

# COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION

#2

The Play of Opposites.

Under the auspices of **The Ministry of Truth** everything assumes **the potency** of its **OPPOSITE**.

**WORK** is cast as *PLAY*

\*

SERVITUDE as *LIBERTY*

\*

**WAR** as *PEACE*

\*

**IDENTITY** as *INDIVIDUALITY*

\*

SECTARIANISM as *INTERSECTIONALITY*

\*

CENSORSHIP as *FREEDOM*

\*

**DENIAL** as **RESPONSIBILITY**

\*

SUBJUGATION as *DEMOCRACY*

\*

POVERTY as *LUXURY*

\*

AUSTERITY as *GROWTH*

Even Orwell's *1984* is repackaged and sold by the ministry that should despise it.

## BIG BROTHER

embraces Orwellian *satire*  
in order to neuter it.

The *colonising* *play of* OPPOSITES seeks to render **COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION** defunct.

Even the *glimmers of light* which **promise** a genuine **countenance** are soon **usurped** and used for the Ministry's own purposes.

*Choice* is **Neutered** as *consumer freedom*.

*Democracy* is **castrated** under the image of  
**a crude homogenising**  
**populism** that serves an *Elite*.

The ideology of *political correctness* is  
**elevated** into a **mechanism** of the very  
**social control** that it once battled against.

*Flexibility* is used to make us **work longer**.

*Luxury* to dull our senses or keep us wanting **MORE**.

**Ethics** transforms into a **MECHANISM** for the  
*Justification* of **Evil**.

To the **tortured** eyes  
of the *Angel of History*  
all appears as barbarianism.  
*Primitivism* and *Modernism* collides  
as a useless dialectic  
which **Obliterates** the **potentiality** of *Progress*.  
Under the new *theodicy* of the **disenchantment of the world**  
all is rendered *Catastrophic*  
as wreckage piles upon wreckage  
and all that was rendered "Progress"  
is **ANNIHILATED** in the **tumult** of historical  
successions.

Yet the dialectics  
of the *Primitive* and the *Modern*  
cannot be reduced  
to the impotent spectator of catastrophes.

## COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION

seeks to **colonise in reverse**; appropriating from *Evil* and transforming it into *Good*. Equivalence is *transcended* via the contradictions of becoming which blow it into the future.

## COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION

is resuscitated in the *perverse dialectics* which reclaims history by splitting it on a horizontal axes.

## COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION

serves to brush history against the grain.

Everything that is *Good* is *Evil*, but everything that is *Evil*  
**is also Good.**

The spectre of **Fascism** contains a **misplaced**  
“*communism*”, just as *communism*  
contains the spectre of “fascism”.

The resistance towards equivalence is found in the counter-history which rediscovers **the *eternal core* and its *perversion*** simultaneously.

**All hail the glorious irony of the cunning of history:**

The denial of  
the *Eternal*  
preserves  
the *Eternal*,

because even *Evil* itself,  
in order to exert power over mankind,  
must be,

*perversely*,  
grounded on  
the *Good*.

COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION aims to foster a new perceptual apparatus grounded in an *open dialectics* that is ever alert to

the **colonising** play of **OPPOSITES**.

To this end COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION recruits JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU AND SEEKS WITHIN HIS THOUGHT *a model of dialectical thinking* THAT PUSHES THE *play of OPPOSITES* TO THE FORE.

WHEN ROUSSEAU DECLARES THAT

“Man was born free, and everywhere he is in chains”

(Jean Jacques Rousseau, Of The Social Contract, in *Of The Social Contract and Other Political Writings*. Trans. Quintin Hoarke. (London: Penguin Classics. 2012) p. 10)

IT IS ASSUMED THAT HE SEEKS *Paradise* IN WHAT IS ALREADY LOST.

