

PETER BOUSCHELJONG

from *dreaming of one thing*

[subversive chronicle]

i said endurance has its limits people are made of flesh
and bone / i spoke about the stalinists and the method of
executing the very best as traitors / who died screaming
long live the party! / sifis said / the statement is only the
beginning. then they will ask who are your friends. / then
where do they live.

—katerina gogou

i believe at heart that one must not be an accomplice to
lies and compromise, the contemporary artist must scream
out their revolt and make understood that we live in an
unbearable, cruel, and hopeless world; and that if things do
not change and a new consciousness emerge, humanity will
ultimately destroy itself.

—josé revueltas

[1961/62]

in december 1960 the french poet danielle collobert joined a
militant group collaborating with the algerian resistance organisation
fln in its struggle against colonial france. in her *cahiers 1956-1978*
she records her desire to leave, as soon as possible, before the
resistance dies out, to flee from personal boredom + exhaustion. later
she attempts during countless journeys, in which everything more +
more resembles everything else, to lose herself. by all accounts, she

smuggled weapons + money into algeria in support of the movement
[porteurs de valises]. she does not reveal much about her involvement,
keeping her experiences by + large to herself. imagination may be
sufficient to picture what activities she was involved in. the mute
screams. simply in order not to hear oneself. the blocked passageways
to light. the boundless separation, the starting point no longer within
view. who is speaking?

collobert understands algeria as a real beginning to which she
binds her hopes. but as early as february 1962 she declares her
militant activism over + views it as having failed. she is forced to
go into hiding for some time in italy [rome, then venice]. she goes,
she departs, she cannot stop departing, to the point that departure,
that disappearance, finds its fulfillment. a question of distance. her
claustrophobia between the walls of the porte de vincennes, just as
between those of a gallery where she worked for a while [+ which
hardly any visitors ever entered]. unable to take any more she observed
events from the distance. while from the outset she was concerned
with endings. the end of writing, of language, of life. in this not
unlike the naysayers beckett or rimbaud. sensation, the access to
routine things, was lost to her. life without a centre. isolated from the
cries of others, the infection of self-inflicted wounds. erosion of time.
places + travels becoming interchangeable, a kind of nomadism that
she lives, a restlessness or disorientation in which the one is as good
as the other [the hostility of things]. she misses the direct influence of
political events. direct action, she writes, immediately justifies itself
in its entirety. political struggle yields to inner struggle. the events in
algeria have only intensified her feeling of disillusionment.

at around the same time in paris, on the evening of 17 october 1961, while nearly 40,000 people march [following the call of the fln to protest a curfew that forbade algerians to leave their homes after 8.30pm], the security forces of the police + crs open fire on peacefully demonstrating men and women. throughout the city there are confrontations in which people are physically abused or killed [more than 50 algerians alone are driven into the inner courtyard of the prefecture + shot]. many of the victims are later thrown into the seine [dead, unconscious, or chained], paulette péju, *ratonnades à paris*, 1961/2000. the events were concealed + censored for decades. jacques panijel's 1962 film, *octobre à paris (fn, guerre d'algerie)*, work on which begins a day following the massacre, presents in documentary footage + interviews with demonstrators the victims of the police violence. this film, too, was subject to censorship for a long time. at least 14,000 people were then forcefully detained by the police for days in two sports stadiums.

[1949/50]

in *il sogno di una cosa / dreaming of one thing* pier paolo pasolini depicts the struggles + strike actions of a pre-industrial farming milieu [the dream of a revolutionary perspective / friulian heresies], conflicts with the carabinieri, the entry of workers + farmers into the pci against the backdrop of the 'de gasperi's decree', which promised workplaces + subsidies for the unemployed + did not deliver / pasolini's discovery of marx + gramsci [he is secretary of the communist section of san giovanni]. the title of the book refers to marx's quotation :: *hence, our motto must be: reform of consciousness not through dogmas, but by analysing the mystical consciousness that is unintelligible to itself, whether it manifests itself in a religious or a political form. it will then*

become evident that the world has long been dreaming of one thing, [pasolini misappropriates the second part of marx's sentence, at the boundary between dream + reality, to avoid the actual possession of the dream / of daily pitfalls], *of which it has only to be conscious in order to possess it in reality.* [karl marx, *letters from the deutsch-französische jahrbücher: marx to ruge*, 1843]. the investigation of real conditions [*the ruthless criticism of all that exists* / the struggles of the workers' movements], in which the people advance their consciousness. the sensation that everything is concentrated in the throat ... + presses / vocalisations of misery. for marx the transition from radical democracy to proletarian communism occurred in 1843/44. because the proletariat, too, aims to dissolve itself as a class [the concept of a *non-class + dissolution of the existing world order*]. that which pasolini in his 1965 essay *dal laboratorio: appunti en poète per una linguistica marxista* / *from the laboratory: notes en poète for a marxist linguistics* calls an external revolution [that is, the marxist revolution], in the germination of a class consciousness that usurps power.

