no doubt that existence can charm moles, worms, slugs and their light-avoiding genomes, but the amount of courtesy in this world would increase if the blind ones did not rely, in order to satisfy their self-absorbed cravings for the child of their dreams, on the pretext of the privilege allegedly included in the fact of existing, whereas nonexistents do not care at all about such a dubious privilege and remain perfectly safe from such a frivolous concern!

No, you Pharisees, you hypocritical and duplicitous eels, you will deprive your children of absolutely nothing if you let them *unexistingly* vegetate in Nothingness, and this for an excellent reason: Nothingness cannot lack anything, cannot complain about anything, cannot mourn anything, nor be frustrated nor be disappointed by anything at all!

To hell with your slimy “generosity”: life is a poisoned gift and the blessed unborns who do not receive it are in no case afflicted by the fact of not receiving it. Once for all, not being born means avoiding all harms, including that of not being born, if being born could be anything other than a harm...

– *But if life is so detestable*, captious thinkers will protest, *how is it that most people nonetheless choose to continue living instead of committing suicide without delay?*

It is easy to eviscerate this objection if we remember that humans are paradoxical animals which continue to obey their instinct much more than their reason. We stay alive just like we engage in reproduction or breathe during our sleep: by pure genetic conditioning.

Throughout the ages, there must have been species that were very little inclined either to have sexual intercourse (see, even nowadays, the borderline case of pandas’ fertility) or to fight hard for life (see, among humans, the number of young people who voluntarily kill themselves before having reproduced). All of them, of course, under the pressure of natural selection, have disappeared. Only the most fertile species, endowed with a sufficient terror of death, have been able to survive.

Without the shadow of a doubt, the panicked fear of death was one of the decisive genetic mutations in terms of adaptive advantage. All the primordial individuals deprived of such a gene died before they could even insufflate life into an embryo of a species...

Thus, although Reason has long ago informed any human creature able to make a correct use of its brain that our destiny is an insoluble tragedy, our species, endowed like all others with the gene of *thanatophobia* (or at least of *algophobia*, the fear of pain, including the pain inherent to death), our species has still not taken the decision to disappear. Does it prove that life is worth living or does it only prove the effectiveness of such a gene, the despotism of Instinct?

No need to cheat: we all know that instinct dominates our psyche much more than the considerations of the highest spirituality succeed in fertilizing it. Anyone who denies such a well-established fact deserves to be impaled alongside a literary character fairly representative of the average humanity: Tartuffe, paragon of hypocrisy.

Living displeases us, but dying terrorizes us: we therefore choose life as a lesser evil, for lack of a less harrowing alternative. Grant people the assurance that only nothingness awaits them beyond the grave and promise them a death without pain or anguish, you will boost the suicide rate so much that humanity will soon also join the sweet pantheon of extinct species...

Among the motives which urge us to remain in the prison of life, this very life our moments of lucidity find nevertheless so poorly charming, stand both the fear of divine punishment and that of being reborn, for nobody gets born a first time without fearing that there could be a second one! Hell or reincarnation, a latent pessimism, inherited precisely from our painful experience of reality, from our inextinguishable mistrust of it, determines us to renew our stay among the evils that we know rather than expose ourselves to others of which we know nothing. Hamlet complex...

Furthermore, if we do not kill ourselves tonight, it is also in the hope that tomorrow will indemnify us for the pains suffered yesterday. How many of us live just like the gambler, every day a little more ruined and yet gambling more and more in the hope of compensating for its losses? Utopia, however: death will ruin us completely before we have received one tenth of the dividends that this insolvent debtor, existence, is supposed to pay to us... Anyone who indulges in the dangerous game of life must admit that they can only accumulate loss after loss until the day the game is totally lost for them.

To sum up, the reason for our hesitation in the face of individual or collective extinction lies in this sad apophthegm: *we live less for love of life than for fear of death*; the trials of our fate seem to us still preferable to the anxious pains which would enable us to escape from it.

Likewise, we do not in the least reproduce by passion for philosophy, or religious concern, or philanthropic benevolence, but merely by blind obedience to Instinct. Aphids have only a weak argumentative

consciousness: they multiply very well without resorting to hypocritical pretexts.

### ***c. Prolonging humanity***

Among these pretexts often invoked to justify that a miserable baby might be exposed to our disarrays figures prominently the idea of “*perpetuating the species*”.

To counter this argument of such a marvelous idealism, it could be pointed out that the human species was not existing a billion years ago and that nobody, absolutely *no body*, was complaining about this non-existence of our dear humanity...

Let us now imagine that our species has, finally, really disappeared. Who, then, will be left to complain about this disappearance? The last man? The last woman? The last war criminal? No, no, these ones will also have disappeared. What human voice will then moan on the evaporation of the most ferocious of all predators? Who will regret that this cruel branch of primates, which has never ceased to rob, rape, fight and kill each other since it (so little, so very little) differentiated itself from the other monkeys, suddenly ceased to exist? The animals we spend our time exploiting, mistreating, torturing, imprisoning and genociding? Certainly not.

Besides, according to every current scientific evidence, the human species is well and truly doomed to extinction since the star which lights and warms us has nothing in common with eternity. Let us nevertheless admit the scenario, for the moment of pure fantasy, which supposes that humankind settles one day on another planet, or even colonizes the whole universe (provided that our species has not in the meantime been massacred by a superior extraterrestrial civilization, superior in technique but equal in malevolence...), in what way would this ubiquitous pullulation improve our existential condition? In what way would our destiny be less absurd and derisory because we populate ten thousand worlds instead of one? In what way would our metaphysical anguish be diminished? In what way would the worries, the despairs, the weariness of toil alternating with the brambles of boredom, the disappointed loves, the fear of tomorrow, and all the other torments of the soul, be less numerous?



Perpetuating the species, but for what purpose? All that is perpetuated by perpetuating the species is the opportunity – loads of opportunities – to taste pain and to complain for the individuals whose sum constitutes it! Species is only a concept; the reality is the legions of individuals who suffer... After all, if the species wishes to perpetuate itself, let it achieve this goal without us, if it can. The child does not have to become the instrument of our curiosity concerning the becoming of our species; it neither has to play the role of another brick in this wailing wall by which human kind could adequately be symbolized, in order to fill with delight those who dread its nonetheless unavoidable reduction to dust! *Big Chill* or *Big Crunch*, absolute entropy or apocalyptic contraction of the universe: life has no future. Inevitably, evolution will cease and destruction will have the last word: why defer it?

What is the point of obliging some unborns to get born, if it is to share with them this overwhelming admission of failure? Scientifically, Death will always be stronger than love or life, Death will eternally be superior to any ideal, any project, any edifice, any creation, any civilization, any biological structure: to claim the opposite amounts to feasting on the last stinking toes of superstition and the shrivelling penises of religious weaponry. Whatever the case may be, the non-existent does not care to know whether the human race will, sooner or later, join the much enviable category of non-existence. The non-existent does not exist and does not complain about it at all...

– *Ah, but, sir, you must realize, if humanity vanishes it means there will be no Shakespeare, no Tolstoy, no Gandhi anymore!*

– Of course, but it also means there will be no more Hitler, no more Stalin, no more Leopold II, no more Pol Pot, no more Pinochet, no more Bush; there will be no more exterminators of American Indians or Australian aborigines, no more blood-thirsty colonizers of Africa, no more white supremacists, no more greedy leaders of multinational companies, no more bankers, no more exploiters, no more exploited people, and no more boring writers, always so much more numerous than the hard-hitting ones. Note also that nine tenths of humanity live without having read the slightest line of Shakespeare or Tolstoy, which considerably reduces the scope of your argument...

Furthermore, what would be your amazement if I showed you that the implicit work of the majority of adamantine thinkers was to make humankind sufficiently aware of its miserable condition so that it could take the decision to gradually desist from reproduction!

Listen to Shakespeare in *Macbeth*, for instance:

*Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing.*

Or also in this impactful excerpt of his *Henry IV*:

*O God! that one might read the book of fate,  
And see the revolution of the times,  
[...] how chances mock,  
And changes fill the cup of alteration  
With divers liquors! O, if this were seen,  
The happiest youth, viewing his progress through,  
What perils past, what crosses to ensue,  
Would shut the book, and sit him down and die.*

Do you observe in these lines any parenetic or frenetic celebration of parturition? I don't.

Do you prefer Tolstoy in *The Death of Ivan Ilych*?

*“And now it is all done and there is only death. Then what does it mean? Why? It can't be that life is so senseless and horrible. But if it really has been so horrible and senseless, why must I die and die in agony? There is something wrong!” [...] Life, a series of increasing sufferings, flies further and further towards its end – the most terrible suffering.*

Or in *The Kreutzer Sonata*?

*Just try to insinuate that one ought to abstain from procreation in the name of morality... God in heaven, what an uproar will ensue! [...]*  
– *You ask how the human race would continue? [...] Why should it continue, the human race?*  
– *Why? We wouldn't exist, otherwise.*  
– *And why should we exist?*  
– *Why? So we can live.*

– *But why should we live? If life has no purpose, if it's been given us for its own sake, we have no reason for living. If that really is the case, then the Schopenhauers and the Hartmanns, as well as the Buddhists, are perfectly right. [...] The human race disappear? Is there anyone, no matter how he views the world, who can doubt this? I mean, it's just as little in dispute as death is. All the churches teach the end of the world, and all the sciences do the same. So what's so strange about morality pointing to the same conclusion?*

*[...]*

*What awful lies we spread about children. Children are God's blessing on us, children are a delight. It's all lies, you know. [...] Children are a torment, nothing more.*

Let us now listen to Gandhi, in *All Men are Brothers*:

*I do not want to be reborn. [...] Suffering is the law of human beings. [...] Suffering is the badge of the human race.*

Or in his *Teachings*:

*The ideal Brahmachari has not to struggle with sensual desire or desire for procreation; it never troubles him at all. [...] He will centre all his ambition in relieving the misery of mankind and the desire for procreation will be to him as gall and wormwood. He who has realized the misery of mankind in all its magnitude will never be stirred by passion.*

Or in his *Letter to Manilal Gandhi* (17<sup>th</sup> of March 1922):

*Suppose for a moment that all procreation stops, it will only mean that all destruction will cease. Moksha is nothing but release from the cycle of births and deaths. This alone is believed to be the highest bliss, and rightly.*

Or in his *Truth is God*:

*A man whose activities are wholly consecrated to the realization of Truth, which requires utter selflessness, can have no time for the selfish purpose of begetting children and running a household.... Hence one who would obey the law of ahimsa cannot marry.*

Before concluding, quite ferociously:

*The larger their family, the farther are they from universal love.*

These reflexions are really a Great Soul's reflexions.

If being a genius means contributing to the rise of humanity's level of consciousness, there is no doubt that the sum of the genius thoughts will one day lead the whole humanity to admit the primacy of Nothingness over Being.

*"Perpetuating the species"*... So farcical! If only our species was glittering with Virtues, if all its tragedies were not unfolding on the Absurd's backdrop...

Come on! Let the species disappear, who will feel worse because of this disappearance? Your hope? But your hope doesn't matter, since it is bought at the price of a very stubborn kind of blindness with which the vegetables, themselves so fertile, stand in solidarity.

#### ***d. Leaving something behind oneself***

Another argument often comes back in the mouths of the irresponsible ones who generate us. For them, it is a matter of "*leaving a trace*". Curious impulse.