YET HE INSISTS THAT HE SEEKS MERELY TO LEGITIMATE THESE **CHAINS**. THE LEGITIMACY OF **CHAINS**?! THE **SLAVE OWNERS** AND VOICES OF REACTION APPLAUD. BUT THEY ARE TOO HASTY. SURELY THE LEGITIMACY OF **CHAINS** CANNOT MEAN THE LEGITIMACY OF **SLAVERY**?

FURTHER COMPLICATING THINGS ROUSSEAU SOON APPEARS TO AFFIRM THE OPPOSITE.

“For the impulsion of mere appetite is slavery, while obedience to the law you have set yourself is liberty.” (Jean Jacques

Rousseau, *Of The Social Contract*, p. 24)

THUS, **MAN IS BORN IN SLAVERY, BUT COULD BE MADE**  
*free!*

HERE WE HAVE TWO CONTRADICTORY ASSERTIONS. ON THE ONE HAND, MAN IS BORN *free*, BUT EVERYWHERE IN **CHAINS**. ON THE OTHER HAND, MAN IS BORN **ENSLAVED**, BUT CAN MAKE HIMSELF *free*. MAN IS BORN BOTH *free* AND **ENSLAVED**. SOCIETY OFFERS BOTH **SERVITUDE** AND *liberation*. WITHIN THESE COMPETING CONTRADICTIONS EMERGES...

### *The Rousseauian Dialectic.*

*In the Rousseauian dialectics* man's natural **SLAVERY** is **SLAVERY** to himself. The *Primitive* finds, in its own base instinct, a strict master.

The beast chooses or rejects by instinct, man by free action, meaning that the beast cannot deviate from the rule prescribed for it, even when it might benefit from doing so [...]  
Nature commands every animal, and the beast obeys. Man experiences the same impulsion, but he recognises that he is free to comply or resist; and it is above all the awareness of this freedom that reveals the spirituality of his soul... (Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*. Trans. Franklin Philip. (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1994) p33)

FOR *The Beast* THE OPPRESSIVE CHARACTER OF ITS  
NATURAL INSTINCTS ARE OBSCURED. WHATEVER misery  
and austerity THAT MIGHT BLIGHT *the primitive* ARE  
**cushioned** BY IGNORANCE. OF ALL THE ALTERNATIVES  
THAT LIE BEYOND NATURE'S austerity THIS *primitive*  
KNOWS NOTHING OF THEM AND SO CONTENTS ITSELF IN  
ITS PATHETIC EXISTENCE.

YET DESPITE ITS **SLAVERY TO ITS OWN INSTINCT**, IT IS *free*  
FROM ITS SERVITUDE TO OTHERS.

A man might well take the fruits that  
another has plucked , the game he has  
killed, or the cave he uses as shelter,  
but how will he ever manage to exact  
obedience, and what sort of chains of  
dependence will there be among men who  
own nothing? (Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*.  
p52)

WITHOUT *social control* IN THE SERVICE OF PROPERTY  
MAN CAN ONLY AMASS WHAT IS GAINED VIA HIS OWN  
MIGHT. HE HAS NO POWER OVER OTHER BEINGS EXCEPT  
FOR

**the strike of a fist**

OR

*the gnashing of teeth.*

IN ROUSSEAU'S STATE OF NATURE THE ABSENCE OF SOCIALITY SAVES US FROM **social control**. THROUGH SOCIALITY *natural inequality* TRANSMUTES INTO **institutional inequality** AND THE GREATER IT BECOMES. AGAINST the masters of social manipulation ROUSSEAU LAMENTS:

The true founder of civil society was the first man who, having enclosed a piece of land, thought of saying, 'This is mine', and came across people simple enough to believe him. How many crimes, wars, murders, and how much misery and horror the human race might have been spared if someone had pulled up the stakes or filled in the ditch, and cried out to his fellows: 'Beware of listening to this charlatan. You are lost if you forget that the fruits of the earth belong to all and that the earth itself belongs to no one!' (Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*. P55)

**Property** BECOMES **Power**. *Civilization* BECOMES **SOCIAL CONTROL**. THE PROGRESS BEYOND *barbarianism* LIBERATES MAN FROM HIS INSTINCT ONLY TO FALL PRAY TO **SUBJUGATION**. *Civility* LIBERATES THE BEAST FROM ITS *instinct* BUT ONLY BY OFFERING **SLAVERY**.