[1981]

karen brodine, poet, activist + typesetter. *writing about work is a form of sabotage. / stealing, another. running off my poems on the company xerox machine, or copying material about the union / saying the way things really are. the karen brodine papers* (glc 191) [lgbtqia center, san francisco public library]. insights into an alienated, mechanized workday, into the endless diversity of capitalistic exploitation. designs for a resistant texture composed of a combination of writing, political actions + dreams. capillary excess. poetry emerges out of life's non-poetic moments, while one's hands glide over the keyboard. a surface made of thoughts + noises that turns to solid matter that one can touch + form. [*women sitting at the machine, thinking. a series of work*

poems, 1990, red letter press]. activities of *tiny circuits* in which the spirit becomes entangled. the eye's memory + sudden inspiration. swarms of black ants from calloused fingertips. + in the meantime, thinking about the work place + its noxiousness [exploitation/abuse]. the cathode rays of the xerox machine, the carcinogenic chemicals + vapours [brodine died at 40 from the consequences of breast cancer diagnosed too late]. anne boyer speaks in *a handbook of disappointed fate* of how a sick body yields more profit than a healthy, functioning one. the constant surveillance + control mechanisms [the clocking of work hours + breaks, the contractually legitimized humiliations]. atomised dysfunctions of 'intelligent' machines. resistance «.....» precariousness «.....» dependence. stories of systemic, routine discrimination. underpaid, precarious jobs requiring no special qualifications + preferably occupied by women. crises + illness make the rich still richer. brodine's militantly marxist conduct, evoking rejection + silence, illustrate this forcefully. poetry refuses to be complicit with the ever-present world.

[1967/68]

in 1967-71 a group of women workers at the rhodiaceta textile factory in besançon, calling themselves the groupe medvedkine after alexander medvedkin, the russian film-maker + inventor of the ciné-train [the 'train of revolution'], make a series of extraordinarily militant films representing an intellectual confrontation with the workers' struggles. they reject individual authorship + draw upon the heritage of factography [artworks as a factory of facts, see sergei tretyakov, *art in revolution and revolution in art*, 1923]. the collective arose from an encounter between chris marker + the film-production company slon. the background is a strike in which more than three-thousand women workers occupy the rhodiaceta factory [the first

factory occupation in france since 1936] + demand not only a change in working conditions, but above all also access to culture, the denial of which they view as a mechanism to maintain class hierarchy. to overturn the separation between represented + representing, between producers + consumers. the film *classe de lutte* was made in may 1968 + shows the struggles of the young working woman suzanne zedet against prevailing patriarchal relations in a watch factory in besançon. the simultaneity of culture + workers' struggles, the social meaning of poetry + art, that suzanne zedet discovers for herself. a poem, she will say, is just as important as political discourse.

jean-luc godard + the dziga vertov group sought an answer to the question of what a 'picture of the people' would have to look like were it go beyond mere documentation, + in what way cinema would need to participate in the formation of society, with the solidarisation of the working class, without having to relinquish the differentiated formal language of avant-garde film [for godard, vertov embodied the synthesis of formal + political revolution]. the director saw in a film about the workers' struggles an insurmountable problem, as the film maker would not be speaking the language of the workers. on the other hand, viewed from a technological standpoint, the workers certainly possessed the skills to make such a film. but godard feared they could unintentionally falsify their own experience.

in *la chinoise* [1967] jean-luc godard shows the interplay of conception + realisation—*un film en train de se faire*—a marxism after the understanding of louis althusser's [whose theoretical project to make marxism a science declined in reputation, however, following may '68. 'althu sert à rien' / 'althu serves nothing' could be read on the walls of paris; see jacques rancière, *la leçon d'althusser*, 1974].