Let us immediately point out that from an ethological point of view, this is akin to the attitude many mammals have to leave droppings on the ground to mark their presence or their territory. The dog that urinates on the lamp post also leaves a trace; this trace however, unlike the baby, benefits from the privilege of not having to endure the grueling constraints of existence...

From a psychoanalytical angle, as one knows, this desire to "leave a trace" is rooted in the behaviour of the toddler who identifies its first excrements with a gift and endeavours to make of them the very judicious present to its moved mother...

Thus, there is nothing very evolved nor very mature in this desire to *mark* one's temporal space while making present to one's contemporaries of a "thing" fallen down from a viscera... There is definitely too much of

Freudian *Id* in this identity fantasy for it to constitute itself as a credible argument.

But trace for trace, if it really matters to leave one in order not to deny our mammalian instinct nor betray our futile hope of immortality, it seems to me that a work of art, science, thought or philanthropy, has all the same a little more value than a catastrophe of flesh. Excrement for excrement, some are more useful and more noble than others. We must admit that the fact of leaving a fleshly offspring lies within reach of any cockroach or earthworm. Nothing, by the way, more amusing than watching a cow calve, or a swine fertilize its sow.

In truth, one generates carnal creatures only by inability to do better: generating spiritual creations...

“*Leaving a trace*”. Very strange idea. There are so many mediocre people: and thus, they desire to leave a trace of their mediocrity! Spare yourself this trouble, you insignificant gentlemen and gentlewomen, we will do very well without any remembrance of you. Unnoticed during your lifetime you hope to be noticed *post-mortem*? You want to perpetuate your name? What good is it, if your child imitates you and remains as anonymous as yourself?

Recognize the absurd, even the burlesque, of this will to reproduce in order “*not to fall into oblivion*” since within a few quick generations your great-grandchildren will not even know your first name nor the color of your hair, as for the luxuriance of your personality... If you dread the transience as well as the drama of our mortality (in which however you have no scruple to enlist the depositaries of your paranoid fear of death...), rather engrave your anthroponym on a granite outcrop: some petroglyphs cheerfully cross the millennia. Or ask someone to carve on your tombstone an elegant quatrain of your invention, the latter will still be legible when your pitiful heirs have already been nibbled by other wormlings.

***e. Religious obligation: “God said that” (but also the opposite of that)***

A little more seriously, others brandish the “*metaphysical injunction*” to legitimize their unwholesome whim of having a progeny. God would demand that we perpetuate ourselves. Really? What do you know about that? Would you be familiar with the divine decrees? This God so little palpable,

so little thirst-quenching, this God we have been speculating about for dozens of centuries, this God we have sought so long with the utmost and sincerest energy of our thirsty psyche; and yet, despite all these hunting attempts and miracles of patience, we still have not succeeded in putting His existence in evidence! No proof of the reality of what we call God... Not even a clue, just a mountain of hypotheses, that each religious system manages, moreover, to make clash and contradict each other to the point of fomenting wars in the name of this princely dubious *first principle!*

I therefore ask: how do you know that the divine invisible ghost would rejoice if we copulated in order to fabricate newborns? You have read it in the Scriptures? Granted! But what deity do the Scriptures tell us about? An omnipotent and omniscient entity, isn't it? Think, then, that an *omnipotent* divinity, that is to say, *who can do everything*, including abolishing all pain, if only for the innocent, think that such a divinity, in light of the Evil which overabounds on our planet and under which creatures scream with horror day after day, such a pitiless divinity can only be the Devil in person!

Yes, if God exists and if He is almighty, God is identical to the Demon. We understand better thenceforth why He desires that we reproduce ourselves... Evil wants Evil, as parents want children.

Beyond all reasonable doubt, and this should become the theorem of any future theology: the goodness of God is inversely proportional to His power!

Our universe unveils itself so flawed and messed up that it would be in the worst taste to beget creatures in the name of the One who inflicts so many woes, bales, banes and blows on his creatures.

Everything was created by God.  
So Evil was created by God.  
So God is a malefic evil-doer.

If God exists, let him cope on his own, without us: we do not have to fabricate new preys for him nor new slaves nor new altar boys/girls to brighten his heavenly leisure. Let him be satisfied with the 80 billion creatures that humanity has already given to him; 80 billion *wolves-to-man*, in the hands of the *circle-of-which-the-centre-is-everywhere-and-the-circumference-nowhere*, is not that quite enough? Yes, it is more than enough.

It is thoroughly impossible to love God, since we owe him *all* our problems and distresses. The cowards are free to celebrate him, but nothing justifies that their cowardice commits the sin to anchor a blessed non-existent in our metaphysical worries.

Let us insist, God is a mere hypothesis, an object of faith, not a constituent of the phenomenal world. However, the pain of existence, for its part, makes no doubt, we carry it every day in our tissues as well as in our mind: the pain even reveals itself to be one of the most certain constituents of the phenomenal world where the bionts struggle against each others for their wretched and hopeless lives...

Since when, in a logic-based reasoning, would an assumption have the same weight as a certainty?

When in doubt, it is better to abstain: this is the very essence of the *Precautionary Principle*, so much and so much advocated nowadays when one never ceases to fantasize about zero-risk...

In this regard, Gentlewomen and Gentlemen so fond of security, we have the honor to announce it to you: it is possible to escape any risk, one just has not to be born. Smoking kills, living too.

Parenthetically, let us remark that the founder of a religion that claims to know a lot about God, Christianity, finally left very few carnal descendants... Born of a virgin, Christ died a virgin and without children, not without asking us to become EUNUCHS, to castrate ourselves, for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven! I do not see in this request a frantic call to rabbit-like fertility.

No incitation to reproduction in the Gospels; on the contrary, the whole spirit of these rests on the eloquent concept of *Imitatio Christi*: to follow Christ, to walk in his paradigmatic footsteps, to model our virtue on his, to shape our destiny on his stimulating redemptive example.

Well, dear Christian brethren and sistren, let us imitate Christ, let us invite the entire humanity to imitate him, to stand under the banner of his categorical imperative, and our fallen species, doomed by the sin of our

stupid first father and first mother, Adam and Eve, will have disappeared, according to my compassionate wishes, in less than a century...

This Christ's radical hostility to procreation, not only did the Gnostics immediately identify it, but KIERKEGAARD himself will reaffirm its vigour. Here is what the Danish philosopher had the clear-headed elegance to write in the pages of his *Journal*:

*~ If the world, as Christianity teaches, is a sinful world that lieth in wickedness, then eo ipso the one who from a Christian standpoint is a good citizen, is, if I dare say so, the one who does not perpetuate this sinful race.*

*~ It was obvious in the eyes of Christ that the Christian should not get married.*

*~ The reproduction of the species. Christianity wants to block it.*

*~ Giving birth to a child! But the child is born in sin after having been conceived by infringement, and this existence is a valley of tears.*

*~ No, the mistake is not that the priest be celibate... a Christian must be so.*

*~ God wants [...] that humans abandon this selfishness that there is in the fact of giving life.*

*~ To save our species, it means: this species is lost, we have only too much of it, the question is to be saved by getting out of the species, and therefore we must start by blocking our species.*

*~ I give thanks to God [...] that no living being owes its existence to me.*

*~ Here is how one raises a child ... in Christianity: your father and your mother are two people who are agreeable to God; above all, this episode which has brought you to life, this prowess on their part, is something that has especially pleased God. Abominable lie! This exploit is, Christianly, a crime, in the eyes of God a crime, and the vileness of this crime is that those concerned do not suffer of it themselves, but that an innocent, by being born, be thrown into this institution of criminals that human existence is.*

*~ A crime brought me into the world, brought me into it against God's will. The fault [...] is to give life.*

Bang! What an astounding contrast with the natalist stance of the contemporary Churches! Let us remember that Kierkegaard, besides being a philosopher, was also a theologian, which confers some punchy credibility to his statements. Of course, most of our so-called Christians have never read anything from this author, their intellectual comfort and even more their reproductive satisfaction depended on this absence of curiosity that generally gives birth to lack of knowledge...



Nevertheless, as early as the 5th century (when the planet was burdened with only 200 million human beings...), Saint Augustine, in his treatise entitled *Of Holy Virginity*, had already issued this vehement warning:

*“It would be utterly foolish to undergo this burdensome tribulation of the flesh, which the Apostle presages for those about to marry, by indulging in marriage in this day and age, when **no service is done to Christ’s future coming by begetting offspring for him** through the progeny of the flesh”.*

The same Father of the Church finally had these definitive and lacerating words in his work *On the Good of Marriage*:

*“I know what people are murmuring: ‘Suppose’, they remark, ‘that everyone sought to abstain from all intercourse? How would the human race survive?’ I only wish that this was everyone’s concern so long as it was uttered in charity, ‘from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned’; then the city of God would be filled much more speedily, and the end of the world would be hastened. For what else is the Apostle clearly urging when he says, speaking on this issue: ‘Would that all were as I myself am?’” [i.e. celibate and continent]*

Listen carefully to these Augustinian bells! They toll without appeal: Salvation is Extinction! Ah, if only they all wanted it, if only they wanted to be *Christic*, those nauseous Christians.

Salvation is Extinction. The various religions of India will not proclaim anything else: whether it be Hinduism, Jainism or Buddhism, their soteriological aim remains the same: to put an end to the Cycle of Births (*Samsara*)!

Getting out of the phenomenal world, freeing the soul from any earthly incarnation, escaping the pain of existing: good heavens, would these spiritual guides be secretly antinatalist? The least one can say is that their contempt for the sensible world combined with their will not to be born again here below certainly does not push, from an exegetical point of view, into multiplying birthings...

Some examples:

*Grace is to show the truth that delivers, grace is the cause of liberation from the cycle of births and deaths.*  
*Shiva Purana. India, circa 9<sup>th</sup> century*

*Give your grace, oh Mother!  
Turn your face towards me,  
Because I am without recourse  
And do not want to be reborn!*  
*Hymn to Kali. India, circa 17<sup>th</sup> century*

*The wise men who have devoted themselves to the method of vigilance,  
Who have renounced the fruit of deeds,  
These will be freed from the bond of rebirth  
And will go to the place that knows no pain.*  
*Bhagavad Gita. India, circa 1<sup>st</sup> century BC*

Will go therefore to the exact opposite of our world where, according to the *Mahabharata*, let us remember it: “*Only, in truth, pain exists; that is why no one obtains happiness*”...

Let us conclude with these few extracts from the *Bardo Thodol*, the famous “Tibetan Book of the Dead”, which is pervaded, as a leitmotiv, by the precept of “closing the doors of the womb”:

~ *Those who have not received the teaching of a Lama will fall into the precipices and chasms of the world of the cycle of existences [Samsara] where they will be eternally chased by abominable sufferings. Consequently, listen to my teaching. I have shown you the instructions for **closing the doors of the womb**, by conjuring away both attraction and aversion.*

~ *If you understand from the depths of your heart that everything is deceit, the door of the womb will close.*

~ *I no longer want this cycle of existences [Samsara]. My heart fears it and refuses it ceaselessly.*

(Quotes translated directly from an authoritative French version of the *Bardo Thodol: Le livre tibétain des morts, Bardo-Thödol*, préface du Lama Anagarika Govinda, présenté par Eva K. Dargyay, en collaboration avec Gesche Lobsang Dargyay, Dervy-Livres, Paris, 1988)

All religious literature of Indian influence is full of such refusals to be reborn (and thus: to be born); we could quote text after text, school after school, but everything was said as early as the 7th century BC, in the illustrious

*Chandogya Upanishad*: “May I never go to the red and toothless, all-devouring, slippery place, yea, may I never go to it.” Knowing that this “red and toothless, all-devouring, slippery place” refers, according to all scholars, to the maternal entrails, and more precisely to the uterus, what are we waiting for to bring down the curtain on this foolish tragedy which is the cycle of existences (*Samsara*)? What are we waiting for “to close the doors of the womb”, since to reach *Nirvana* is nothing else, etymologically, than to enjoy *Extinction*...