THE POOR BEAST WISHES TO

*scream out in terror:*

**Retard my brain!**

**Destroy** each fibre of my intellectual being!

**Let me eat from the trough or *starve* in the  
wilderness!**

**Let me return to the misery of nature!**

But it is too late.

Time cannot be undone. *Ignorance cannot be made* and knowledge cannot be unmade. **THE SLAVE** may envy the **savage**, but does not possess the ignorance that tied the **savage** to its **base instinct**. For all the miseries of servitude are underscored with the potentiality of *paradise* and the promise of *paradise* becomes the foundation of **the new servitude**.

**The masters of power** WISH TO RETAIN THEIR DOMINANCE FOR IN THEIR **elevation** THEY TOO INHERIT “a multitude of new needs” (Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*. p66) **The Master RELIES**

**ON THE SLAVE** LIKE **THE SLAVE** RELIES ON **The Master**.

THE TWO BECOME COMPLICIT IN EACH OTHER. “For if he is rich, he needs their service; if he is poor he needs their aid; and even a position in between does not enable him to do without them.” (Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on Inequality*. p66) **A**

**silent WAR IS MADE.** THE MAINTENANCE OF POWER

REQUIRES **the subduing of a multitude** AND EVEN THE RICH MUST

FIND WAYS OF **subduing themselves**. **Power**, NOW MUST SERVE

AGAINST **excessive solidarity of the poor and excessive**

**philanthropy of the rich**. THE NEW POWER

USHERS **WAR** AGAINST ALL.

IN *the Rousseauian dialectic* HOBBSIANISM IS

INVERTED. **Power** BECOMES *Chaos*. *Peace* BECOMES

**WAR**. Order BECOMES *Anarchy*.

**Terror** LINES THE SURFACE OF *civility*.

TO THE SUBJECTS OF *This New Anarchy* primitivism  
OFTEN APPEARS AS *a utopian ideal*, YET primitivism  
CANNOT BE THE ANSWER. The brutal austerity and misery  
of nature offers no **salvation**, if for no other reason than  
the *Gentrified Beast*, now liberated from its  
instinct, lacks the capacity to follow its mere  
biological master and now sees in nature the crude  
empty austerity that *The Beast*, in its ignorance,  
accepted.

**Salvation** WILL BE FOUND ONLY THROUGH *a*  
*Final Synthesis*, THROUGH A SOCIAL CONTRACT  
THAT CAN LIBERATE MANKIND FROM *INSTINCT* AND  
*OTHERS* SIMULTANEOUSLY. MAN MUST NO LONGER BE  
RICH ENOUGH TO BUY ANOTHER, NOR POOR ENOUGH TO  
SELL HIMSELF, AND IN **The New Republican Spirit**  
EACH INDIVIDUAL BECOMES THEIR OWN MASTER  
THROUGH THE NEW DEMOCRATIC APPARATUS  
PRESCRIBING LAWS UNTO THEMSELVES.

*Civilization no longer serves  
to subdue a multitude and  
instead governs a society.*

IN *The Rousseauian Dialectics* WE ENCOUNTER THREE  
PHASES OF HISTORY.