the rediscovery of marxism as an ensemble of the most elementary, routine actions in the relation of practice + theory in the lives of a group of young students. althusser's pedagogy + maoist rhetoric. the step from abstract thought to concrete political action. to be gleaned in :: althusser, preface to *lire le capital* :: *that is, the need to rediscover and relearn the meaning of existence in the simplest gestures—in the ways in which we see, hear, speak, or read—since such gestures reveal the attitudes that people absorb and reflect in their deeds and their self-destructive apathy.*

[1980]

nanni balestrini published the poetical text *blackout*, whose starting point is the 25-hour blackout in new york on 13 july 1977. *at 9:30 pm the lights went out at 9:40 pm they were already ravaging the shops.* [looting understood as a form of income support + of political purchase that shows emphatically the desire for immediate satisfaction of needs]. *blackout* was originally meant to be performed with the sound artist, singer + activist demetrio stratos in milan's *rotonda della besana*. but on 7 april 1979 a great wave of arrests by the italian state against the autonomia movement began. balestrini [co-founder of *potere operaio* + supporter of *autonomia*] learned from a newspaper report that he was being sought. since, however, the carabinieri perform their search in rome, rather than in his flat in milan, he is able to flee undetected across the alps + into france. demetrio stratos becomes severely ill + ultimately dies a short time afterwards.

this poem should not be published because it is also a political manifesto. arranged according to the musical example of a classical sonata in four movements. a swansong to the political movements +

their struggles in italy during the 1970s, the altercations within the universities, the strikes + acts of sabotage in factories, the uprising of the masses in the streets. the unmasking of state terror + its secret services, the collapse of the constitutional state of which toni negri speaks. *a new concept is emerging it is the concept of direct counterpower.* each of the four chapters is introduced with a definition of a blackout [1. loss of memory 2. the extinguishing of all stage lights to end a play or scene 3. suppression censorship concealment 4. a momentary loss of consciousness or vision]. its strict formalistic composition, every page with two thematic fields that always follow on from what precedes, results each time in new combinations that are developed on the pages that follow + which draw upon 18 sources. tema con variazioni. quotations from newspapers + books, media transcripts. cut-up + remix of the material of words. fragmentation + multiplication of perspectives. deconstruction of relationships. the polyphonous sounds + calibration of their effect on one another + their conveyance into an intertextual collage. the shift between light + darkness. beginning with the description of the gleamingly bright panorama of the mont blanc massif. the infiltration of the text. in the spaces of a creative disorder. fragments are arranged with the help of a patchwork model according to formal rules. of a structure of repeating leitmotifs. shifts between time levels + forms. pictures of individuals that merge into a community. evocation of a collective identity. *as in may 1968 and only recently declared null and void.* discontinuous developments. we try again + again. with different words or forms. permanent breaches in a flood of possibilities. an insurmountable resistance [of the communism of the masses]. the explosion of the *hundreds of thousands of voices.* mayakovsky's *one-hundred and fifty million of a lip-signal system.* the synchronicity of events, of emotions. lines or fragments that free themselves from

their textual bonds, subsequently enter into new alliances, the constitution of a community through poetic logic. the world + its conditions were written all along. irreducible resistance, longing for a revolt. the (re-)creation of a world at the moment of its explosion. balestrini's work is the mapping + reviving of a somnambulant, sleeping body. poetry understood as an alternative draft in content + form, as a quasi opposition to the society of the present.

one sees/one does not see giovanni zibecchi's skull run over by a police truck in the photos by aldo bonasia from 17.4.1975 [printed in *blackout*]

blackout. transformation instigation persecution inhibition. 7 april 1979. the public prosecution department of padua under judge pietro calogero [a member of the pci] initiates criminal procedure no. 710/79a against the *autonomia operaia organizzata*, who are accused of association with the brigate rosse + responsibility for the kidnapping of conservative politician aldo moro + his death. armed insurrection against the state. general criminalisation [the so-called *teorema calogero*]. with the aim of bringing about systemic revolution. confiscation of apparently incriminating materials as well as the journals *rosso autonomia controinformazione*. the criminalisation of an entire decade. *pursue your pursuer with the power of truth* [ugo foscolo, *ultimi lettere di jacobopo ortis*, 1802, whose protagonist lives through the turmoil of the french revolution]. 6000 political activists [no eccentrics or political sectarians whose struggles would have taken place within a social bubble] sit in italian prisons. in a trial between terrorism + subversiveness. among them one of the principal defendants, toni negri [charged with being the secret commander of the brigate rosse]. forced awakenings of a corpse that doesn't really

want it. it sticks out its tongue. which the conjuror neatly removes with a perfect movement.

