

I want to talk about not talking about sex; or, more precisely, I want to talk about why someone who professes total social liberation should choose to not talk about sex.

The Situationist International (SI) famously held that all social interaction is mediated by the spectacle, which is the culmination and controlling mechanism of consumer capitalism. Guy Debord argued that within the society of the spectacle “everything that was directly lived has receded into a representation,” and though the spectacle itself is more than a collection of images, “it is a social relation between people that is mediated by images.”¹ Any oppositional cultural critique, any assault upon the spectacle, must necessarily be levelled at the totality of spectacular society’s modes of domination: “A revolutionary organisation must constitute an integral critique of society, that is, it must make a comprehensive critique of all aspects of alienated social life while refusing to compromise with any form of separate power anywhere in the world.”²

Although Debord’s *Society of the Spectacle* (1967) made the above claims for an “integral critique of society,” in laying out the SI’s critical framework the text’s own focus remained grand and abstract. The SI used its journal *Internationale Situationniste* to transpose this ambition to totality into the critique of “all aspects of alienated social life” by investigating a range of isolated social phenomena through the critical prism of the spectacle. Yet between the twin foci of Debord’s grand theorisations and the journal’s more localised pursuits, there remained a conspicuous absence in the SI’s agenda: the issues of sex and sexuality.

At the very least, one might have expected some attention to sexual matters in terms of a historical analysis of the degradation of sexual experience via the spectacle, or as an exploration of the mutual imbrications of sexual and situationist revolutions. For instance, the SI introduced the notion of the “constructed situation” as “a moment of life, concretely and deliberately constructed by the collective organization of a unitary ambience and a game of events.”³ Borne of the dialectical encounter between conscious action in a particular environment and a quasi-Surrealist faith in the emancipatory potential of chance, the constructed situation was intended to provide a brief glimpse of a life beyond the spectacle. Why not extend the method of the constructed situation to the arena of uninhibited sexual activity between two or more consenting individuals? (Or even the solo individual: does not masturbation have its own history of posing a subversive threat to stultifying moral decency?). In *One Dimensional Man* (1964), Herbert Marcuse made explicit the relationship between sexual activity and environment in order to demonstrate capitalism’s de-eroticisation of whole dimensions of human experience: “compare love-making in a meadow and in an automobile, on a lovers’ walk outside the town walls and on a Manhattan street. In the former cases, the environment partakes of and invites libidinal cathexis and tends to be eroticized.”⁴ With so much apparent affinity between sex and situation, why did the Situationists themselves not seize on sexual activity as a practice that could allow the individual to experience directly his or her own species-being beyond the reified images through which spectacular life is lived? This essay will explore this absence before turning to make some theoretical observations intended to gesture towards an approach to sex not undertaken by the SI but nonetheless commensurate with situationist thinking.

Everything that the Bourgeois Scum call Debauchery

The Situationists' unwillingness to talk explicitly about sex is particularly surprising given their immersion in various discourses that were, in the late 1950s and 1960s, shifting popular and critical attention towards matters of sex and sexuality. The association between the SI and Henri Lefebvre reflects the group's proximity to the current of leftist thought that moved away from orthodox political organisation and towards the politics of the everyday, which for Lefebvre, as for Marcuse, had necessitated a critique of how the changes in post-war capitalism had affected sexual behaviour.⁵ Similarly, the SI was active during the great age of counter-cultural sexual liberation. Although Guy Debord and his comrades were certainly removed from the free-lovin' hippies of the Woodstock generation, there remained an undercurrent of sexual rebellion that pervaded the French group's concerns. So it is perhaps misleading to suggest that sex was completely absent from situationist theory, but the question of sex was broached primarily by way of allusion and intimation.

To explore the Situationists' reluctance to engage head-on with matters of sex and sexual liberation, there are two questions with which I shall begin. Firstly, in order to recognise how the Situationists themselves acted, behind their rhetoric and self-mystification, I shall indulge in some biographical inquiry: what type of sexual activity accompanied situationist critique? Or, in Marxist terminology, what was the Situationists' *sexual praxis*? The second question—one that needs to be posed in order to establish what role sex plays in the situationist revolutionary programme—is even more speculative: what would situationist sex be?

The biographical focus of the first question is less prurient than it may first appear, though I want to be careful when looking towards members of the group's private lives for answers to questions generated by their creative and theoretical production. The SI created its own image through a constant interplay of reality and myth, from Debord's self-eulogization, to the journal's complex juggling of anonymity and celebrity, to René Viénet's aggrandised claims of the group's involvement in the *événements* of May '68.⁶ In true avant-gardist fashion, the Situationists also insisted on the necessary proximity between their lives and their critique. In the collectively written 'Questionnaire' from the ninth issue of *Internationale Situationniste* (1964), the Situationists emphasized that their approach needed to be an active, involved and participatory one. They were to practice what they preached. So, in response to the question, "Is there a relation between your theories and your actual way of life?" they wrote:

Our theories are nothing other than the theory of our real life and of the possibilities experienced or perceived in it. As fragmented as the available terrains of activity may be for the moment, we make the most of them. We treat enemies as enemies, a first step we recommend to everyone as an accelerated apprenticeship in learning how to think. *It also goes without saying that we unconditionally support all forms of liberated behaviour, everything that the bourgeois and bureaucratic scum call debauchery. It is obviously out of the question that we pave the way for the revolution of everyday life with asceticism.*⁷

The Situationists' response indicated what type of sexual behaviour they were advocating: situationist sex, it would seem, would need to be anti-ascetic, anti-bourgeois, debaucherous, and liberated on all fronts. More problematic is their assertion that this should go without saying. I shall arrive later at some biographical accounts that suggest what, sexually, the Situationists were up to, but first I want to consider how the SI went no further than flirting with the question of sexual revolution. What, precisely, had gone without saying?