In Judaism, everyone remembers Job’s exemplary disgust and anger against his Being-in-the-World, but it is worth noting that this wise man also desired that some benevolent power had *shut the doors of his mother’s womb!*

~ *Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. And Job said: “Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night that said, ‘A man is conceived.’ Let that day be darkness! May God above not seek it, nor light shine upon it. Let gloom and deep darkness claim it. Let clouds dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it. That night – let thick darkness seize it! [...] Let that night be barren. [...] Let the stars of its dawn be dark; let it hope for light, but have none, nor see the eyelids of the morning, because it did not **shut the doors of my mother’s womb.***

~ *Why did I not die at birth, come out from the womb and expire? Why did the knees receive me? Or why the breasts, that I should nurse? For then I would have lain down and been quiet; I would have slept; then I would have been at rest.*

~ *Why was I not as a hidden stillborn child, as infants who never see the light?*

~ *Why is light given to him who is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, who long for death, but it comes not, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures, who rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they find the grave?*

~ *Human beings are born to trouble just as sparks fly upward.*

~ *Man who is born of a woman is few of days and full of trouble.*

*Book of Job. Israel, 5<sup>th</sup> century BC*

These radical protestations of the Just-One-Crushed-by-Injustice against the day when he was begotten have nothing unique, they are cheerfully redoubled by those of Jeremiah or the Ecclesiastes:

~ *Cursed be the day on which I was born! The day when my mother bore me, let it not be blessed! Cursed be the man who brought the news to my*

*father, "A son is born to you," making him very glad. Let that man be like the cities that the Lord overthrew without pity [...] because he did not kill me in the womb; so my mother would have been my grave.*

*~ Why did I come out from the womb to see toil and sorrow?*

*Jeremiah. Israel, 6<sup>th</sup> century BC*

*~ I thought the dead who are already dead more fortunate than the living who are still alive. But better than both is he who has not yet been and has not seen the evil deeds that are done under the sun.*

*~ A good name is better than precious ointment, and the day of death than the day of birth.*

*Ecclesiastes. Israel, 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC*

If I read well, all these recriminations, gushed forth from the mind of visionaries and prophets, glitter with a certain antinatalist brightness; at least they do not express the vividest gratitude towards the scoundrels who generate us...

But above all, Judaism and Islam, like most religions, offer a strong argument to the pessimist: they are based on the theme of the *Fall*. We live in a world which is not yet complete Hell, but which is certainly no longer that of Paradise! Earthly existence is a long exile, a place of expiation, a desperate, never-ending, search for the Messiah and the Promised Land... Our ancestors have committed a monumental blunder when they tasted the serpent's fruit – damned fecundity – and we have not ceased since then to suffer the punishment of this first disobedience! Existence in our world, a punishment? The Bible and the Koran say nothing else... Why inviting nonexistent ones to come and share our fate of convicts?

Let us rather applaud the clear-mindedness of the wise men of Zion:

*The Rabbis taught: For two-and-a-half years Bet Shammai and Bet Hillel carried on a dispute. One side argued that it would be better for man if he had not been created than to have been created, while the other side contended that it is better for man to have been created than not to have been created. When they counted the votes they found that the majority held that it would be better not to have been created than to have been created.*

*Aggadah (Rabbinic tales and lore). Israel, circa 5<sup>th</sup> century*

This pessimism about our human condition structures countless traditions, since the Golden Age, the Silver Age and the Bronze Age always lie far behind us and we live now in the Iron Age, in Kali Yuga, times of generalized decline, degradation and ferocity, bleak epochs in which bliss and perfection are not anymore – just remaining as empty words haloed with utopian memories or imbued with messianic impatience....

Whether it is the nostalgia for lost paradises or the expectation of a better world, the avowal is the same: our earthly stay dissatisfies us so violently that every religion constitutes itself as a *Hope*, in a doubly antidepressive way, first as an immediate remedy against the distresses of the day, and then as a future consolation for all the sufferings endured in an anthropic trajectory. Happy, feeling safe and satiated in this world, humanity would have invented neither gods nor other worlds...

(Parenthetically, one will notice that the optimist is always forced to seek *out of the reality* or *out of the present time* its infamous “reasons” to hope: God, the Future, the Afterlife, the Progress, are the eternal, magical, pockets of *Elsewhere* from which the meliorists and other Pollyanna’s devotees surreptitiously extract the fake rabbits of their joviality... It is true that if they confined themselves to observing the observable, they would reach the same conclusions as the pessimist: “*Woe, sadness, anguish and disaster triumph over everything, and living is more painful than not living*”. Hope is not a phenomenological virtue: any biolatry corresponds either to a fraud or to an error of perspective.)

Let us resume our thread. For their part, Orphism, Pythagorism, Platonism and Neo-Platonism will never cease to consider the body as a tomb or an expiatory prison (*soma = sema*) from which the soul longs to escape, thus adequately indicating that the incarnation inflicted on us by our parents really deserves no particular praise...

Lastly, in a very explicit way, the Gnostics, the Manicheans, the Bogomils and the Cathars deemed our universe to be the Devil’s work, and that the only possibility to put an end to the suffering which submerges this flawed universe is to refuse to reproduce oneself! One can only bow before the Gnostic logic: if, as saint John and saint Paul also assert, *the Devil is the Prince of this World*, it would be criminal to shape new subjects and new victims for him.

Without doubt, procreating is ultimately less perpetuating the species than perpetuating Evil in all its modalities.

It is superfluous to insist: if there is any metaphysico-religious injunction, it decidedly leans more in the direction of the *Refusal to Procreate* than in that of hyperbolic fecundity! It is therefore difficult to understand how one could seriously use the argument of God to condone trivial uterine or testicular itching.

But if giving birth in the name of “*love*” does not hold water (one does not destine to unavoidable sufferings a person whom one authentically loves), if wanting to “*perpetuate the species*” is the utmost absurdity (the species being in any case promised to extinction), if parturition under “*metaphysical pretext*” contradicts the teaching of the greatest sages, what does remain in the quiver of the natalists to justify their reproductive obsession? Not much, it must be admitted, and what remains is so nauseating that we will not linger over it.

### ***f. The chrematistic child***

The political discourse thus dares to extol *reproduction for economic aims*: more children should be fabricated to guarantee the financing of pensions in the coming decades, to rejuvenate the declining labour force, to avert a dangerous reversal of the age pyramid, or to sustain industrial growth (since an expanding demography naturally means larger markets...), and so on.

So many emetic discourses that are regularly propagated by the mainstream media.

This is the theme of the *ploutodot-child*, a bestower of wealth: it goes without saying that this argument of fecundity as a source of prosperity contradicts the minimum requirements of Ethics, since it is based on the reification and instrumentalization of Others, that is to say, on the very principle of slavery...

We ask an individual to be born in order to help us solve our economic problems: what a pestilence, what a sordidness! It is sometimes to be regretted that so few politicians are slapped in public.

### ***g. The child-soldier***

Other slap-deserving hoodlums will glorify reproduction as a *patriotic act!* The more populated a country is, the more powerful the fatherland is supposed to be; it would be wrong to believe that such loathsome fertilist attitudes belong to the past: the constant exhortations to build a large family still resound in the treacherous mouths of those who play the sinister role of popes, priests and clergymen in Christendom, attesting that religious war is won first and foremost on the field of the wombs...

What would the Vatican do without fresh followers to make money flourish in its coffers, strengthen its power and boost its global expansion? *Instrumentalization + Reification of the individual = Slavery*, did we say... What is the difference between a child thrown into the world to enlarge the ranks of Christendom and a mere child soldier? None: both are forcibly enlisted to fight in vain against all the figures of Evil proliferating in our valley of tears.

### ***h. Nature***

Barely will you have refuted all these hideous pretexts when crowds will brandish at you the worst, the most specious, misleading and ill-founded of all the “arguments” in favour of motherhood: that of *Nature!* It is “natural” to spawn, and therefore, as if it were self-evident, legitimate to abandon oneself to this desperately common vice.

Alas, Nature is barbarism, the state of *war of all against all*, as Hobbes emphasized. Nature means Aggression and Cruelty at the service of the survival instinct of each individual. Based on competition and perpetual struggle “to-eat-before-being-eaten”, Nature knows only one Law, that of the jungle, that of the strongest, the most violent or the most cunning, that of the most able to establish its narcissistic domination over the other living beings.

To those who invoke Nature, the instinctual drive, to justify their whimsical desire for offspring, I will just point out that theft, murder and rape also correspond to instinctual drives and that this does not in any way condone these crimes in the eyes of the ethical requirement...

Nothing is more natural for Nature than to remorselessly indulge in all atrocities! Should we congratulate violence and murder because they are part of nature? Of course not. So why should we bow down, without further analysis, to the sexual/reproductive instinct on the grounds that it stems from Nature?

*In the vast domain of living nature there reigns an open violence. [...] The great law of the violent destruction of living creatures is ceaselessly fulfilled. The whole earth, perpetually steeped in blood, is nothing but a vast altar on which all living things must be sacrificed without end, without measure, without pause, until the consummation of things, until evil is extinct, until the death of death.*

Joseph de MAISTRE, *St. Petersburg Dialogues*.

*Everything in nature is nothing but theft and murder.*

Remy de GOURMONT, *Physics of Love*.

*Life, large-scale massacre.*

Jean ROSTAND, *Thoughts of a Biologist*.

*The total amount of suffering per year in the natural world is beyond all decent contemplation. During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease. [...] If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored.*

Richard DAWKINS, *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*.

*Nature is utterly cruel, even atrocious. How can one attribute this creation to a divinity theoretically compassionate and merciful to its creatures?*

Theodore MONOD, *Conversations with Jean-Philippe de Tonnac*.

*Nature is ecological in the dog-eat-dog sense. It is not beautiful, but functional. The world [...] may look beautiful to us, but the scenery we behold also conceals immense suffering. [...] Nature is not kind. It's a vicious bloodbath.*

Colin FELTHAM, *Keeping Ourselves in the Dark*.



The argument of Nature is precisely that of Sade, or even of the Nazis, and ultimately of all those who think that Darwinism (as legitimate triumph of the most ferocious or the less compassionate ones) remains the finest flower of ethics and human wisdom.

Assenting to Nature signifies assenting to all our impulses, even if they are atrociously prejudicial to others... Should we absolve a rapist on the pretext that he yielded to Nature's promptings? Why then should we compliment our parents for having conformed to the impetus of this same Nature? Do not rapists and procreators both inflict intolerable torments on their victims?

*~ Nature, mother to us all, never speaks to us save of ourselves; nothing has more of the egoistic than her message.*

*~ Cruelty [...] is the first sentiment Nature injects in us all.*

*~ Cruelty is natural. All of us are born furnished with a dose of cruelty education later modifies.*

SADE, *Philosophy in the Bedroom*.