[1968/1982]

leslie kaplan belongs in 1968 to a series of young, maoist intellectuals who, influenced by the ideas of the cultural revolution, decide to ally themselves with factory workers [the so-called *établis*]. on 13 may, when a general strike grips the whole of france + in the following weeks involves more than ten million workers, leslie kaplan has been recently employed in a washing machine factory in lyon + is responsible for the installation of cables. factory work shocks her. the strike is a liberation. ten years later she writes *l'excès—l'usine* [reading robert linhart's *l'établis*, which presents an account of work as an *ouvrier specialise* at the citroën assembly lines, corroborates her undertaking / linhart belongs to the maoist gauche prolétarienne, which over the years carries out countless political actions + within which many of the 'most significant' intellectuals were organized]. the endlessness of a time standing still. while one carries the factory around with oneself. the factory + the monotony. the microprocesses of production, about which marguerite duras speaks in discussion with leslie kaplan, that destroy the individual + their spirit. the alienation of the workers. the repetition. the compression of various layers. nine levels of circular structures. the compression of time. of consciousness. of pain. of solidarity. the automatisms that set in. the concentric circles of an occurrence. the factory, a universe [here populated exclusively by women / the division of women from men]. a camp. *sure, one can die*. the factory as a political place. a cage. tracks. one goes. one comes. the factory is exchangeable. like the assembly lines.

yesterday i worked the entire day. from 4:00 am i worked at the rate of 400 pieces with a feeling of unspeakable affliction. at 4:00 pm the foreman said to me that if i don't complete 800 pieces, he would have to dismiss me. [simone weil in a letter to boris souvarine, from *la condition ouvriere / journal d'usine*, 1953]. she worked in 1934 in a paris metal factory in order to understand working + living conditions from the roots, rejecting the abstractions of theoretical analysis. the revolutionary hopes of the worker seems illusory to her. she is all the more overjoyed when a fierce wave of strikes is unleashed in 1936 in france + factories are occupied.

the factory that one carries everywhere with oneself. a routine workday that circles around itself. *the air is red.* the work that enters your bones + which one is never rid of. not even during breaks. not even outside the factory. in the canteen. the waxed tablecloths of the canteen that smell the same everywhere. this strange conformity of the 'small' things. the smells, the small chequers of the tablecloths. the pain. the exploitation. *pain is without profit.* [but capitalism has effectively ensured that even pain, even illness, affords profit, cf. karen brodine]. *the body works + crumples.* nothing one can be rid of. not in retirement, not with one's death only a few years later.

on the question of what for her as a writer is the most political sentence, leslie kaplan points to franz kafka's journal entry from 27 january 1922: writing is a leap out of murderers row [*la phrase la plus politique pour moi en tant qu'écrivain*, in: les abassades, a publication of the crl on the occasion of a colloquium in tours 3 + 4 march 2000], in which kafka speaks of the consolation of writing, of this leap from the murderers row of 'act observation', of the unceasing coercion of self examination. kaplan summarizes the leap as an act of

thought + of resistance that enables one to emerge from the endless repetitions, the usual run of things + to start anew.

more than a consolation is :: that you, too, have weapons [franz kafka, *journals*]

[1999]

the film *la commune (paris 1871)* by the british director peter watkins, made with more than 200 actors (the overwhelming majority non-professionals including undocumented migrants, + homeless + unemployed persons) + in thirteen days, each with only one single shot, is a reflection on solidarity + engagement, the necessity of changing social structures, at which conclusion it is not only the 30,000 dead communards of the '*semaine sanglante*' who remain in one's memory.

la commune is filmed in a disused factory at the outskirts of paris that served the former film pioneer georges méliès as film studio + its setting is based on the outline of the 11th arrondissement at the time of the paris commune, in which an above-average number of women workers promoted the uprising. the neon lamps mounted on the ceiling of the hall provide uniform light so that the camera can move freely, without the need to take into account the various light sources on the floor, through the crowds of people + between reality + theatricality, without hiding the artificial constructions of the film set, which makes the long sequences of the 'tv commune' possible, that in abrupt cuts or shifts, the fragmentation of images + statements, the collective voices in the splintering of discourses, the improvisations in front of the camera of an anonymous workforce, reflecting the events, creates a diversity of voices + opinions in

contrast to the coverage of the national tv versailles, in which the roles have long since been assigned + the expert opinions of so-called superiors or government + military representatives are predominantly broadcast :: ‘the commune disseminates disorder. we establish order. the french understand this.’