Howls in Favour of Sade

The questionnaire's brief intimation of what situationist sex would look like immediately associates the SI with the tradition of effusive sexual deviancy heralded by the Marquis de Sade, whose name reappeared throughout the SI's oeuvre although they were to consistently avoid a sustained engagement with either his actual work or his (sex) life. Whilst they considered themselves to be of the same "line of contestation,"⁸ the Situationists were content with an uncomplicated characterisation of Sade. The same goes for Sade's contemporary Charles Fourier, who largely disagreed with Sade but nonetheless placed equal importance on a systematic investigation of even the most obscure sexual acts as a necessary precondition for any social reorganisation. The SI regularly dropped Fourier's name but never explored his sexual philosophy to any depth, as demonstrated in the tenth *Internationale Situationniste* (1966), in which Raoul Vaneigem added "Homage to Charles Fourier" to a list entitled "Some theoretical topics that need to be dealt with without academic debate or idle speculation."⁹ Reminiscent of the title of Debord's first film, *Howls in Favour of Sade* (1952) – whose own narration admits that 'no one talks about Sade in this film'¹⁰ – Vaneigem's proposed homage to Fourier was never realized.

We can read the "Some theoretical topics..." article, however, as more than a situationist to-do list or an act of idle namedropping. The article demonstrates how the SI constellated their predecessors in much the same way that André Breton's "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924) made the claim that surrealist impulses could be found in writers as diverse as Swift, Poe, Baudelaire and Mallarmé. Breton also claimed Sade: 'a Surrealist in sadism'¹¹. The Situationists incorporated Fourier and Sade as the exemplars of sexual subversion, just as they (the Situationists) took their poetics from Lautréamont (also recycled from Surrealism) and their councilist politics from Cornelius Castoriadis' *Socialisme ou Barbarie* group. We can recognise that, for the SI, to "unconditionally support" figures like Sade or Fourier meant little more than to convert their names into signifiers of, or gestures towards, radical sexual liberation without lingering too long on the content and the tensions of their actual texts.¹² Retrospectively, this seems to us an uncomfortably spectacularized tactic in which scandal trumps sincerity and infamy analysis.

Today, much later in the development of neoliberal consumerism in which all that was taboo is available and all that was obscene is sold, simply intimating towards radical or extreme sexual practices is not enough to *épater la bourgeoisie* as it might have been prior to the consolidation of what the SI called the spectacular-commodity society. Despite their initial shock or fascination, the writings of Sade, for example, represent little that modern capitalism cannot accommodate. Pornography has become (somewhat) legitimized or de-sensationalized by its sheer ubiquity and profitability. This is not to say that Sade is boring or passé, but the fact that his writings are available on the high street reflects the degree to which they have been comfortably assimilated. This situation stands in contrast to the experience of founding SI member Ralph Rumney, who during the 1950s was only allowed to read Sade in Halifax library in the presence of a representative of the Archbishop of Canterbury. When the librarian realised what Rumney was reading, Rumney was branded a "disgusting, perverted brat."¹³

Even prior to the liberalization of sexual behaviour ushered in during the 1960s, the Situationists' conversion of the figures of Sade and Fourier into signifiers of sexual transgression demonstrates little more than a juvenile desire to shock and offend. Indeed, in its earliest stages, before 1962 when it disavowed artistic production in favour of a more theoretical focus, the SI had been relatively content with provocation by any means necessary. In a letter from January 8th, 1958, Debord advised Pinot Gallizio that, if they were to represent the Situationists, his "paintings must be the most *stunning*, the most *shocking* possible."¹⁴ As it refined its critique of the spectacle, the SI was caught between its impulse to shock and offend, the Sadeian affront to bourgeois decency, and the recognition that even the most explicit or extreme imagery is easily co-opted by

the spectacle. The SI named this process of deradicalisation and commodification “recuperation.”

Revolution Is Not “Showing” People Life, It Is Making Them Live

The problem of recuperation as conceived by the SI was that the emphatically visual operation of the spectacle could easily claim as its own any oppositional image generated by and for the situationist programme. Yet to address and confront spectacular society, to speak its language, representations of situationist sex needed necessarily to themselves be visual, and thus susceptible to recuperation. The SI shrank away from this antinomy with a profound distrust of the visual, as terrain entirely and irrevocably colonised by the spectacle. The SI even decided that a work of art produced by a Situationist must be considered anti-situationist, precisely because of its engagement with the spectacular order.¹⁵ As the SI came to equate the visual image with repression and with the spectacular order, the image became an obstacle to sexual freedom.¹⁶

The SI explored the spectacle’s co-option of explicit sexual imagery by reproducing in its journal images of scantily-clad women from pornographic magazines, usually with the addition of a speech-bubble praising workers or quoting Marx. Pornographic images epitomise Debord’s understanding of the spectacular image in that, for Debord, they replace sexual experience with its representation whilst simultaneously reifying the sexual figure. According to the SI, the pornographic image reduces a sexual desire predicated on direct experience of the body and of the environment into an alienated engagement with a world of surfaces that offer nothing more than visual titillation. With their speech-bubbled slogans, the Situationists attempted literally to inscribe such images with alternative, radical, meanings. The juxtaposition of the newly-added political sentiment with the lascivious image, the suggestion that an image of a nude model could be anything more than an image of a nude model, as well as the implied association between life under the spectacle and prostitution, were all intended to expose the alienation embodied and propagated by the original image. Whilst the gaze that these recontextualised images elicit is complicated, they serve to demonstrate the degradation of sexual experience and the commodification of (an almost exclusively female) sexuality affected by the spectacle. Kelly Baum’s investigation into “The Sex of the Situationist International” emphasizes the latent sexism of much of the SI’s visual production, but nonetheless reads the salacious images reprinted in *Internationale Situationniste* as the presentation of the “becoming-commodity” of desire and cites Debord and Pierre Canjuers on striptease as “the most obvious form of the degradation of eroticism into a mere spectacle.”¹⁷