Forget Nature. Humans, fortunately, have become beings of Culture; their law should no longer be that of instinct but that of ethics. The "argument" of Nature lying convivially slaughtered, let us move on to the next one.

### *i. Desire*

If you are looking to find out the ultimate motive for bringing new victims to life, ask future parents why they want to become parents: they will answer you as naively as possible that they will conceive a child because they *desire* to do so!

At least they do not lie. Even better, they let the cat out of the bag: they simply have a desire for a child, in the same way they have a desire for a car, a beautiful house, or a piece of chocolate. They find the child "cute", "charming", "moving", "amusing", "enjoyable", "motivating", "exciting", and that's all! They fancy a child, they yearn for a child, they crave a child: in short, they breed to satisfy a thirst, a greed, a pruritus, a mere concupiscence!

The child, as said at the outset of this book, is nothing else than a gift that parents make to themselves. The question remains to know if the *desire* to inflict suffering on one's fellow creature is compatible with Ethics or not: a chapter will be devoted to this crucial issue.

One therefore procreates sometimes because of a *need*, sometimes for *pleasure*. The first attitude falls within the grim realm of slavery, the second within that of sadism, but whatever the case may be, one procreates only out of *absolute selfishness*! The child is never conceived as an end but always as a means, which proves that begetting is an act of pure Machiavellianism!

## **POSITION III**

### ***The True Motives and Mechanisms of Procreation***

[Currently under translation]

## POSITION IV

### *But then, how Is It Possible that We Love such Monsters, our Parents?*

*The relations of parents and children are, in nine cases out of ten,  
a source of unhappiness to both parties,  
and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred  
a source of unhappiness to at least one of the two parties.*

Bertrand RUSSELL, *The Conquest of Happiness*.  
England, 20<sup>th</sup> century

Loving our parents... Do we really have a choice? Born into a hostile world, saturated with needs that we are radically unable to fulfill, where else can we expect to find shelter, food, protection and some semblance of affection, however hypocritical and egocentric it may be, if not in the parental den? For many of us, our progenitors were only a last resort: it is true that we did not choose them, but it is even more certain that, in most cases, we will not discover a less disastrous asylum than the one they accept to give us. The street, the orphanage have something even more foul than a family home: we will therefore remain with those who are responsible for all our ills since fleeing from our parents would in all likelihood throw us into the mouth of a worse nightmare. *Rather toy than garbage*, guesses intuitively the child...

Should we quote Lichtenberg's aphorism again?

*"We love neither father, nor mother, nor wife, nor child;  
what we love are the pleasant sensations they produce in us."*

Corroborating this maxim, which explains in a very satisfactory way the apparent paradox of the tenderness we feel for our torturers, Freud talks of *anaclitic love*: the child "loves" the creatures who put themselves at the service of its self-preservation drives, by providing food, care and protection (against the aggressiveness of reality, against other adults or other

polymorphous perverts...), by consoling it, by soothing its distress and by guaranteeing the satisfaction of its vital and psycho-affective needs. In short, we love our begetters like we love our house or a raspberry ice cream.

Having imperative *need* of them, the child does not cherish its parents, it adores all the advantages it derives from them: its radical selfishness has nothing to envy from that of its creators, except that it is based on justice!

From our early childhood, a positive association is thus created between the notion of “parents” and that of “well-being”: the love we show to our progenitors is in fact much more a conditioned reflex, a Pavlovian salivation, than a genuine feeling!

Such is the material motive, of immediate *interest*, which incites us to “love” our parents, but there is something deeper and ethology is of great help here: it forces us to have the most vigorous suspicion towards our filial feelings by offering us the *theory of imprinting*. We know that the latter describes the automatic and lasting attachment of a baby animal to the first creature (or even to the first moving *object*...) that it encounters when it leaves the egg or to the one that took care of its feeding. This is how a lamb will develop affection – which will persist in adulthood! – for the person who nourished it with a nursing bottle, while ducklings will consider as their *mother* any mobile gadget discovered at birth (coloured ball, wheeled toy, mechanical duck, ethologist,...).

It is no different for the human species: the baby stupidly *attaches* itself to what it finds when it leaves the vagina (usually a mother, more or less competent, or completely pathetic) as well as to the organism that takes the trouble to feed it (a she-wolf or a she-monkey, well-known examples, may sometimes be enough)... Programmed to cling on to the first lifebuoy it meets, the child does not love, it *fixes itself*: it appreciates the owner of the breast that it sucks like the lamprey the fish it vampirizes.

The *theory of imprinting* thus teaches us this: the human animal possesses, in the form of genetic instructions, of an innate coding, patterns of psycho-affective attachment to any creature that will provide it with vital first aid and guarantee its survival; rapidly these libidinal patterns will provoke an almost irreversible *fixation* to the maternal *imago* irrespective of the intrinsic qualities or merit of the real mother.

Our “love” for our parents therefore proceeds infinitely less from a choice, a gratitude, than from a ferocious determinism, from a simple adaptive drive! We do not like our fabricators, we are *imprinted* with them, like a white garment with an ink stain...

As if that were not enough, our makers engage in a real work of *conditioning* on our juvenile soul as malleable as wax: throughout our childhood and adolescence, at the slightest sign of aggressiveness on our part against our father or mother (irritation, blow, insult, refusal to obey), we receive a frightening commination or exemplary punishment. “*How dare you speak to your parents like that?*”, we have all heard this admonition, but who among us, who feared so much the omnipotence of these brutes on whom we depended, ventured to retort “*Because you deserve it!*”? It was a sure slap in the face for us, as well as for them...

Constantly threatened with physical and psychological sanctions (various deprivations or punishments), if one takes the pulse of one’s unconscious, one easily discovers that the child loves its parents less than it fears them, the balance of power being clearly to its disadvantage...

Moreover, we must recognize that our procreators have at least one talent, they are masters in the art of blackmail and seduction by coercion: “*Be wise, otherwise!; come and give Mommy a kiss; it’s not right not to love one’s parents; if you’re naughty, you know what awaits you!; if you’re not kind, you won’t get any presents; well, don’t you give Daddy a kiss?*”: so many tried-and-tested formulas well able to abolish, by repressing them under the weight of the feeling of guilt, the animosity and resentment that our young years often feel against those who spend their lives burdening us with commands and prohibitions in order to mould us on their own deficient personalities....

Despite the fantasies of devouring and destruction that we all experience against our damned progenitors (tenacious and universal fantasies so well highlighted by psychoanalysis), all our embryos of revolt were systematically smothered in the womb. We were literally *drilled* to respect our creators: not only did they use every possible means of coercion imaginable by their despotism to lead us into submission, deference and a simulacrum of affection, but, through the constraint of school, society itself inculcated in us the *duty of proving our tenderness towards our parents* by

giving them some pleasant present, as a token of allegiance, for each of their celebrations!

Immersed in the cult of parenthood instituted by the parents themselves, is it any wonder that, along with Confucius, we make filial piety a public virtue? The child of a Muslim becomes a Muslim, the child of a Jew becomes a Jew, the child of a Buddhist becomes a Buddhist, the child of a capitalist becomes a capitalist, the child of parents becomes parentalist: what a marvel, what a surprise...

Furthermore, we are led to fall into an *irrational idealization* of our parents since they were almost our only points of reference in our decisive first years. These pseudo-magicians who succeed in accomplishing under our impressionable eyes everything in which our clumsy childishness fails are none other than our procreators: how then could we, even as adults, look down on them? We respect our parents forever because they seemed to be endowed with divine powers and mysterious talents to our childish soul, as ignorant as it is impotent...

Let us acknowledge it, our feelings for our begetters have something obtuse, fallacious and mechanical. If we had been born as offspring of our neighbour, it is the neighbour that we would esteem and not the other heartless creatures that a sheer coincidence imposed on us as progenitors. We blindly cherish those in whose arms Nature catapults us; but we always love them less according to their real merits than according to the fourfold imperative of *Anaclitism, Imprinting, Conditioning* and *Idealization*.

In this connection and by way of parenthesis, it should be noted that the difficulties encountered by any form of antinatalism in making its way into public debate stem precisely from this originary *solidification* of any psyche around parental figures. The human brain is built in such close interrelation with its procreators that it cannot call them into question without jeopardizing its very foundations! Yes, we are *a priori* condemned to respect, if not our parents (some of them are so harmful that nothing can hinder the legitimate hatred that we feel towards them), at least the notion of parenthood. Daring to contest its value presupposes that one has succeeded in looking beyond the human, all too human. It is doubtful that, in our century still cruelly dominated by barbarity and ignorance on a planetary scale, many people are capable of such a leap towards clear-sighted benevolence.

As Jung himself admitted, in the wake of a cohort of thinkers: “*Mankind is, in essentials, psychologically still in a state of childhood*”. Let us bet that humanity, as soon as it becomes wiser, authentically perspicacious and spiritual, will take a more critical look at the hideous idol of its ultimate dogmatic fetishism: *Reproduction*.

This chapter hopes to have shed some light on the superficial paradox between the discontent with existence (its universality was established above), which should logically lead us to hate those whose navel-gazing malevolence banishes us from the serenity of nothingness, and the affection, nonetheless always ambiguous, that we seem to have for them.

In truth, even if they have the *illusion* of being loved by their child (an illusion which, by the way, wonderfully fulfills their own narcissistic desire), the child, in the depths of its mind, does not really love its parents: it fears them, exploits them and manipulates them to its maximum advantage in order to ensure its well-being, but basically it has no other passion than itself; it simply appreciates those whom it is in its interest to appreciate, the people, for instance, from whom it receives cuddles, treats, gifts, sweets, security, money, etc. Of course, it turns out that most often these people are its own parents, but why be surprised at this, since it is indeed with the aim of pampering it, playing with it and making it their antidepressive property that they begetted it!

But above all, even if cunning remains the strength of the weak, a child only attaches itself to its progenitors because it has no alternative: were it miraculously possible for it to free itself from the diktat of *Imprinting*, can you imagine it running away from home at the age of twelve months in order to find the competent adoptive parents it deserves?

Who has never heard of the phenomenon, known as the *Stockholm Syndrome*, where the victim falls in love with its tormentor? Such a thing is only possible because the victim recognizes in the tormentor the very image of those who ruthlessly threw this victim into the world. A child, in order to survive, has no other resource than to convert to masochism: with nowhere to flee to, it *must* love the sadists who inflicted existence on it and find, willy-nilly, its enjoyment in all they put it through...



Anyone who would see their parents as they are would hasten to fondly slit their throats with the sword of philosophy.

## POSITION V

### *Incompatibility between Ethics and Procreation*

*That is no gift which is gift that does harm to creatures, [...] there is no gift in a pernicious charm, or in what does harm to creatures.*  
*The Teaching of Akshayamati. India, circa 1<sup>st</sup> century*

*Were it not for the evil inclination, no man would [...] beget children.*  
*Genesis Rabbah. Israël, 5<sup>th</sup> century*

*The difference between false and healthy morals is that the former seeks only assistance against evil, while the latter is concerned that the causes of this evil not exist at all.*  
Immanuel KANT, *Notes and Fragments*. Germany, 18<sup>th</sup> century

A previous chapter brought the demonstration that parents, far from being the paragons of all virtues, rather appear as the accomplices of all vices. Philosophically speaking, nothing justifies our fall into this sad world: we have been born only to satisfy the whims, compensate for the frustrations and fulfill the emotional needs of the criminals who beget us.