in brecht’s play *the days of the commune* the worker pierre langevin responds to teacher geniève guéricault’s remark that disunity within the commune is bad, ‘no, it is good, it is movement—provided it is the right direction’.

at the end of *la commune* a female worker states: ‘in this kind of work [that of the communards] there is the possibility of transformation. transformation depends upon all on whether we succeed in bringing our thought + action into harmony + in fighting for our ideals. + this must not necessarily involve physical violence.’

kristin ross proposes the thesis [e.g. in *communal luxury*, 2015] that current occupation movements, such as in zad in notre-dames-des-landes or the indigenous movement in standing rock + their territorial struggles, the formation of decentralised, solidly united communities are much more inclusive [similar to the rebels of the paris commune] than the factory strikes of the 60s + 70s.

[2001]

after the neo-liberal policies of the argentine government led to profound social crisis with high levels of unemployment + an unbridled precarity of working conditions, on 19 + 20 december in buenos aires, following the decision of the finance minister to freeze private savings + thus, in a last-ditch effort, to stall the free fall of the

argentine currency, the people reacted with multiple uprisings + the colectivo situaciones attempted over the next few weeks to picture this response in a series of texts. here the figure of the ‘researcher-militant’ played a characteristic role. a method that closely combined practice + theory, engagement + research + focused upon posing questions [without following any strategic purpose]. a plethora of rebels + accompanying voices run through the texts of the collective that thus preserve a plurality + creativity in the writing + open up access to knowledge of the struggles, without claiming any one truth about what happened on those two days in december. according to the motto of zapatismo :: *preguntando caminamos* [asking we walk’].

the colectivo situaciones speaks of a movement that has no intention of using power, but which hopes rather more to *effect a deposition of power* + the delegitimization of official policy or of so-called representatives [‘*insurrección destituyente*/insurrection to oust the government’ :: *apuntes para el nuevo protagonismo social*, 2002]. as an expression of a social transformation, a new form of socio-political participation, a horizontal layer of action in which hierarchies have no place.

between the power that destroys and the actions of countervailing power there exists an essentially asymmetrical relationship [*colectivo situaciones, el silencio de los caracoles*].

the uprisings, aimed at the entire political class + their system of neoliberal paradigms, lasted uninterrupted — even after the argentine government declared state of siege — for more than 30 hours. the struggles were articulated through new forms of protest + present a kind of laboratory of rebellion. on 19 december there are *cooking-*

pot demonstrations [‘*cacerolazos*’], during which the crowds chant :: ‘stick the state of siege up your asses’. later one could then hear ‘*¡que se vayan todos!*’ [you should all go!]*—two superimposed soundtracks :: the beating of cooking pots + the slogans, of which nearly all that can be understood is their sound. on 20 december there follows open confrontation, the appropriation of local practices of resistance with situative creative power. the forms of action that one knows from the piqueteros :: roads + business blockaded, barricades erected, various different materials + objects set alight. burning tires in an access road in the centre. the collective processes of collective situations. the trust placed by each individual in something shared. plaza de mayo, plaza de los dos congresos. fighting in the plaza de mayo between the rebels + the police. a fleeing president + a police force that shoots into the crowds. afterwards, as always + everywhere, the injured + more than 30 dead. the government stands down. socio-political hierarchies are removed. it was obvious that behind the events there was no particular power. the media report upon the usual spectres + ghosts of the ‘ungovernable’, the same old worn-out patterns of interpretation. the illusory existence of constituted powers. because the representing heads or parties + associations were lacking, those who still believed themselves to speak what others think. spontaneous absences. each leaves the place assigned to them. the radically egalitarian entitlement to political participation [performative practice], the politically emancipatory rupture with the separation of the political + the sensual that alters our perception of social assignments + defined areas of competence [cf. jacques rancière, *le partage du sensible. esthétique et politique*, 2000 & *la nuit des prolétaires. archives du rêve ouvrier*, 1981]. we aren’t talking about a political avant garde that positions itself at the forefront in a process of creative positivity. it is*

the numerous, well prepared + networked movements + cooperatives, lived forms of resistance, that do not emerge out of nothing.