« L'émancipation des travailleurs sera l'œuvre des travailleurs eux-mêmes. »

Image from *Internationale Situationniste* 9¹⁸

The term that the SI coined for the practice of superimposing different messages onto the spectacular image was “détournement.” As the principle situationist aesthetic tactic, détournement elsewhere attempted to negate the spectacle’s own aesthetic production through fragmentation, recontextualisation, and subversion. Détournement, quite conveniently, did not require the SI to produce its own images of sex or sexuality. As such, they retreated from conventional artistic production. Instead, the situationist image performed the role of dialectical negation, “the détournement of pre-existing aesthetic elements.”¹⁹

Indeed, as early as 1952 Debord himself was retreating from the production of visual images, sexual or otherwise. His film *Howls in Favour of Sade* (1952) consists of a predominantly black screen without any sound, which was interspersed periodically with nothing more than a white screen and some fragmented voiceover. The film contains nothing of the sexual exuberance suggested by its title. As a gesture of iconoclasm, *Howls in Favour of Sade* allows no compromise whatsoever with the image and visually offers nothing apart from its oscillation between light and dark. Such a denial of visual satisfaction, here and elsewhere, attracted the accusation of asceticism, or at least of bourgeois prudishness. Martin Jay recognises in Debord a puritanical streak at odds with the debauched and orgiastic sexual praxis that the SI claimed to herald:

For all their hopes for happiness in the festival of unalienated existence, there was something of the ascetic suspicion of the “lust of the eyes” in the Situationists’ relentless hostility to visual pleasure in the present. When Debord insisted that “revolution is not ‘showing’ people life, it is making them live,” there was a touch of the stern Rousseauist injunction to force people to be free by compelling them to shut their eyes to illusion, whether they wanted to or not.²⁰

The Situationists’ (anti-)aesthetic was so dry, so bitter, so removed from the pleasure that we expect (and want) to feel, that it is easy to imagine the Situationists as asexual ascetics in spite of their professed support for “all forms of liberated behaviour.” Yet the aforementioned “Questionnaire”’s vehement opposition to the SI’s association with asceticism (“it is out of the question that we should pave the way for the revolution of everyday life with asceticism”) suggests that the SI were conscious of the fine line between their resistance to the spectacular image and the ascetic’s abstinence from (visual) pleasure. There is, however, a difference between Jay’s conception of asceticism—one based on a “suspicion of the lust of the eyes”—and the SI’s understanding of asceticism as a becoming-desensitised to the excess of fraudulent and superficial—in their terminology, *inauthentic*—visual pleasure offered by the spectacle. Vaneigem explained that,

Taken over body and consciousness by the blandishments of a succession of images, [modern man] rejects authentic satisfaction and espouses a passionless asceticism: his pleasures are so mitigated, yet so demonstrative, that they can only be a façade.²¹

Whilst they renounced stoical restraint and self-denial, the Situationists were at pains to discover a visual register that could simultaneously reflect their sense of playful abandon and avoid spectacular recuperation. Détourned porn does not manage to offer up a positive sense of what situationist sex (as an alternative to spectacular sex) would look like: it lacks the libidinal energy or sexual abandon that we would expect from an assault on asceticism. The détourned image offers no reprieve from or solution to the regime of visibility pre-established by the spectacle.



Tract clandestin en Espagne. « Je ne connais rien de mieux que coucher avec un mineur asturien. Voilà des hommes ! »

Image from Internationale Situationniste 9²²

The problem, of course, was that situationist sex could not be allowed to look like anything, as its visual representation foredoomed it to recuperation. If the spectacle served to replace lived experience with representation, with images, then the movement that the Situationists needed to catalyse from asceticism to sexual abandon needed to reverse this process and gesture towards a sexual practice not mediated by the spectacle. Given this impasse, situationist practice seems tentatively to have gestured towards a non-visual sexual repertoire, to a sexual desire not determined by the gaze. This approach to sexuality required a non-spectacular liberation from bourgeois sexual values, a liberation without images; and as vulnerable as this denial of vision is to the accusation of censorship or asceticism, it nonetheless corresponds with the SI's rejection of didactic Utopianism in favour of individual experimentation and free play.²³ Absence of sex, or at least of its visual representation, would not mean sexlessness. This work, however, reveals a tactical disjuncture between the group's lived sexual praxis and what it chose to represent in its theoretical work.

The SI's experiments with a sex-without-image can be located in Michèle Bernstein's novel, *All the King's Horses* (1960), not least because the novel does not trade in visual images other than those evoked by language. *All the King's Horses* engages with the spectacle's treatment of sex by acting as a détournement-cum-pastiche²⁴ of Pierre Choderlos de Laclos' scandalous tale *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (1782) which had, when Bernstein's novel was first published, only recently been made into a film by Roger Vadim (1959). Bernstein replaces graphic depictions of sex with a coy self-censorship, and exchanges overt eroticism for wink-wink suggestiveness. The novel also offers further insight into the SI's lived sexual praxis, as Bernstein wrote the novel to generate funds for the group, and her adaptation recounts the extra-marital affairs of a couple transparently modelled upon Bernstein herself and her then-husband Debord.