And if procreation is the subject of so much praise, of an ecumenical dithyramb, as war and slavery once were, it is only because the ocean of the unaccomplished and irresponsible ones who dominate our earthly cloaca all wish to savour the satisfaction of becoming procreators: we never condemn a crime that we have ourselves the firm intention to commit...

The question now remains as to whether or not such satisfaction, that of becoming parents, is legitimate from a philosophical point of view, whether

it is in line with acceptable ethical criteria, or on the contrary contravenes any *synderesis*...

To begin, let us clarify our notion of Ethics: we will call *Ethics* the *search for a universalizable rule of conduct based on philosophical reason*, in order to distinguish it clearly from *Morality*, which reflects only the *arbitrary and consensual elaboration of the values of a given society at a given time*, habit and *doxa* (as a collective lack of thought) having here greater force of law than the reflection carried out according to the disinfectant rigors of wisdom... *Morality* varies according to customs, beliefs and popular sensibilities, whereas *Ethics* strives to reach the objectifiable. A behaviour can therefore be ethical while being immoral, or on the contrary, moral while revealing itself, after analysis, completely antinomic to ethics.

From a historical point of view, and for the subject that concerns us, let us note at the outset that the vast majority of thinkers, either latently or manifestly, tend to agree on this point: the object targeted by Ethics corresponding to the Good (or Virtue), no human will be declared in conformity with the concept of the Good (or Virtue) if its conduct towards other humans consists in inflicting on them, against their will, various torments, whatever their nature.

If one should characterize the ethical injunction in its most universal and timeless form, one should therefore state it in this way:

*“Do anything that rejoices you and makes your life sweeter  
As long as your fellow human does not suffer as a result!”*

Or according to CHAMFORT’s formulation:

*“Enjoy and give enjoyment, without injury to yourself or others”*

Or according to SCHOPENHAUER’s:

*“Neminem laede: Do not harm anyone!”*

*“Do whatever you like without harming others!”*: this is the only ethical maxim that is always and everywhere, humanly and *pragmatically*, valid.

Despite the well-known epistemological limitations (Kant, Wittgenstein, Popper,...) that prevent us from attributing to any value the character of absoluteness or transcendent veracity, the operative relevance of this maxim of “*Not Harming Our Neighbour*” could be convincingly demonstrated: it would suffice to insist on the imperative of *reciprocity* for a behavioural option to be everywhere and always valid in the field of anthropic action. Knowing that we are always the Other of the Other, or, to paraphrase Rimbaud, that *the Other is a I*, whoever would grant themselves the right to torture their fellow human would at the same time grant their fellow human the right to torture them in turn... Nevertheless, this discussion on the possibility of establishing a rational and universalizable rule of conduct goes beyond the scope of this writing.

For our current purpose, let us simply remember that our whole civilization, and not only ours, has been methodically built on this simple and effective precept of *refusing to harm others*. This is the meaning of the Mosaic Decalogue, the heart of evangelical morality, the essence of the Indian concept of *Ahimsa* (absolute non-violence) to which all Hinduists, Buddhists and Jains refer, and finally the core of Confucian thought under the species of *Ren*, the *Benevolence* that commands us not to cause any harm to anyone and to “*love all humans as we love ourselves*”, as the Chinese master invited us to do so, six centuries before Christ... As we can see, this “*Harm Principle*”, as modern philosophers name it, has a fairly wide historical and geographical distribution.

Gandhi, Martin Luther King, human rights promoters, anti-slavery activists, opponents of the death penalty, anti-racists, anti-colonialists, anti-fascists, advocates of feminism, proponents of homosexual rights, socialists, pacifists, environmentalists, vegans, antispeciesists, etc., etc., in other words, all supporters of humanist, animalist and progressive causes base themselves, explicitly or not, on this minimal ethical invariant that requires us *to refrain from making our fellow human beings or the other sentient creatures suffer against their will*, to preserve them from our own natural tendencies to aggression and predation, to stop subordinating them to the realization of our whims or to the satisfaction of our needs, to abdicate the desire to objectify them and to instrumentalize them for our own benefit!

Not inflicting any suffering on any sentient creature: impeccable Wisdom, who would then venture to disapprove of it?

However, we have seen that existence and suffering tend to be one and same reality: this is the irrefutable conclusion reached by a superb majority of thinkers, but moreover this clear equation can be the subject of a strict and probative demonstration (*according to the geometric order*, to pastiche Spinoza), as outlined in the first chapter.

We have established that, *structurally*, every existence involves much more suffering than enjoyment and that pain is *consubstantial* with the effort to live!

(I see drops of sweat germinating on breeders' brows, let us continue...)

From these two theorems:

*1° Ethics = not inflicting harm on others*

*2° Being born = being exposed to all harms*

we can distil two premises by the virtue of which the following syllogism imposes itself:

***Making others suffer is incompatible with Ethics.***

***To live is to suffer.***

***Therefore to give life is incompatible with Ethics.***

QED: procreating is in absolute discrepancy with the higher ethical values around which are articulated not only the main civilizations but also modern Humanism itself!

The issue thus becomes: *should we renounce Ethics or Procreation?*

Let us note it attentively: if we renounce the universal ethical injunction as we have identified it, we come to justify Nazism and all systems of totalitarian oppression! If it is legitimate to make others suffer against their will, if virtue belongs to the strongest, then the *Shoah* and the extermination of the Amerindians were legitimate and virtuous...

Do you feel ready to assume the consequences of this antimorality? Be careful, because if you tell me that it is allowed to make use of Others according to our good pleasure, you will become the first target of my bellicose ferocity!

Anyone who will affirm to me that it is acceptable to torment our fellow human as long as we find some satisfaction in doing so, I will take them at their word and plunge a bottle shard into their gums before introducing a jackhammer into their anus, although, especially if they die from it, this lesson would be too magnanimous towards them. In short, an Ethics is never valid if the person who advocates it as a subject bitterly regrets, in its heart and flesh, becoming its object.

We fully understand that we cannot repudiate Ethics as *Total-Respect-for-the-Figure-of-the-Other* without immediately reopening the gates of barbarism and reigniting the war of all against all. Either ethics and the totality of its constraints – or the natural impulse and the totality of its atrocities! Either ethics – or rape, spoliation and murder at will. I sense that you are opting for ethics. You sadden my jackhammer, but gladden my reasoning.

The issue was made explicit: *should we renounce Ethics or Procreation?*

We have wisely chosen not to renounce Ethics. Thus, unless we could demonstrate, which would be a supernatural feat, that life is a barrel of laughs rolling in a castle of delights from which suffering is excluded, we can only renounce Procreation, under penalty of legitimizing all other acts of barbarism!

- *Is it right to make others suffer?*

- *Certainly not!*

- *Then why would it be right to make children?*

*Birth is suffering,*

*death is suffering*

*and the interval between birth and death*

*swarms with inevitable sufferings.*

In conclusion, in order for there to be compatibility between Ethics and Procreation, the life that is conferred on a being, who has obviously not asked for it, should not be a poisoned gift; for in truth, what is living if not the certainty of suffering a lot in the hope of enjoying a little?

## POSITION VI

### *On the Right to Sue One's Parents*

Poil de Carotte [Carrot Top].

*Put this epigraph on the title page:*

*“The father and the mother owe everything to the child.*

*The child owes nothing to them.”*

Jules RENARD, *Journal*. France, 19<sup>th</sup> century

*How many children know they may use legal recourses,*

*when they are confronted with absurd parents*

*or with parents who abuse their rights and strength like bad masters?*

Françoise DOLTO, *The Difficulty to Live*. France, 20<sup>th</sup> century

In the previous chapter, we have built a rather annoying syllogism, as a reminder:

*Making others suffer is incompatible with Ethics.*

*To live is to suffer.*

*Therefore to give life is incompatible with Ethics.*

Naturally, I can already hear the trumpets of protest blowing: since natalists can not attack this syllogism on its major, they will try, oh salacious rascals, to rape the minor, and will argue, quite barrenly, that life is so full of so many ecstasies that it is a lucky privilege to receive it and therefore a sacred duty to impose it on a non-existent which would nevertheless lose NOTHING in ignoring forever life's dubious voluptuousnesses.

So be it. Let us grant them the “right”, notwithstanding the radical indemonstrability of the benefit of being born rather than not being born, to anchor a non-existent in existence. The parents thus make the *bet*, a terribly perilous bet, that life is a good thing in itself and that the child will be happy

to receive it as a donation. Donation including, of course, the anguish of death and of the agony preceding death. Never mind, they will retort: everything has its price and life is worth suffering and struggling for, since, as everybody knows, loads of consolations, compensations and rewards flourish in this *valley of tears*, as Christians name our sweet sublunary world.

Alright. Such was the opinion (*doxa*) of two lovers, and a baby resulted from this opinion. The newborn begins to grow and gradually discovers that the enchanted world promised to it by its begetters is mostly full of disenchantment, and that the expected consolations, compensations and rewards are not abundant at all, but on the contrary viciously scarce and most of the time unsatisfying.

The child has decidedly no taste for the diseases that afflict it with a certain stubbornness, nor for the injuries resulting from its discovery of the limitations imposed by the hardness of reality, nor for the obligation to attend school (this depressing prison for children) for twelve, sixteen or twenty years, nor for the classic, chronic and diabolic blackmail: *either* the docile acceptance of school torments (grueling homework, tedious lessons, conflicts with classmates and teachers, stress of studying, anxiety of exams, punishment by parents when one misses these vexatious exams – not to mention the dreadful, nauseous and suicidal rage that one feels when one is doomed to failure not for lack of effort but for lack of ability), *or* the risk of unemployment-poverty-despair-criminality, and the prospect of an even more sinister prison than school itself...

As for the prospect of having to endure, for about forty years, the yoke of a profession in order to “earn” a livelihood, it delights the child as much as the sting of the scorpion or the bite of the piranha.

In short, endowed with a certain intellectual power and realizing that here on earth the time devoted to orgasm is infinitely shorter than the time wasted on daily chores and exasperating labour, the ex-non-existent regrets more and more having been compelled to exist and feels life, every day more intensely, not as a caress, but as a most lacerating prejudice (*harm*).

The puppy – the puppet – the baby – the doll – the baby doll... is no more a toy: it has grown up and is now an adolescent who firmly believes, according to Lautréamont’s words, that it has “*received life as a wound*” and, like him, struggles as much as it can “*to forbid suicide to heal the scar*”, unless,



however, the terror of death that palpitates in it be less intense than the spasms of nausea it feels when looking at the raft of destiny unveiling before it, to the far reaches of the future, its rotten boards, with the result that it finally opts for the rational choice, embraced every year by legions of teenagers, of the suicidal attempt, more or less successful, more or less recurrent....

But suicide is not the only reason to stigmatize parents' *missed bet*: there is also anorexia, delinquency, running away, vandalism, drug addiction, violence, self-mutilation and many other forms of revolt... So many symbolic methods used by the "*begotten-against-their-will*" to shout their NO to the existence they have been burdened with!

Yes, all those that public hypocrisy mocks and despises as "sick", "immature", "scapegraces", "misfits" or "deviants", in short, "people deserving jail or asylum", all those countless *victims* cruelly injured by the mere fact of having been born adopt such rebellious behaviours only because they feel their existence not as a blessing but as a painful prejudice (*harm*)!

Harm? This word reminds me of something...

"Philosophically, I am allowed to do everything, except harm other individuals."

Exactly!