in the subsequent decade they inspire a series of uprisings in latin america that embrace the occupation + recommissioning of bankrupt or defunct factories [the issue of private ownership] + the self administration of schools. alternative forms of living are put to the test, the reappropriation of abandoned neighborhoods.

instead of the utilizable crises + catastrophes, the profitable demise, that is, the forms of protest that capitalism integrates within its systems + ultimately neutralizes, the comité invisible recognises only the *deposed insurrection* as able to prevent the failure of revolutions that in the end only replicate what they rebel against. *in terms of a destituent logic, the struggle against state and capital is valuable first of all for the exit from capitalist normality that is experienced therein, for the desertion from the shitty relations with oneself, others, and the world under capitalism.* [comité invisible, *maintenant*, 2017]. to make oneself ungovernable. the subjective expression of an objective disorder. people who affiliate themselves with various forms of resistance. potencies of invisible parties. utopian thought can only then function if it breaks free of its own myth. *the destituent gesture is thus desertion and attack, creation and wrecking, and all at once, in the same gesture.* pillage, that can equally be understood as a form of self limitation. marcello tarí writes in *there is no unhappy revolution*, 2021, that only a revolutionary-proletarian dimension of the political as such is able to effect a true rupture with the present, a revolutionary becoming that gives free rein to the imagination [with the enthusiasm of a child].

tarí addresses the demands of the 2001 protesters :: everyone must go, the governors + bosses, the liars, all politicians, all cowards, all the corrupt + the corrupters, everyone must go. they have to go, they will not be shot or guillotined, they must simply disappear, now. a protest directed at the entire political system. while the ballot boxes cannot be large enough for our conceptions of politics [+ our dreams].

marcello tarí, *there is no unhappy revolution :: colectivo situaciones began their analysis of the argentinian insurrection with a significant theoretical gesture, defining it not as a large-scale social movement or a political practice (however extraordinary) but instead as an "ethical operation."* knowing how to make this distinction between social movement, political practice, and ethical operation is no easy exercise, given how we are used to putting homogeneous labels of "movement" and "politics" on an extremely diverse array of events and processes, without any clarity as to what these words might even mean. [...] a social movement can march through cities and perhaps block the streets, occupy houses, and, if it is strong enough, even declare a strike—but in an insurrection a people is born, in a revolution a class is constituted.

to disrupt flows of goods + money means to intervene directly in networks of control + destroying the picture they project of a united world kept alive by an omnipresent technological system of policing.

donatella di cesare writes in *il tempo della rivolta* of the predominant political tendency + its medial narrative, in which current, global revolts are viewed as a pre-political, infantile expression of opinion that lacks the ability to formulate its demands. the usual public view is directed towards a projected lack of clarity, a spectacle, presented

as an unmanageable chaos, 'because revolts break through and surpass the logic of institutional politics'. while politics exhausts itself in the regimenting + penalising actions of the police + judiciary.

protest remains a nomad, camped in tents at the city periphery along with migrants, the stateless, the ostracised, the homeless & vagrants. [donatella di cesare]

while the laws of capital [+ of a state granting its own legitimacy, but which no longer represents a predominant majority] continue to find application through the cudgels + bullets of the police,—the encroachment of interpretative violence—the tailored punishments, the mechanisms of containment + deprivation of liberty, the boundaries of its exercise of violence shift in an unimaginable manner. the collapse of capitalism is obvious, but it repeats itself as permanent catastrophe.

[1968]

un fantasma recorre méxico / a specter haunts mexico is the first text written by the mexican poet, revolutionary + marxist theoretician josé revueltas following the student massacre on 2 october at the plaza de las tres culturas in the tlaxelolco district [it is the same spectre that haunts the first pages of the communist manifesto], after disappearing underground in the wake of the military occupation of the unam [*universidad nacional autónoma de méxico*] — + forced to remain on the move + to travel from one end of the city to the other. *i begin to write these notes in a large and orderly room, in some house in some neighborhood in the city, today, tuesday, 29 october.* on the day before his arrest he holds a lecture on the campus. he spends the following night on the university grounds. at his writing desk