All the King's Horses

Bernstein's novel moves blithely through the infidelity of the husband Gilles with a younger woman, followed by the wife Geneviève's coupling with a younger man and then another woman. As an autofictional²⁵ account, the novel provides a brief glimpse into Bernstein and

Debord's relationship and its suggestion of sexual freedom and nonchalant transgression of dominant sexual morality. For instance, when Geneviève is asked by the younger man, Bertrand, whether she is sleeping with him or with Gilles, she answers casually, "Often with Gilles. Most of the time it's Gilles."²⁶ Geneviève and her husband sleep with other people, seemingly without betraying the emotional bond they share with each other. The fact that they are sexually open serves to reinforce their own partnership, an arrangement explained by Geneviève: "because if Gilles ever stopped liking the same girls I did, it would have introduced an element of separation between us."²⁷

Despite the novel's preoccupation with sexual activity, the sexual act itself remains underrepresented. Instead, sex enters the narrative only via oblique allusion, often with the tackiness and cheekiness of a pulp novel. For example, the narrator reveals about one sexual encounter that "Unexpected things happened that night. In the morning we hadn't slept at all."²⁸ Between these two sentences, we can imagine a curtain falling or a fade to black as the sexual act is left unwitnessed. The temporal ellipsis signified by the full-stop obscures the event itself, which is bracketed by the two sentences. We get foreplay and post-coitus, but no sex. The narrator later recounts another night of passion:

Our gaze hardened. Then she rested her head against me, in surrender. I let it happen.

"Come," she said.

I never saw a girl undress so fast.²⁹

This passage is loaded with suggestive double-entendres which narrativise the sexual encounter: "hardened," "surrender," "come." The "it" of the third sentence, unnamed and without direct referent, is presumably the sexual act, or at least its immediate prelude. The bawdy final sentence functions as a bathetic release of tension. Again, the event itself is eclipsed, and in the blank space between this paragraph and the next we are forced to write for ourselves the details of the night. The narrator has performed a sort of syntactical censorship by simply breaking off the paragraph as the characters begin to copulate, and resuming the narrative when they wake up the next morning, as though a chunk of the text had literally been cut out.

Sex remains invisible, despite the novel's otherwise uninhibited series of events. The exclusion from the text of actual representations of sex enacts some degree of resistance to the spectacle's treatment of sex by refusing the spectacle's immediate gratification of what the SI considered to be inauthentic pleasure. The narrator maintains a protective distance between the sexual act and its representation, and encourages the reader to imagine for oneself what is left uncommunicated by the narrative. This is the same tactic that we have already recognised in Debord's declaration that "revolution is not 'showing' people life, it is making them live," which Jay has characterised as prudish. Though we must bear in mind Bernstein's conscious use of cliché, her affected coyness attempts to sidestep spectacular forms of representation whilst alluding to sexual activity and managing to preserve a sense of – what? Privacy? Decorum? Decency? Bernstein prompts the reader into projecting his or her own liberated sexual fantasies into the representative absence; however, there is no guarantee that this is what will happen. Bernstein's restraint can be read as prudishly conservative just as easily as it can be credited with having pried open the door to transgression.³⁰

The refusal to represent sex explicitly as a means of sexual liberation creates a situation in which resistance and negation can hardly be distinguished from their antithesis, bourgeois moral indignation. No alternative to the spectacular regime of visibility is produced other than a

rejection of visual pleasure and a retreat into iconophobia. Moreover, the narrative events of Bernstein's novel seem to reinforce conservative values despite its play of sexual freedom and experimentation. The protagonists Gilles and Geneviève, after their various erotic escapades, come together again, stronger than before. It is Geneviève who must work to bring them back together by instigating another tactical affair. In her essay, "Portrait of Guy Debord as a Young Libertine," Odile Passot notes that "Geneviève cannot use bourgeois means; she must invent an original solution in order not to lower herself in the esteem of the man she loves."³¹ Although these means may be decidedly un-bourgeois, the end that they justify essentially negates their own emancipatory promises: the image of the bourgeois heterosexual couple triumphs. Despite her sexual freedom, Geneviève's actions serve to preserve the hegemony of heterosexual patriarchy. Geneviève must work for Gilles and play by his rules, so the deployment of female sexual agency serves the gratification of male sexual dominance.

All the King's Men

The accusation of a pervasive sexism within the SI itself is levelled by Baum, who argues that the Situationists "reproduced the gender biases of their time."³² Ralph Rumney, who was to marry Bernstein after Debord left her for Alice Becker-Ho, points toward another discrepancy between situationist rhetoric and situationist practice. He remembers that,

One of the curious things about the IS [sic] was that it was extraordinarily anti-feminist in its practice. Women were there to type, cook supper and so on. I rather disapproved of this. Michèle had, and has, an extraordinarily powerful and perceptive mind which is shown by the fact that she is among the most important literary critics in France today. A lot of the theory, particularly the political theory, I think originated with Michèle rather than Debord, he just took it over and put his name to it.³³

We encounter now one of the many complications of pursuing such speculative lines of biographical enquiry, as Rumney's accusation of the SI's anti-feminist practices initially seems to sit uneasily alongside a different account of the milieu of the (pre-Situationist) Lettrist International during the mid-to-late 1950s. During this time, when Debord and Bernstein first got together, the Lettrists frequented the cafés of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, particularly Chez Moineau. Remembering his time with the Lettrists, Jean-Michel Mension provides a portrait of youthful, carefree and indiscriminate libertinage. Mension's recollections echo Bernstein's narrator in their accounts of sexual freedom and inclusivity, all regarded as *de rigueur* for the bohemian group that included Mension, Debord and Bernstein. Asked whether the young men who made up "the tribe" that drank and misbehaved nightly at Chez Moineau met many girls at that time, Mension answers:

Oh, yes, the level of sexual activity must certainly have surpassed the national average. Naturally, we were not faithful, either on principle or by inclination; nobody is faithful by inclination—and we were not faithful on principle, either. It was quite inevitable, therefore, that after a while everybody had spent a tender moment or two with most of the others. Not with all, but everyone had two, three, four, or five liaisons in succession.³⁴

He adds that most of them were having homosexual relations. When asked whether this was practiced overtly, Mension replied, "Yes, at that time it was part of the game: you were supposed to do everything, try everything."³⁵

In Mension's account, we can recognise the vague outlines of a situationist code of sexual conduct. The Situationists' pride in their acceptance of alternative sexualities later became a means of differentiating themselves from their predecessors. Raoul Vaneigem, for example, criticised the old world morality of the Surrealists evinced in André Breton's homophobia and "deep hostility to the idea of a man making love with two women at the same time."³⁶ That Debord and other Situationists had practiced a level of sexual freedom so at odds with mid-century mainstream sexual values would seem to provide excellent material for their theoretical work, but they would neither report on these experiences nor pursue a broader agenda of sexual emancipation.