**STAGE 1:**

FREEDOM FROM OTHERS + SLAVERY TO INSTINCT

**STAGE 2:**

SLAVERY TO OTHERS + FREEDOM FROM INSTINCT

**STAGE 3:**

FREEDOM FROM OTHERS + FREEDOM FROM INSTINCT

It is within this **TUSSLE OF HISTORY** that COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION is born. IT SEEKS TO RESIST THE FIRST TWO PHASES OF HISTORY AND PUSH TOWARDS THE FINAL LIBERATION. COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION turns against the savagery of nature and the servitude of civilization and joins the commune in their call for

“the inauguration of luxury of the whole community and the splendours of the future and the universal republic.” (Declaration of the Artist's Federation of the 1871 Paris Commune, quoted in Donny Gluckstein, *The Paris Commune: A Revolution in Democracy*. (London: Haymarket Books. 2006/2011) p.33)

Rousseau is divided into *three*.

1) The Rousseau of the return to nature.

2) The Rousseau of the legitimation of servitude

*and ...*

3) the Rousseau of *the final liberty*.

**Rousseau turns against Rousseau, just as Rousseau turns against Rousseau.**

## **Here Begins The WAR of the Rousseaus**

In the **eyes** of The Ministry each must be appropriated and transformed into something else. Rousseau, the lover of *nature*, is soon taken up as a hero of the new age counter-enlightenment and used as a plea for eco-austerity. In the idea of a return to nature The Ministry turns against rising living standards of the first world working class and their new found "*Luxuries*", and dismisses them *as vulgar excesses of modern living*. In its declaration "back to basics" and its adoration of all that is **green** the ministry seeks to drain the last vestiges of "*Luxury*" that the poor still possess.

ROUSSEAU, **the seeker of legitimacy**, IS ALSO APPROPRIATED BY the ministry. FOR the ministry DECLARE THAT **THEY ARE LEGITIMATE**, DESPITE THEIR INCREASING **TOTALITARIANISM** (*WHICH ITSELF IS DONE FOR "THE GREATER GOOD"*). The ministry IS THE LEGITIMATE VOICE...

*of Freedom*

*of Equality*

**of Justice**

of the common good

*of democracy*

*of diversity*

*of political correctness*

**of security**

**of God**

*of truth*

**OF NEUTRALITY**

**of Hope**

**ALL GRAND IDEAS MUST BE APPROPRIATED AND DRAINED OF THEIR RADICAL POTENTIAL.**

This includes the **Rousseau of *the final liberation***. For even the most radical and emancipatory visions can be transformed into their opposite: into mindless distractions, pseudo-revolutionary violence, state authoritarianism, the creation of new social division, **THE POISONED BATE DRESSED UP IN UTOPIAN PROMISE.**

COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION resists this **colonisation**. Yet COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION is born of the same world as its detractors and **the battle emerges over the same ideological territory**. Tom McDonough recognises this play of opposites in the Situationist International.

Here are the editors of the first number of the Internationale situationniste, writing in 1958 of the capitalist avant-garde, of those scientists pioneering “new techniques of conditioning” the masses, from subliminal advertising to brainwashing: “It is the entire humanist, artistic, and juridical conception of the inviolable, unvarying that is being condemned. We will shed no tears over its passing. However, it must be understood that we will be present at, and take part in, a sprint between independent artists and the police to test and develop the use of new techniques of conditioning.” (Tom McDonough writing and quoting from “Notes editoriales: La Lutte pour le Controle des nouvelles techniques de conditionnement,” in his “Introduction: Ideology and the Situationist Utopia”, in *Guy Debord and the Situationist International*. Ed. Tom McDonough. (Athens, Georgia: MIT Press. 2004) p.xi)

The *capitalist avant-garde* embrace of subliminal advertising and brainwashing may appear as a dangerous spectre to the *independent artists*. Yet these *artists* cannot ignore them. They are both born of the same parents and they both share the same telos:

## THE CREATION OF A NEW HUMAN

The *independent artist* and THE POLICE are increasingly caught in the play of OPPOSITES and **THE WAR** that should divide them shows a striking similarity.