In all likelihood, the parents have lost their bet: having preferred to ignore the teachings of the wise who, from Lucretius to Schopenhauer, had explained to them, according to the mathematical firmness of reason, how much life is more like a torture than a bliss, they only listened to the bestial voice of their desire-need for a child and now this child is rightly protesting against this torture it did not ask for!

But who says "harm suffered", also says "right to seek compensation for the harm suffered"... Our politicians must therefore enact without delay a law authorising children, who consider themselves *harmed* by the fact of having been born, to file a complaint against their tormentors: I have named those who forced them to be born...

What is in question, let us be acutely aware of it, is nothing less than the validity of the ethical edifice that integrally structures our civilization! *Either* we grant the child the right to sue those who are responsible for its distress in face of the crucifying demands of destiny, *or* we must accept to open the doors of penitentiaries and free the criminals who, let us emphasize it, only yielded to the temptation of evil because of their inability to adapt to the unbearable obligations of existence that their inept begetters selfishly imposed on them...

It does not belong to parents to decide whether life is worth living or not, this value judgment belongs exclusively to the child!!!

If the child, sole arbiter of its happiness or unhappiness of being alive, considers that it has suffered serious *mistreatment* by the fact of having been born, it is not clear why it should be denied what is granted to all victims of mistreatment: the legal possibility to incriminate its torturers...

If you grant yourself the anti-philosophical right to bring a child into the world, you can only grant that child the perfectly philosophical right to file a complaint against its procreators!

I cannot resist the temptation to quote here the ARTICLE 3 of the “INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD” elaborated by UNICEF in 1989 and ratified by almost all the States of the world (with the deplorable exception of the USA...):

*“In all actions concerning children, [...] the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.”*

Obviously, if *the best interests of the child* must be taken into account *in all actions* affecting it, then the most important directive is: *Do not give life to it! Do not bring it into the world!* Nothing, indeed, is more detrimental to its well-being than being condemned to be born...

The first articles of any Charter aiming to protect the interests of the Child should therefore look like this:

1° *The first right of the child is not to be born.*

2° *The second right of the child consists in having the power to summon before the Courts, if it deems it necessary, those who grievously harmed it by violating its first right.*

At the very least, we can hope that such legal provisions would strongly encourage parents to acquire the *maturity* and the appropriate *skills* they will need to give their child *the sweetest happiness* it deserves!

It may be assumed that few children would make use of such a right, the scope of which would ultimately be more symbolical than practical, but it is important that future parents be aware that, if they do not do everything within their means to ensure their child a pleasant and satisfactory existence, this child will have legal means to call them to account!

Do promulgate such a law and you will immediately behold an increasing number of *responsible*, loving, devoted, competent, caring and indulgent parents, while the countless scoundrels who treat their offspring as toys or punchbags will evaporate just as quickly! The scandal of the *woman as object* has been widely and pertinently denounced, but why does nobody denounce, even more forcefully, the scandal of the *child as object*?

At the present time, all experts admit that the disaster is enormous: *hundreds of millions* of children are raped, beaten, bullied, neglected, oppressed, starved, exploited, poorly if not badly educated, unloved, despised and pushed to despair or to permanent existential disability – or even tortured to death by their own genitors! Yes, sometimes *tortured to death*, as attested by newspapers every day! What do you intend to do, flocks of pharisees, to remedy such a silent holocaust? Subsidize fertility without restriction? Imbeciles. Babes in arms. Slavers.

Do you think that the emerging generations will forever remain impassive before the figures revealing to them, day after day, the extent of the misery of the world?

Let us peruse a few dismal statistics, keeping in mind that one third of the world's population is under 15 years of age, or to put it another way, that more than 2 billion human beings are children:

§ 1.2 billion people “live” (*survive* would be closer to the truth) on less than \$1 a day, and 1.6 billion others on less than \$2 a day! This means that a

terrifying number of children are plunged into the most abyssal poverty: obviously, more than one billion!

§ Consequence of this misery crushing half of humanity: 1 billion people live in slums, hovels, shantytowns or unhealthy buildings – this number includes, naturally, a large proportion of juvenile souls, since the poorest, deprived of access to family planning, are often afflicted with tragically high birth rates...

§ Another consequence: at this very moment, 40 million people are suffering from acute hunger, 800 million are chronically undernourished and another 2 billion are suffering from malnutrition. In total, no fewer than 9 to 15 million people, depending on the vintage, die of *hunger* or the consequences of hunger every year! 15 million: the equivalent of a World War....

§ To speak only of children, 170 million of them suffer from undernourishment and 3.4 million die annually because of this want of food!

§ In the same period of time, more than 11 million children *under the age of five* die from preventable diseases, *i.e.* from lack of appropriate vaccines, care and medication....

§ Malaria, which constantly infects about 100 million people, is responsible for the death of nearly two million people each year.

§ Tuberculosis strikes 6 million new victims and causes no less than 2 million deaths, every year.

§ Hepatitis C affects 170 million people, of whom 20%, *i.e.* 34 million individuals, will develop cirrhosis or liver cancer.

§ Its sweet sister, hepatitis B, afflicts 350 million other victims, chronically infected, and similarly threatened with liver destruction. Definitely, concocting deadly viruses and cruel bacterias seems to be God's favorite hobby....

§ Diarrhoeal diseases exterminate 2.2 million human creatures, the majority of them children, between two New Year's Eves! No reason to deflower a bottle of champagne....

§ 200 million individuals suffer from schistosomiasis, a *serious* parasitic disease.

§ Trachoma has already caused blindness in 6 million people, infects 80 million people, all of them at risk of irreversible eye damage, and threatens the health of 500 million human beings!

§ There are 10 million new cases of cancer per year. Your child will have *more than one chance in four* (!) of contracting one: thank you for this wonderful generosity.

§ Since its inception, AIDS has decimated some 30 million people (more than 4 million of whom had not reached the age of 15...) while 40 million others are currently infected, including several million children!

§ Whereas the epidemic will inevitably worsen, 15 million children are already orphaned by HIV. There will be 25 million by 2010... Do you intend to take action to moderate the disaster? For instance, by choosing adoption instead of procreation?

§ Among these children stricken by AIDS, some even had the privilege of being born carrying the virus or of contracting it through the poisonous milk of their reckless genitrix... Every year, 600,000 babies are infected in this way: by God's blood, what a pleasure it is to receive life!

§ Nevertheless, at one time or another, suicidal thoughts haunt one in three teenagers, and one in ten eventually make an attempt! Who would still dare to claim that life is a delightful party?

§ All psychologists admit that aggressiveness is a sign of suffering. Luckily for the optimist, there are relatively few aggressive people on our globe. Statistics not available.

§ At least 20 million people are reduced to some form of slavery in the true sense of the word: hard forced labour for a paltry wage.

§ “*A total of 1,200,000 children worldwide are sold for work or prostitution*” proclaims a 2003 UNICEF-led campaign against child trafficking...

§ 200 million people on earth savour the misfortune of being diabetic; they will probably number 330 million in 2025. Well-known consequences: cardiovascular accidents, cerebral attacks, neuropathy, retinal or renal diseases... Annual ransom: 4 million deaths. Comment by the President of the International Diabetes Federation: “*All figures show that we are heading towards one of the greatest disasters the world has ever seen.*” Will your child be a spectator or an actor of this tragedy?

§ Our planet is home to several dozens of millions of drug addicts, including more than 22 million heroin and cocaine addicts, and an additional 30 million people who abuse amphetamines. As for alcoholics, who could determine their number? Observers speak of 2 to 5 percent of the adult human population, *i.e.* 80 to 200 million people, excessively enticed by alcohol... Add to this the consumers of tobacco, hashish, LSD, opium, morphine, mescaline, antidepressants, barbiturates and other benzodiazepines, and you suddenly discover that there are hundreds of millions of drug and/or pharmaceutical addicts of all kinds! If life were so charming, we may presume that we would not need so many psychotropics to make it bearable...

§ More than one in a hundred people are schizophrenic, that is, about 90 million people in the world!

§ In total, on our blissful planet, 450 million people suffer from various neuropsychiatric disorders.

§ Better still: 25 percent of individuals are doomed to develop, at one time or another of their delicious destiny, psychological or behavioural disorders. It should be noted that the *family* environment plays a major role in the development of these psychopathologies....

§ Thus, no less than 10 percent of children suffer, sooner or later, from mental illnesses severe enough to require specific treatment! Adequate therapy that only 20 percent of them actually receive...

§ According to the UN, because of the unkillable wars, millions of children died between 1980 and 1995 alone, five million became disabled (blessed be the anti-personnel mines, machine guns, shells and bombs under which so many silly, cruel people enjoy spawning), one million became fatherless

and motherless, and twelve million suffered irreparable psychological trauma.

§ Every 365 nycthemerons the deaths of 5 million children are linked to unhealthy environments. Knowing that pollution is constantly increasing....

§ During their childhood, 130 million women were subjected to torture in the form of genital mutilation (clitoral excision, labial amputation, infibulation, etc.). Among boys, hundreds of millions of them are victims of circumcision and other sexual abuses under religious pretext.

§ According to estimations, between fifty and one hundred million children live on the streets. Yes, without a decent roof over their heads, these legions of children grow up, work and die *in the street!* Sometimes *as young as four years old!* Fated to delinquency, mendicity, drug addiction, small, debasing jobs, or prostitution, before being killed by a rival gang or by these “death squads” set up by adults mainly mindful of their inner comfort... Why not *adopt* or sponsor one of these damned of the earth? Obviously, their begetters are dead, indifferent or do not have the means to provide for their most basic needs...

§ Poverty being not the best friend of childhood, 250 million children under the age of 14 are constrained to work, most often to support their irresponsible families! Deprived of any decent schooling, no doubt that a bright future will shine on their pink foreheads.

§ Nevertheless, their fate seems enviable compared to that of the 300,000 children forced to serve as soldiers (or to put it more accurately: as cannon fodder) in conflicts they don't even understand. At eight, ten or twelve years old, going to the front, an assault rifle on the shoulder... Throwing new babies into such a hideous world is probably not the cleverest proof of kindness one can brandish with honour and dignity.

§ Yes, hideous: at this very moment, several million children are sexually exploited or forced into prostitution, some of them being *sold* to sexual slavery and pornography networks by their own parents! Used as mere sex toys, many die as a result of repeated rape and abuse by respectable adults, others fall into drugs, others receive a dose of HIV as a tip...

Bloody hell!  
When one sees the amount of suffering  
children endure all over the world,  
one could paraphrase Isaac Bashevis Singer  
by asserting that, for Childhood,  
every day is an eternal Treblinka!

An Indian myth tells that Avalokiteshvara's head, endowed with omniscience, literally exploded with pain when he discovered from heaven's height the vastness of humankind's misery: how to better metaphorize the unendurableness of the destinies inflicted on creatures?

Ultimate consequence of this universal distress: every *minute* two human creatures, disgusted with the life their begetters imposed on them, successfully commit Suicide, while every three *seconds*, somewhere on our planet of tears and torments, an individual courageously attempts to put an end to its existence.

In other words, during the half-hour of an average sexual intercourse, about sixty human beings killed themselves and more than half a thousand endeavoured to get rid of their corporality! This should give a peculiar taste to your next reproductive frolics.

In respect to suicide, it goes without saying, despite the conspiracy of silence surrounding their act ("*Thou shalt not depress families*" is the Eleventh Commandment), that even the tenderest children are not absent from this meaningful candidacy for Nothingness...