Mension's account of uninhibited promiscuity, however, does not necessarily describe an enlightened or progressive attitude towards sex and gender relations among the Lettrists and Situationists. Even at their most rose-tinted, Mension's memories of youth sexually unrestrained by bourgeois mores are rather complicated by the presence of the young Guy Debord. Whilst most of the characters Mension remembers from the Chez Moineau days were aimless drifters, happy just to drink and proud of their status as good-for-nothings, Debord was a moralist—"a good moralist"³⁷—but a moralist nonetheless. Although Debord presented himself as fiercely hostile to all traces of bourgeois subjectivity, Mension remembers Debord as sentimental and romantic: "Only recently did I learn that Guy had a very, very pure vision of eternal love, perfect love, a vision impossible to live out in this lousy world..."³⁸

Mension's evocation of Debord's romantic idealism rhymes with the representation of Gilles in *All the King's Horses*. Geneviève recognises, behind Gilles' outward persona, his underlying romantic sensibility:

When I met Gilles three years ago, I realized quickly that he was far from the cool libertine most people took him for. His desires always contain as much passion as he can put into them, and it's this same state that he always pursued in various love stories that you'd be crazy to call unserious.³⁹

Just as Jay reveals Debord's puritanical didacticism, Bernstein and Mension identify Debord's vestigial bourgeois values, which sit uneasily alongside his otherwise unforgiving iconoclasm. Love, unlike sex, is not typically represented in visual terms; perhaps it is this invisibility that allowed Debord to present his "very pure vision of eternal love" as subversive and to reconcile his romantic with his revolutionary impulses.⁴⁰ Understood thus, love becomes a site of resistance, an authentic experience somehow beyond the spectacle. We find Debord declaring as much in his narration to his post-SI film *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni* (1978). He wants to tell the story of "the knights and ladies, the arms and loves, the gallant conversations and bold adventures of a unique era."⁴¹ At the same time, the visual dimension of the film, composed entirely of détourned images, is brushed aside: "this film disdains the image-scrap of which it is composed."⁴² The images are throwaway; the project is motivated by love. And whilst we should not use Debord to represent metonymically the SI *in toto*, Raoul Vaneigem also affirmed love's potential to transcend the spectacle by arguing that,

People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints, such people have a corpse in their mouths.⁴³

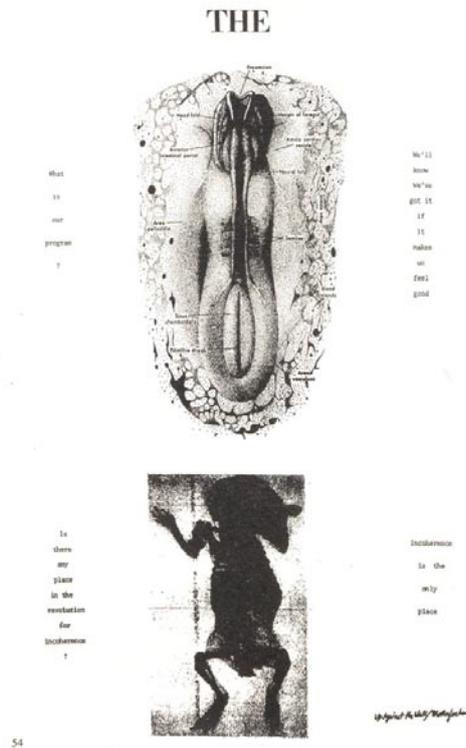
Yet these are unsatisfying conclusions to reach, conclusions which ally the SI not with radical politics but with the Kantian sublime. An authentically radical sexual revolution would upset

these romantic ideals and their quaint dedication to a love gallant and heroic. Moreover, the implied gender/sexual relations ('knights and ladies') that correspond with this type of love clearly paved the way for the heterosexist division of labour for which Rumney indicts the SI. Debord's privileging of romantic love served to maintain the moral-ideological base that more radical sexual revolutionaries—from Sade's libertinage, to Fourier's Utopianism, to more contemporary radical feminisms⁴⁴—have attempted to abolish. Although Debord posited his belief in an absolute love not as a remnant of bourgeois morality but as an unassuageable and emancipatory principle and a tactic of resistance to the spectacle, it offered no alternative to the spectacle's substitution of experience with image. Vaneigem's statement above, similarly, failed to recognise that his conception of love is itself a constraint that would need to be refuted by a truly emancipatory sexual politics—one that would offer pleasure and not shy away from being able to look at images of and with pleasure.

We'll Know We've Got It If It Makes Us Feel Good

The problem of situationist sex lies at the intersection of competing and irresolvable needs: the need to demolish spectacular representations of sex *and* the need *not* to shy away from the inherent visuality of sex itself, so as not to remain entrapped by vestigial bourgeois values. This antinomy is enforced by a recurrent term that remains central to the SI's critical framework: the authentic. The SI's critique of the spectacle adhered closely to a very specific logic of authenticity, whereby spectacular representation was insincere and inauthentic and had substituted itself for the authentic experience of man's directly-lived species-being. (For the moment, we shall not linger on the vagueness of the SI's conception of a life directly experienced). In sexual terms, we can recognise how spectacular sex was deemed inauthentic, whilst profound and authentic sex could not be represented visually. The image in general was afforded no agency in constructing a post-spectacular situ-sexuality. But while the spectacular image could only threaten to obscure authentic sexual experience, the situationist image could only ridicule spectacular representation.