he not only works, but rests + sleeps. early in the morning he leaves the campus + attempts to evade his pursuers—changing cars several times during his journey—but is nevertheless discovered a short time later at his accommodation. *one doesn't know what it means, what that thing is about putting together words, in a world, an unbreathable void in which all of them seem to have been broken without daring to say what has happened, what they designate [...] in reality i had started taking notes in early may, before the movement. one day sooner or later i will reconstruct—in the ever-new light, new at every minute and every hour—of this vertiginous, changing, ungraspable life in which something that in its time had an enormous or anxious importance afterwards seems unreal, dream-like, and lived in all unlikelihood, as though we ourselves were our own story, our own distant story as told by others.* revueltas allied himself with the students. he wrote countless essays + manifestos with the student protests as their subject. owing to his role as apparent intellectual spokesperson + ideologue of the movement he is sentenced to 16 years imprisonment. as if the causes of the protests + revolts did not lie in the social inequalities, the exploitation of people + resources, the lived corruption of so-called elites, the intentional minimisation of the life chances of entire generations, but only as the result of intellectual incendiary agents provocateurs. on 13 may 1971, after two years' incarceration, revueltas is finally given early release from lecumberri prison.

in *méxico 68: juventud y revolución* revueltas writes that mexico's student youth movement, like the students of the french may '68, had stood on the side of the working class in order to achieve their goals. he highlights the revolutionary movement of may '68 in france as a model for mexican society, holds in esteem the uncompromising demands + negotiations with employers + the

government. in *revueltas'* understanding the '68 movement, each + every demonstrator [the polyphony of voices + opinions / the meeting of the most diverse currents] is a participant in the creation of the democratic process of history, without any hierarchy of persons or event [horizontal + egalitarian], bound to a sequence of moments that defy clear definition. *un movimiento, una bandera, una revolución.* the moment of equal participation for all. moments that set an arduous transformation in motion + are able to bring about a transformation of society. each revolt, no matter how successful it is, serves the following as a matrix + draft of a script still being written [a work in progress]. the revolution is not the work of a single day or year, says revueltas, but of an entire lifetime. intensities that unexpectedly erupt anew in other times + inspire a subsequent generation. radical social transformations to be protected from all forms of bureaucratisation + usurpation by parties + their dogmas.

in contrast to many other writers revueltas did not merely experience the events of '68 from afar. for him it is not some whim of youthful spontaneity. he is obsessed with '68 + maintains that the revolters + their radical slogans, the unanticipated graffiti on the walls of the university, its unprecedented means differentiate it from all previous uprisings. *i believe that the experience of 1968 is highly positive and that it is going to lead to enormous benefits, on the condition that we know how to theorize the phenomenon.*

revueltas viewed the october revolution of 1917 as a manifestation of the idea of a *cognitive democracy*. an experiment in which various ideas + projects, which had more or less foundered historically, were realised. revueltas was a marxist heretic with a radical understanding of freedom. a stranger to any dogmatism, he never subordinated his

thoughts + his work to any kind of power. he joined the communist party of mexico in 1930, was expelled from it in 1943, only to join again in 1956—four years later he was expelled by the party for a second time. he was a co-founder of the leninist spartacus league (*liga leninista espartaco*), but later was banned even from this.

in the early period of his imprisonment—after the massacre of students + workers—*revueltas* was instead a political captive in lecumberri's cell block 1 for common prisoners + criminals. he remained awake virtually day + night, fearing at each hour for his life. at this time he developed the idea of *el apando* [*the hole*]. in this text he analyzed the complexity of freedom's possibilities, the situative + spatial conditions that allow one to feel a sense of freedom or the longing for it. in any place that seems to be the most distant. for *revueltas* freedom is inconceivable without this withdrawal [imprisonment, dictatorship, migration, the criminalisation of political dissidence]. he writes in his diarios de lecumberri [lecumberri diaries] :: [8 february 1970] [...] *for the essence of freedom lies precisely in the richness of its options, a richness that, explained in abstract terms, is reduced to its most extreme limits only when faced with the imminence of death. The problem here is that unfreedom represents a kind of death, a constant imminence of death, that renews itself each day for years [...]*

with *palabras finales* *revueltas* answers the judges + public prosecutors that had condemned him :: *who can prevent what it is we're struggling for, from prison, armed with criticism and thoughts? herein lies the inconsequence of those who have convicted us. they have been unable to sentence us to death, not because such a penalty is not inscribed in the legal code, nor because it is outside of their power to murder us—as demonstrated by the vandalic assault we suffered on*

january 1 of this year [*revueltas* is referring to an attack by common prisoners, mostly criminals—pumped full of drugs—on political ones, orchestrated at the behest of the guards] *but because they cannot murder what we represent.*