By pondering on the above quantified facts, on the burden of suffering carried or witnessed by the younger generations, we better apprehend this sentence of Arthur Janov in his famous *Primal Scream*:

*"No matter what position a man has attained in life, no matter how sober or "mature" his defense, when one scratches a bit, I have found a hurt child beneath the veneer."*

Yes, THE TIME HAS COME TO FIGHT FOR THE RIGHT TO INCRIMINATE THOSE WHO PLUNGE US INTO THE DISASTER OF EXISTING: procreating, is it not inflicting death and torments? On what grounds should procreators deserve less punishment than murderers or torturers? If people are never condemned



for the crime of giving birth to a child, there is no need to look far for the explanation: the magistrates themselves, and the jurists, and the lawyers, and the politicians, and the bioethicists, and all the other pseudo-moralists, wish to bask in the “*joys that the birth of a child brings*” and *enjoy* for many years the stimulating presence of this complaisant toy... Unsuspected pedophiles?

Young people,  
for Christ's sake,  
let your sex become red with insurrection  
and do not hesitate any more:  
if the drudgery of existing displeases you,  
rather than committing suicide,  
file a complaint against your parents!!!

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# SUPPLEMENTS

Warm thanks to Karim Akerma and François Tremblay for their perspicacious, comprehensive and pertinent reviews of the book.

Karim Akerma's website:

<https://antinatalismblog.wordpress.com/author/antinatalismblog/>

An essential guide to antinatalism

(in German but currently under translation in English):

**Karim Akerma**

***Antinatalismus – Ein Handbuch.***

<https://www.amazon.de/Antinatalismus-Ein-Handbuch-Karim-Akerma/dp/3741892750>

François Tremblay's website:

<https://francoistremblay.wordpress.com/>

A must-read antinatalist book (in English):

**François Tremblay**

***A New Approach to Procreative Ethics.***

<https://www.amazon.com/New-Approach-Procreative-Ethics/dp/1793405018>

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## **Karim Akerma's Review of the *Antinatalist Manifesto***

(originally published in German

on the website *Tabula Rasa*, the 27th of September 2013)

[http://www.tabularasa-jena.de/artikel/artikel\\_5019/](http://www.tabularasa-jena.de/artikel/artikel_5019/)

[http://web.archive.org/web/20141223000829/http://www.tabularasa-jena.de/artikel/artikel\\_5019/](http://web.archive.org/web/20141223000829/http://www.tabularasa-jena.de/artikel/artikel_5019/)

Under an *a priori* intimidating title, “*L’Art de guillotiner les Procréateurs*” (*The Art of Guillotining Procreators*), the Belgian philosopher Théophile de Giraud (born in 1968) produced a work that is nevertheless humanist: a manifesto arguing for an end to human misery and therefore for the cessation of human reproduction. What should an “art, of guillotining procreators”, consist of? Well, de Giraud’s work, his style, smoothly approaching the reader and rich in neologisms, is this art.

This book, which is so far only available in French, is aimed at a potential readership of more than 100 million people: environmentalists, anti-globalisation activists, but above all people who are faced with the enormous decision to beget human beings. At the same time, the book fulfils the wishes, unfulfilled by many other authors, of literary criticism, which often complains that there are no longer any powerful, committed, corrosive and revolutionary texts.

The author may consider himself a humanist, since he pleads for the cessation of procreation. Whoever does not plead for the cessation of procreation prescribes to their own children, as an element of the human condition, three kinds of pain: 1. the pain of birth, which the human being who is coming into the world has to endure; 2. the pain accompanying the period of existence; 3. the pain of death.

The pain of existence, which stretches between birth and death, Giraud explores it more closely in a bionomic decalogue, in 10 laws of existence, the most unbreakable of which is that pains and deprivations last longer, are more intense and are easier to obtain than experiences of happiness. What is striking is that Giraud focuses our attention on the pain endured by the child at birth, while perinatal attention has so far been focused on the pain of the parturient.

Far from rejecting reproduction without examining it, our author analyzes – and discards – a series of reasons that might speak in its favour: love, the great adventure of existence; the continuation of humanity; the desire to leave something behind; religious obligations: God demands that...; the child as an economic factor and source of wealth; envy and some other reasons.

After having dismantled these natalist motivations, de Giraud presents to his readers the mechanisms that he considers to be the real locomotives of procreation. In addition to our genetic programme, these are: selfishness, narcissism, sadism, jealousy, pride, despotism, hidden pedophilia, infantilism.

In the light of this list of rather base motives identified by the author in the psychology of reproduction, the question arises as to why we nevertheless love or honour our parents. Giraud does not deprive his readers of an answer, but reminds us of the *Stockholm Syndrome*, according to which the victim of a misdeed (here: procreation) develops sympathy for the wrongdoer who

has abducted it – in this case: into existence. If the author does not deprive his readers of an answer, neither does he starve them of quotations. Whoever reads Giraud will be rewarded with a wealth of humanistic statements formulated by countless authors from philosophy, religion and world literature, without gaining the impression that the author wants to display his erudition.

The ethical centrepiece of the antinatalist manifesto forms the fifth chapter, which deals with the incompatibility between ethics and procreation, incompatibility which de Giraud makes transparent with the following syllogism:

Making someone suffer is incompatible with ethics;  
Someone who is alive cannot avoid suffering;  
Therefore it is unethical to procreate.

The chapter on the irreconcilability of ethics and procreation is followed by remarks about a future right of all children to call their own parents to account for the fact that they (the children) were begetted.

In this regard, Giraud has a French precursor in the person of Georges Poulet, who formulated this idea in 1913 in his novel *Rien n'est* (see: [http://www.tabularasa-jena.de/artikel/artikel\\_3818/](http://www.tabularasa-jena.de/artikel/artikel_3818/)).

In the seventh chapter, we get acquainted with one of de Giraud's successful neologisms: "*Surpollupopulation*", which could be translated as "*Overpollupopulation*". Giraud estimates that with every additional child begotten in advanced industrial societies, 200 tons of waste will be poured into the world, thus further polluting our already moribund planet.

Without reducing the *Overpollupopulation*, in the year 2050, 10 or 12 billion people will be able to feed their uncertain existence only by being forced to convert to vegetarianism. Unfortunately, de Giraud only perceives vegetarianism as a strictly tightened belt, instead of recognising in it a partner of antinatalism, which after all should not only be concerned with humans but with all pain-sensitive beings. Giraud carelessly leaves aside the fact that vegetarianism is antinatalism put into practise, given that a plant-based diet reduces the demand for new slaughterings, reproductions and thus births of so-called farm animals.

Under the heading of “*Agathogenesis*”, de Giraud demands, on the model of the compulsory driving licence for vehicles, a parenting licence, which should only be bestowed after a rigorous education. – A demand which is also expressed by G. Bleibohm in his book “*The Curse of Birth*” (“*Fluch der Geburt*”, 2nd ed. 2011). This compulsory parenting licence should increase the chances of future children to have a bearable childhood and adolescence. Closely linked to the demand for a parenting licence is de Giraud’s praise of adoption: anyone who loves the children of this world, and not one’s own Self, for the celebration, valorisation, protection or fulfillment of which children are begotten, may adopt existing children in order to improve their lot.

Instead of creating new plights by having one’s own child, Giraud can convincingly argue that one should, by means of adoption, free from its predicament a child already in need. Emphatically and thoughtfully, de Giraud raises the question: why even the most incompetent parents are allowed to throw as many children as they want into an existence filled with foreseeable sufferings, while people who would probably be good parents have to prove, laboriously, that they are psychosocially competent to adopt an already distressed child?

De Giraud considers feminism and the opponents of globalisation as his allies. He calls the opponents of globalisation to a worldwide reproductive strike that should last until they judge that the world is henceforth habitable. Giraud does not accept the counter-argument: “*But our child will fight with us for a better world*”. It is incumbent on the people currently alive to arrange the world so that it becomes habitable. To procreate children as tools, in order that they make the world habitable and life livable for the future generations, is disgraceful.

In addition to these practical demands for a parenting licence or the call for a global procreation strike, our author makes a name for himself as an important theorist. Giraud offers a theoretical tool for understanding the transcultural phenomena of misogyny and of shame. Why do religions seek to convince us that evil came into the world through the fault of a woman, if not because the person who bears the guilt for our entry into this world is a woman? Because we come into evil through a woman, all evil comes from women: this is what constitutes the misogyny of all times and all places.

What is more, for his interpretive hypothesis of the phenomenon of shame, Giraud mobilizes what he calls “*Genethliophobia*”: the prudish concealment of the reproductive organs is grounded, like misogyny, in our unconscious refusal to have been conceived and born, what these organs recall to us. In ultimate analysis, the cult of chastity, which belongs to many religions, would be the heritage of an esoteric core of these respective religions which was directed against procreation and whose antinatalist impetus has long since been diluted.

In two appendices, de Giraud provides us with pessimistic (*i.e.* realistic) and feminist-antinatalist collections of quotations – unfortunately without detailed bibliographical references. Yet one could raise the question of how many of the quoted women who criticized natalism gave birth to physical children besides their intellectual or artistic works.

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## **François Tremblay’s Review of the *Antinatalist Manifesto***

(originally published on the website *The Prime Directive*,  
the 30th of September 2014)

<https://francoistremblay.wordpress.com/2014/09/30/review-of-lart-de-guillotiner-les-procreateurs-by-theophile-de-giraud/>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180718214306/https://francoistremblay.wordpress.com/2014/09/30/review-of-lart-de-guillotiner-les-procreateurs-by-theophile-de-giraud/>

I do not believe this book is available in any other language but French, and it is now out of print. Its subtitle is “*anti-natalist manifesto*.” It was released in 2006, therefore predating “*Better Never to Have Been*”, so what we have here seems to be the actual, very first, *ur-text* on antinatalism, unless I am gravely mistaken! This is quite a find, especially since I appear to have found the very last copy available on the Internet (although some more may turn up later). I contacted de Giraud and he told me an English translation was in the works for 2015 [1]. The quotes below will differ from the English version, since I translated these quotes. All errors of translation are mine.

**Chapter 1** presents “the three sufferings”: the suffering of birth, the suffering of living, and the suffering of death, laying down the case for

considering all three to be quite negative (his analysis of childbirth is especially poignant). In the second suffering, he presents a case for *Asymmetry* very similar to that of Benatar (including the fact that the non-existent cannot suffer or be deprived), with “the ten laws of existence” (caps in original):

1. We are born weaved by Needs which, unsatisfied, engender Pain.
2. To satisfy our Needs, there is constant necessity of Effort and Fight.
3. Unhappiness abounds, Happiness absconds.
4. Pain is felt more intensely than Pleasure.
5. The temporality of Happiness is more brief than the temporality of Unhappiness.
6. Pleasure only lasts while the stimulus lasts; Pain lasts much longer than the stimulus that caused it.
7. Health does not in itself procure any positive sensation; Sickness engenders very perceptible unease.
8. The essence of desire is Dissatisfaction and its realization causes Disappointment.
9. Prolonged happiness causes two new sufferings: Boredom and the Anxiety of losing this hardy acquired benefit.
10. Anxiety is the skeleton of all destinies.

CONCLUSION: Suffering is cosubstantial with Existence, and being Anxious of suffering the very texture of our Humanity!