Though the SI was unable to move beyond (its own critique of) the spectacle, the trajectory of situationist critique after Debord and Vaneigem reflects an attempt to move beyond the limits of the SI. The absence, for the most part, of sexual content from the SI's programme marks a notable difference between the original SI and later spin-off, "pro-situ"⁴⁵ groups, who took tactical and theoretical influence from the SI but generally placed more emphasis on confrontational sexuality and the imminence of a sexual revolution. Pro-situ aesthetics developed in Anglo-American contexts in particular attempted to move beyond the SI's insistence on authenticity. I want to turn now to explore some instances of situationist sexual aesthetics beyond the SI. These pro-situ factions responded to the challenge posed by both Debord and Vaneigem: "One more effort if you want to be Situationists!" (Debord)⁴⁶, and "Nihilists, one more effort if you want to be revolutionaries!" (Vaneigem)⁴⁷

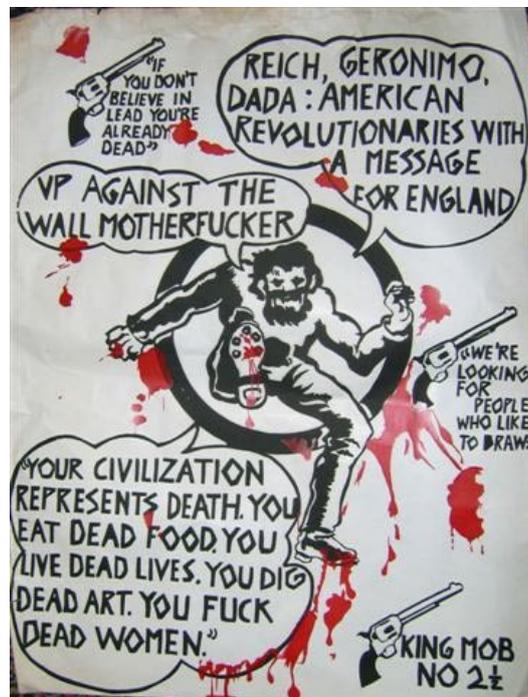


*Unattributed Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker poster*⁴⁸

Ben Morea's American and more anarchistic Black Mask and Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker groups represent the most sexually aggressive of pro-situ currents. Both of these groups emphasised the sexual dimensions of their revolutionary programs in a much more pronounced way than the SI ever attempted. Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker—or, the Motherfuckers—offered a particularly primal image of sexually liberated man (and we should note it is always a male at stake with the Motherfuckers) through an iconographic repertoire that consisted of images of skeletons, werewolves, and fiercely masculine Native and Latin American revolutionaries. The confrontational sexuality they espoused was based on the concept of “armed love,” illustrated variously by phallic rifles and vaginas presented alongside the lyrics, “We’ll know we’ve got it if it makes us feel good.” Clearly, the Motherfuckers were addressing the male, heterosexual gaze. The Motherfuckers’ posters also reflect the pseudo-mystical and quasi-pornographic imagery of the more radical hippie and beatnik movements, which would eventually attract the various obscenity trials faced during the late Sixties by the Anglo-American underground press, and most notably by the Australian-British magazine *Oz* which was taken to court in 1971 over the images published in its “Schoolkids” issue.

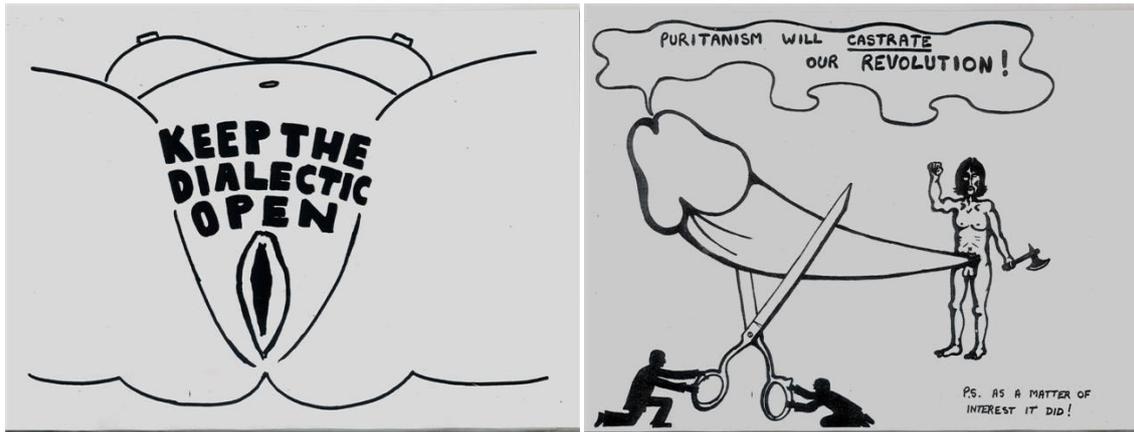


Oz 28, the Schoolkids issue.



Unattributed King Mob poster⁴⁹

The imagery of the Motherfuckers was in turn reproduced in the posters of King Mob, an incarnation of the English Section of the Situationist International after its expulsion by Debord in 1967 for allegedly siding with Morea in a dispute with Vaneigem.⁵⁰ Although this expulsion demonstrated the division between the Continental SI and Anglo-American pro-situs, King Mob were ideologically closer to the French Situationists than to the hippie mysticism of Morea's groups. King Mob utilised the Motherfucker's pornographic imagery but replaced its alpha male excesses with an Anglicized, less erotic, black humour which drew more from Andy Capp than Geronimo, and replaced the erect phallus with toiler-door scribbles of cock-and-balls.