[1977]

on 24 march, the first anniversary of the military coup in argentina, the journalist + author rodolfo walsh wrote an open letter to the military junta [*carta abierta de un escritor a la junta militar*], in which he names the junta's atrocities + repression + denounces its ever-disastrous economic policy + their impacts especially on the working class [in the clear knowledge that this would further increase the attention he would receive from the generals] :: *the censorship of the press, the persecution of intellectuals, the raid on my house in el tigre, the dear friends murdered by you, and the loss of my daughter, who died fighting you: these are among the circumstances that have made me resort to this clandestine form of expression, after nearly thirty years of having freely given my opinion as a journalist and writer.* [the year before, his 26-year-old daughter victoria had shouted from the roof terrace of her shelter, which was surrounded by more than 150 soldiers + in which she + other comrades had resisted the military for one + a half hours :: *you are not killing us we decide for ourselves when we die* + took her own life with her own weapon. she had been the officer of the guerilla organization *montoneros*, responsible for the trade-union press. rodolfo walsh dedicated a story to her + recorded it :: *vicky could have chosen other paths that would not have been less honourable, but the one that she did choose was the most just, generous, and reasonable. her clear-sighted death is a synthesis of her short, beautiful life. she lived not for herself, she lived for others, and these others are in their millions*]. on 25 march, after walsh set off for

a meeting in the centre of buenos aires — he had shortly beforehand tossed copies of his letter into a postbox — he was ambushed [a comrade had revealed the meeting place under torture]. in order not to fall into the hands of the enemy alive, he attempts to defend himself with a tiny revolver that he carried with him at all times during his last months + is hit during an exchange of fire with the task force *grupo de tareas* 3.3.2. his body is taken to the dictatorship's largest secret prison [esma]. a detained friend who happens to see him there testifies that his chest was riddled with bullets. his body remains undiscovered to this day. *fifteen thousand disappeared persons, ten thousand prisoners taken, four thousand dead, tens of thousands landless peasants—together, these comprise the naked cipher of the terror i speak of* [in the course of one year]. the denunciation of the forms of absolute [metaphysical] torture.

according to walsh, writing literature is closely connected to forms of political militance. subversive reportage [documentary literature], the factual report or as ricardo piglia suggests in an interview with walsh :: the *literatura fakta* of a sergei tretyakov that attentively analyzes socio-political changes + renounces fiction, committed to an obsessive search for truth. against a bourgeois notion of literature, because the critique of actual conditions, as soon as it is translated into a fictional character or the 'art of the novel', no longer appears to be anyone's business. *today i think that not only is it possible that art be directly related to politics, but, since in retrospect i am much annoyed by the crutch we had to use for years, i would like to reverse the situation and say that today i cannot imagine art that is not directly related to politics, to the current situation in a certain country; when this is not the case, for me it is lacking something as art [...] because today in argentina it is impossible to make literature detached from politics or to make art*

detached from politics. that is, if it is detached from politics, it is neither art nor politics by that definition alone.

at the start of the 70s walsh had attached himself to the revolutionary struggle + belonged to the left-wing peronist guerilla organization *montoneros*. among whose ranks the poets juan gelman + paco urondo also fought the dictatorship. *weapons have weight, but they don't think* [juan gelman]. later they were among the editorial staff of the newspaper *noticias*, published within montoneros' sphere from november 1973 until august 1974. over time, though, they came to criticize the orientation + strategy of the guerrilla organization, the increasingly hierarchical structures. gelman, who was on the list of the fascist death squads, departed overseas in 1975. the military coup in the following year prolonged his exile to rome, madrid + paris, then later mexico. the bloody madness of the argentine dictatorship became the content of numerous newspaper articles by gelman.

in *los poemas de julio greco, siempre la poesía / the poem of julio greco, on poetry*, juan gelman writes that *poetry should be made by all, not only by one / as if one were to say that the earth were for all and not only for one* :: an expression of poetic communism. poetry must have practical truth as its goal [lautréamont, *poésie*, 1870 / lautréamont's *poesien* can be read as prologue to the paris commune, the destruction or plagiaristic misappropriation of bourgeois modes of being]. the certainty in the mind of the comrade. the burning soul that blocks the course of the bullet. of the wild political poet gelman. *with these verses you will make no revolution*. or settle accounts yet to be settled. to call to mind, keep accounts. a signal that begins to gleam in the middle of the night. concealment in cellars, the electric circuits of closed paths.