#### QUOTES:

*“Answer without flinching: if there existed a solution that could abolish the totality of all evils inflicted on disastrous humanity, if it was possible, by some simple remedy, incredibly cheap, immediately accessible, scrupulously inoffensive, of absolute and definitive efficiency, to stop all distress, all cries, all cries of pain, all pathologies, all protests of ill-being, all despair, all cataclysms, all anxiety, all unhappiness, in short all tortures afflicting the human species, would you have the macabre stupidity to reject such a remedy, to disdain such a miracle cure? No, that goes without saying. Well this solution does exist, and the mysterious is thereby delivered to us: it consists simply, in its saintly simplicity, to not procreate...”*

*“To see a recent birth, his body creased, cyanotic, asphyxiated, as the medical literature admits, to contemplate his face labored with cries, his eyes lashed with anxiety, his cheeks raked by tears, who would doubt that he*

*just went through the equivalent of a beatdown by a horde of cavemen? What sadism for parents to inflict, in full knowledge of the cause, such mistreatment, such hardships, on their “dearest”?”*

**Chapter 2** goes through the laundry list of arguments in favor of procreation. The following are addressed:

- a. Love (having children as an expression of love)
- b. Adventure (having children is a wonderful adventure) – where he also addresses the “why don’t you kill yourself” objection as well
- c. Mankind (perpetuating the species)
- d. Leaving something behind (self-perpetuation)
- e. Religious obligation to have children
- f. Economic reasons
- g. Child as religious soldier
- h. Natural reasons
- i. Envy of other parents

De Giraud draws not only from good sense and logic, but also from a wide variety of literary sources, and nowhere is this more obvious than here. He does not hesitate to draw from a very wide variety of sources, religious and secular, from all eras of history. His intent is to demonstrate that antinatalist sentiments have been widespread throughout history. This is one of the big strengths of the book so far.

Another strength of the book is how exhaustive and persuasive it is. De Giraud hits all the points and leaves nothing behind: it’s obvious that he’s not just well read but also has a profound understanding of the subject.

One thing I dislike about the book is how florid the language is. I think he is doing so to make his argument more persuasive. In this he only partially succeeds, and the failures distract from his flow of reasoning.

#### QUOTES:

*“Another argument comes back time and time again from the irresponsibles who breed. They want to “leave something behind.” A curious impulse. Let us first argue from an ethnological standpoint that this seems to correspond exactly to the attitude of many mammals to mark their territory. The dog urinating on a street lamp leaves something behind: this trace, however,*



*unlike the baby's, benefits from the privilege of not having to bear the tiresome constraints of existence..."*

*"The political discourse vaunts procreation for economic aims: we must make more children to guarantee pensions for the next decades, to rejuvenate the aging workforce, to prevent a dangerous reversal of the age distribution, or to sustain industrial growth, etc. So many emetics that are knocked about regularly in the mass media. This is then the theme of the child as wealth-giver: it goes without saying that this argument for procreation as prosperity contradicts the minimum requirements of Ethics, since it is founded on the objectification of the Other, that is to say the principle of slavery... We demand the birth of an individual to help solve our economic problems: how sordid! It is to be regretted that so few politicians are publicly slapped."*

*"We procreate sometimes because of a need, sometimes for pleasure. The former is nothing more than slavery, the latter sadism, but whatever the reason, we only procreate from absolute selfishness! The child is never conceived as an end but always as a means, which is purely machiavellian!"*

**Chapter 3** addresses, not the rationalizations or the dogmas, but the real psychological reasons why people procreate. They are:

- a. Our natural programming
- b. Sadism (knowing the child will suffer and getting joy from it)
- c. Narcissism (having children to satisfy their desires, transmit their genes)
- d. Egocentrism
- e. Infantilism (having children means to go back to an infantile state)
- f. Cultural conditioning
- g. Jealousy (desire for the status granted by procreation)
- h. Pride (of having children)
- i. Exhibitionism (showing off one's children)
- j. Despotism (the inherent fascism of the family structure)
- k. Servitude (of the child to the parents)
- l. Pedophilia (sexual abuse of children)
- m. Other perversions

Since the arguments pertain after all to human psychology, it would be easy for de Giraud to go off the rails into psychoanalysis or some other flummery, but he does not do so. I thought his arguments were particularly persuasive

here. Again he draws both from facts and logic, and from a deep understanding of human psychology.

#### QUOTES:

*“If it was otherwise, if procreation was not the result of the most scandalous narcissism, if our odious parents were really moved by some generosity, prospective adoption candidates would be incredibly more numerous than the millions of children who wait, right now, to be adopted! But talk about adoption and you’ll see a big frown of “yes-but-not-for-me” form on their face, greedy to possess a prey coming entirely from their bodies. Orphans? Someone else’s baby? Come on, get scientists to help vanquish my infertility instead!”*

*“Observe how, intoxicated with presumptions, the future torturer – pregnant woman, I mean – shows herself off from all angles in the certainty that her baby bump makes her the belle of the ball... The pride of the father, who can’t himself harbor such a creation and jealous of such a gestational privilege, is essentially testicular, the baby playing the role of witness to the orderly functioning of his sperm and showing to all and sundry that he had the good fortune to insert his miserable penis between the legs of a consenting female at least once in his life...”*

*“The more a male suffers from frustrations (think of all those paltry procreators, all the professional or affective failures, the innumerable mediocrities who can’t even hide it), the more he will rejoice at the birth of a child that his weakness designates as an ideal scapegoat. All breeders internally rejoice at being able to exert near-unlimited authority over the terrified creature he calls his child... This is how, in final analysis, the family is revealed as the archetype of all fascist regimes. Note that these regimes never cease lauding prolific families and singing the supposed “virtues” of patriarchy! A song and dance repeated by the mafia, great supporter of traditional family values...”*

*“After careful review, we conclude that no child exists for its own ends, we are all merely parental appendages. There is no legitimate child: we are born only to become, in the fullest sense, our parents’ scapegoat. According to the law of human selfishness, if we did not expect the child to heal our wounds, we would prefer not to burden ourselves with it!”*

**Chapter 4** asks the question: given all that's already been said, why do we love our parents? The answers are not too surprising: children "love" their parents out of self-interest, imprinting, conditioning, and the idealization of these parents who, to the young child, seem like the gods of their universe.

**Chapter 5** is even shorter and dedicated to one specific argument, which seeks to demonstrate the incompatibility of ethics and procreation. The argument is the following:

*"Making others suffer is incompatible with Ethics.  
To live is to suffer.  
Therefore to give life is incompatible with Ethics.  
QED"*

This comes at the end of an explanation as to why being against making others suffer against their will is the foundation of all that people have fought for throughout the ages, and the summation of ethical philosophy. Although I think that here, as elsewhere, he can sometimes overstate his case, I don't need to be convinced.

**Chapter 6** is concerned with the right of children to sue their parents for negligence or otherwise not providing for them adequately. He points out the numerous inequities that may befall children and why it makes perfect sense ethically to allow children to have such a right.

#### QUOTES:

*"It's not just suicide that casts blame upon the parents' lost bet: there is anorexia, delinquency, runaways, vandalism, drug use, violence, and all other forms of revolt... So many symbolic methods used by the forcibly-created to hurl their NO at the existence they were burdened with! For those that public hypocrisy tars with the labels "sick", "immature", "dysfunctional", those who are called "crazy", all those victims of being born only adopt such rebellious behaviors because they see their existence not as a blessing but as a harm!"*

*"The first articles of any Charter that aims to protect Children's interests should look something like this:*

- 1. The first right of any child is not to be born.*
- 2. The second right of any child resides in the power to sue, if they deem it necessary, those who grievously harmed them by botching their first right.*

*We can hope that such legislation would strongly encourage parents to acquire the maturity and the skills they need to give their child the greatest standard of happiness!"*

**Chapter 7** concerns overpopulation. Here de Giraud again gathers the quotes and arguments to point out that our level of population is leading us to environmental disaster. This planet may be able to house billions of people, but it cannot sustainably host even a billion people based on the standards of living of the Western world. Not just that, but overpopulation will cause wars, famine and overwhelming misery.

QUOTE:

*"Finally, let me point out to my environmentalist friends, admirable champions of Ethics, that on a planet with failing health due to the irrational quantity of its inhabitants, an environmentalist who reproduces is a dubious environmentalist... Let me remind you that the famous commander Cousteau promoted, with the intent of saving the planet, an optimal number of 800 million human beings: seven times fewer than currently! To work, IUDs! Keep cranking the vasectomies!"*

**Chapter 8** is called "*For agathogenism*", a word which seems to have been created by de Giraud to mean "*procreation according to the Good*". The chapter concerns ensuring that every child is only born to people who are able to raise it perfectly. He asks the obvious question: why aren't there breeding permits? He discusses measures which would work towards agathogenism, including: mandatory parenting classes in schools, psychoanalysis of parenting candidates, and the prohibition of breeding prior to 30 years of age.

**Chapter 9** concerns another coined term, "*Metatocy*", which de Giraud translates as "*transcending the beastial*". His basic thesis is that humans must sublimate their desire for children (a beastial desire, which all animals have) into the desire for intellectual and social works.

**Chapter 10** which, in my opinion, is one of the strongest, concerns feminism and its connection to antinatalism. It continues the discussion of chapter 9, stating that women can only be emancipated when they reject child-raising and strive for excellence (instead of trying to "have it all", which is only a handicap). He also looks at woman-hatred throughout the millennia and concludes that it is displaced hatred of the trauma of birth.

## QUOTES:

*“If you ask yourself why femininity has, at all eras, been subject to such virulent and universal denunciations, we find no other answer than this: all born from a woman’s body and all hating – subconsciously at least – having been born, we can only hate those who carry in their insides the matrix of all our suffering!”*

*“It is of great import to understand that only by dissociating motherhood and femininity can we hope to end Patriarchy, and it is in this enormous work of de-confusion, of semantic de-tangling, that lies the main challenge of future feminism: as long as women invest their identity in motherhood, or claim it as the essence of their destiny, they will only expose themselves to the hatred of the people wounded from being alive, as well as unconscious self-hatred.”*

*“We must say: women have better things to do during the best years of their lives than to raise children which our polluted humanity has no need. We must say: women have better to do with their formidable personalities than suffocate them under a mountain of diapers. We must say: women are wrong to dissolve their talents in the futility of milk bottles. We must glorify the female poets and scorn the breeders.”*

*“Knowing that a frustrated woman will seek a remedy in having children, knowing that a woman in possession of intellectual tools who flourishes outside of the home is a woman who breeds little or none, knowing that a woman who can choose the number of her pregnancies will most often opt for a very reduced number of children to whom she can ensure a quality existence, antinatalism can only push the same way as feminists when they fight against all forms of gender domination and fight for the universal right to contraception, abortion, homosexuality, celibacy, sexual liberation, erotic completeness, choosing one’s career, and the refusal to procreate if they feel called to a higher destiny than that of walking incubator from which must come out more and more children!”*

**Chapter 11** is called “A Brief Eulogy to Adoption”. In this short chapter he notes adoption as another solution and how much harder adoption is than breeding.

**Chapter 12 and 13** are also short and more or less a recapitulation of what came before.

Well, that's my review of the book. I hope you can all read it when it comes out in English, hopefully next year!

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1. A note from Théophile de Giraud (written in summer 2020): an attempt at translation had indeed begun in 2014 but was unfortunately abandoned after a few months because of its unsatisfying quality. Let us hope that this new attempt will meet with a better fate. All comments are welcome.

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