*Unattributed King Mob posters*⁵¹

Considered in terms of the authentic, such imagery would seem ideologically repulsive to the SI. But it is supposed to be shocking, without reprieve. King Mob were particularly merciless, as even the fêted sexual revolution was made puerile and pathetic. King Mob's "Keep the dialectic open" poster, for example, is an assault upon all but the crudest of sensibilities. Dialectical thought is associated with the sexual conquest of the female body, itself an anonymous torso stripped to nothing but a line-drawing of its sexual parts. The image is shamelessly exploitative, unapologetically misogynistic, and replicates sexist iconography in the guise of intellectual liberation. Another poster, "Puritanism will castrate our revolution," associates the revolution with a comically large penis. Paradoxically, it is these images' excess of ugly and excessively macho heterosexism that acts as their redeeming feature: King Mob are taking the piss—it's all a big joke, a provocation. With such an overload of sarcasm and insincerity, King Mob usefully undermine the SI's distinction between serious, stony-faced authenticity and repressive insincerity, and bring into focus the ugly machismo of a large section of the hippie-beatnik movement.⁵²

King Mob's imagery is cartoonish, bagatelle, a relentless attack on liberal values. Their pro-situ aesthetics disregard the SI's concerns over authenticity and the fallibility of the image, and attempt to make the extra effort beyond nihilism by pushing the visual to its breaking point. Where the SI's insistence on the authentic tied their aesthetic project to realism, King Mob attempted to produce the "irreality"⁵³ that Roland Barthes attributed to the Marquis de Sade. Such imagery self-consciously antagonizes the dominant system of values and does not purport to offer a more desirable alternative, choosing instead to throw out an ugly bastardisation, a demented hyper-sexuality. Through exaggeration, this unreal imagery attempts to foreground the underlying violence of bourgeois sexuality, as a preliminary step towards destroying those values by pushing them towards climactic self-destruction. A famous piece of King Mob graffiti which quotes William Blake may be seen to justify the group's "hysterical over emphasis...of violence"⁵⁴: "The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom/ the tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction."⁵⁵

The SI's concerns over the authentic were rooted in a sense of social responsibility. The Sadeian project, revitalised in these pro-situ groups, is, instead, concerned instead with obscenity, taboo, violence, and concerted social irresponsibility. Roland Barthes elaborated this distinction:

The social revolution of a text (not necessarily achieved at the time the text appears) is measured not by the popularity of its audience, or by the fidelity of the socio-economic reflection it contains or projects to a few eager sociologists, but rather by the violence that enables it to exceed the

laws that a society, an ideology, a philosophy establish for themselves in order to agree among themselves in a fine surge of historical intelligibility.⁵⁶

Yet the problem remained in the pro-situ project as it did in the original situationist program: the act of negation can only do so much. The pro-situ project still determined itself primarily in the negative, and there remained no constructive principle that could generate an image of an alternative sexual praxis. However violent the affront upon the spectacle's own production of images, by waging the battle solely on the terrain of the visual, the underlying moral-ideological base was not challenged. Thus, the situationist and pro-situ projects regenerated the old forms of sexism, anti-feminism, and heteronormativity.

By the time of punk, around 1977—in the English context at least—pornographic and extreme imagery had become a staple of the pro-situ critique of sexual alienation. At the same time, as predicted by the SI, recuperation had run at an equal pace to aesthetic subversion. Most notably, Vivienne Westwood (who was married to Malcolm McLaren, one time King Mob affiliate and manager of the Sex Pistols) designed a t-shirt to be sold at her shop, featuring two trouserless cowboys facing each other, penises not quite touching. In *Homos* Leo Bersani uses Jean Genet's *Funeral Rites* (1949) to contend that the image of anal sex between men poses a subversive threat to dominant cultural ideology and sexual morality. Bersani argues that Genet uses the image of anal sex to unfix bourgeois notions of selfhood, productivity, and communality, recognising in Genet's gay sex a moment of subjective dissolution, a radically sterile male-male union in which we are offered "the anti-relationality inherent in all homo-ness."⁵⁷ Although not as explicit as Genet's images of anal sex, Westwood's trouserless cowboys pose a similar challenge—just through their matter-of-fact "homo-ness." The cowboys' casual stance, one lighting the other's cigarette, does not seem to correspond with the situation that they are in whereby their penises seem to be about to make contact. The provocation made by this image when reproduced on a t-shirt is twofold: the proud display to bourgeois heterosexual society of an image which contravenes that society's expectations, and the challenge made to the wearer to identify with the image and carry it into situations where the sight of trouserless cowboys may not be a welcome or common occurrence. In this instance, the pro-situ image seems to perform a valuable service for the project of social and sexual emancipation.



Reproductions of Vivienne Westwood's t-shirt design⁵⁸

Westwood's imagery played with and confronted homophobia and notions of masculinity in ways unarticulated by either the firebrand obscenity of King Mob or the haughty reserve of the French Situationists, neither of whom could offer an image that treated naked men so casually and without an explicit ideological inscription. Punk's aesthetic practice drew on that of the SI, but its political ambitions were rather different. The shock-value of Westwood's image was generated primarily to sell the image as t-shirt, now available via her website for £70. To the SI, this would surely seem a cynical act of auto-recuperation—a comfortable imbrication of radical aesthetics and commodity fetishism that does more to strengthen capitalism rather than to assault it. *Détournement* here comes full circle, and the logic of undermining the spectacle becomes the logic of the spectacle itself. Westwood seems to have confronted the *pas de deux* of *détournement-recuperation* not to undermine the spectacle but to exist within it. As a radical gesture, this sort of pro-situ recourse to visual shock proved short-lived and failed to retrieve the image from the laws of the commodity.