The path of complete police control over all human activities and the pass of infinite free creation of all human activities is one: it is the same path of modern discoveries. [...] we are inevitably on the same path as our enemies – most often preceding them – but we must be there, without any confusion, as enemies. (“Now the SI” quoted in Tom McDonough, “Introduction: Ideology and the Situationist Utopia”, p.xii-xiii)

All becomes one, but one divides into two. **A WAR** is cast of constant appropriation via both sides. And despite the difference in *Utopian Dreaming* the mechanisms deployed bare a striking resemblance.

**We may seek to flee back to** the state of nature, **to have done with** THE MASTERY OF TECHNOLOGY, **but** Primitivism **can no longer offer** *liberation* **to mankind, who need a technical mastery of the future more than ever. But** THE WAR **over** TECHNOLOGY **must be fought in a battle between those who seek hierarchy, subservience and exploitation and those who seek equality and liberation. The two become leaches to each other, seeking the** MASTERY OF TECHNOLOGY **AND FORM in the name of different ideals.**

Only the tortured and self-justifying logic of recuperation could make sense of these competing claims, could, that is reconcile the idea of being “on the same path as our enemies” with the insistence on an absolute distance from them. There is an irony in the use of the idea of recuperation to bolster the alleged purity of the situationist avant-garde, for what is recuperation other than a strategy of mixing, of blending – the heavy artillery with which bourgeois society batters down all Chinese walls of avant-garde isolation? And, to take the argument a step further, could we not posit *détournement*, the situationist strategy of divesting elements of affirmative bourgeois culture to revolutionary ends, of distorting meanings, as the exact corollary of recuperation? If power “creates nothing, it recuperates,” then for the avant-garde “the impossibility of ex nihilo creation” presents a precise symmetry. We can only conclude that the bourgeoisie was as adept at *détournement* as the situationists themselves, that, in fact, recuperation and *détournement* were one and the same, a shared cultural strategy. (Tom McDonough, “Introduction: Ideology and the Situationist Utopia” p.Xiv)

In the persistent *play of* OPPOSITES COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION and indoctrination borrow freely from each other. For this reason COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION must always remain *dynamic*, resisting all false a prioris of progress.

For the dogmatists only a solitary formula can lead to enlightenment, but they quickly find that their formula is persistently used against them. *Nor can COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION embrace "the new" without suspicion.*

**There is no safe space.**

All is open to recuperation.  
Yet détournement always threatens to reinvest the terrain.

**The System absorbs its enemies.**

This is cause for both remorse and elation. For what it neuters it also preserves in sedimented form ready to be *reignited*.

In the hands of **the Ministry** all that glistens with *utopian potential* are used for their ends.

Flexible working becomes precarity

Creativity becomes **GENTRIFICATION**

The welfare state becomes a means to **discipline** the poor.

COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION seeks to rupture this one-dimensional tendency, and to reflect the genuine ideas missed in the ministry's "revolution". COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION seeks to harness the **power of the sign**. COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION seeks to reclaim the power of *iconography* and reveal a new alternative buried in the carnage. COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION seeks to learn from *the masters of design*.

You can solve any brief with an image of an eye. Eyes are both compelling and visually dynamic; a stare can be powerfully hypnotic. Their flexibility in design can be seen in the fact that they have been used to represent both creative individuality in posters for art and design exhibitions, and to portray the terror of Big Brother's all-seeing totalitarian regime in covers for George Orwell's 1984. (John Ingledeu, *The a-z of Visual Ideas: How to Solve any Creative Brief*, (London: Laurence King Publishing. 2011/2013) p.50)

**The eye doubles. The eye of *liberation* and the eye of DOMINATION cannot be strictly separated.** The struggle against misery and austerity lurks at every corner. **The BRAIN POLICE are everywhere, quick to seize your soul. But the Brain Engineers are everywhere too. We are told that Big Brother is watching us, but COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION is looking back.**

Against the Ministry of Truth we declare

**COUNTER-INDOCTRINATION IS WATCHING YOU TOO**