SEX: It's ok, says Debord, as long as you don't do it too often⁵⁹

Without a clear situationist expression of sexual revolution, we are left to speculate as to what situationist sex would look like. We could accept this odd lacuna as an invitation to experiment and explore beyond what the spectacle offers us without becoming reliant on images of liberated sex offered by agents of transgression like the SI. Debord and Bernstein's coyness and refusal to indulge in pornographic shock-value sheds light on the distinction between the SI's experimental nature and the Utopianism of, say, Fourierist or Surrealist thinkers. Debord wanted the SI to expose the oppressive conditions of the spectacle without replacing those conditions with prescriptive or rigidly systematic non-alternatives; yet in practice we see how this attempt to produce an imaginative space for sexual experimentation neither assaults the spectacle's own workings nor offers anything beyond the spectacle of what a situationist sexual praxis could look like.

Vaneigem, again marking out the Situationists' position against Surrealism, was critical of the false distinction between asceticism and pornographic sexual aggression:

The Surrealists opposed libertinism in the name of an elective and exclusive form of love, but it is an open question whether these two antagonistic attitudes do not in the end amount to much the same thing, whether a woman elevated to the rank of the Chosen One and a woman fucked lovelessly are not both being treated as objects.⁶⁰

The nuanced differences between asceticism and sex-without-image are also lost within the emphatically and inescapably visual society of the spectacle. Theoretically, we can recognise how sex could function in accordance with the Situationists' notion of the constructed situation, the limits of which would be only the limits of the individual's unfettered imagination. The sexual act would become a moment of transgression, of directly experiencing the bodily pleasure of our species-being, a moment of orgasmic illumination. Yet in limiting the SI's cultural production to a negational impulse, the SI could critique the spectacle's degradation of sex but could not formulate a means of making visible alternative approaches to sexual practice. Situationist sex was left in the dark.

I want to gesture towards an approach that might help us step around these impasses by reconsidering the SI's invocation of the spectacle in terms of its—implicit, explicit or allegorical—visuality. In his recent observations on the possibilities and limitations of political aesthetics, Jacques Rancière asserts that

The arts only ever lend to projects of domination or emancipation what they are able to lend to them, that is to say, quite simply, what they have in common with them: bodily positions and movements, functions of speech, the parcelling out of the visible and the invisible.⁶¹

In Rancière's understanding the image would seem unable to produce unforeseen and previously unimaginable practices (including sexual practices or representations of them), but it can reveal what has previously been obscured or repressed. What happens if we wed Rancière's relatively moderate claims regarding the political use-value of the image to Bersani's notion of the image of homosexual sex as always already radically unsettling? Bersani contends that the image of a man being anally penetrated is fundamentally threatening to dominant cultural ideology: "nothing is more threatening to the culturally enforced boundaries between men and women than a man participating in the *jouissance* of real or fantasmic female sexuality."⁶² This argument does not contradict Rancière's claims, if only because the threat of Bersani's image of gay sex does not come by way of interruption or revolt or violence. Its shock is not the shock of the new but the shock of the newly-recognised. Bersani's image of gay sex reveals a *jouissance*, a pleasure for its own sake, pursued regardless (or in defiance) of how sex is codified and represented by the dominant order. Bersani attributes to male gay sex in particular a transgressive force that challenges both the ideological overdetermination of the spectacular image and the ideological instrumentalisation of the situationist image.

These insights, wedded or welded together, suggest that the SI's attempts to inscribe sexual images with a political use-value were fundamentally misguided. Instead—and in a spirit that accords entirely with situationist notions of free play and directly-lived experience—we might argue that an emancipatory sexual image would be both radically indeterminate and unpredictable and fully attuned to the unmastering potential of erotic enjoyment. In thinking about sex, the SI could only really think about the spectacle. Just as its own discourse was confined by its rigid account of the spectacle's regime of visibility and visibility, the SI's sexual imagery confined itself to appeals to the spectacle. In contrast, a sexual image which truly addressed itself to sex and to the bodily pleasure of sex might offer itself as a radical disengagement from the spectacle's regime of visibility. I mentioned earlier the SI's advocacy to treat enemies as enemies. I want to advocate treating sex as sex. I do so not to invoke a project limited to mimetic realism, but rather to insist that sexual discourse and sexualized representation be pursued in radically sexual terms rather than as metonymic figures for the spectacle. In contrast to the SI's pursuits within and against the spectacle, to speak of sex as sex is itself a gesture that struggles for space exterior to spectacular representation, and is a gesture which could perhaps reveal something that has elsewhere lain obscured.

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Notes

¹ Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Ken Knabb (London: Rebel Press 2004), Theses 1 and 4.

² *Ibid.*, Thesis 121.

³ Situationist International, "Definitions," in Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets 2006), 51.

⁴ Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man* (London: Sphere Books Ltd. 1968), 70.

⁵ See Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life Volume One*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso 1992), 34-35.

⁶ Debord's self-eulogisation spanned from *Mémoires* (1959) to *Panegyric* (1989), and of particular interest is his auto-biographical film *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni* (1978). See also René Viénet, *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68* (New York: Autonomedia 1992).

⁷ Situationist International, "Questionnaire," in Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 181. My italics.

⁸ Raoul Vaneigem, "Basic Banalities (Part 2)," in Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 169.

⁹ Raoul Vaneigem, "Some Theoretical Topics That Need To Be Dealt With Without Academic Debate Or Idle Speculation," in Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 221.

¹⁰ Guy Debord, *Complete Cinematic Works: Scripts, Stills, Documents*, trans. Ken Knabb (Edinburgh: AK Press 2003), 5.

¹¹ André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan 1972), 27.

¹² Wilhelm Reich is given a similar treatment, moreso in the work of Raoul Vaneigem than Debord. The pre-'68 pamphlet "On the poverty of student life" gestures towards Reich in acknowledging that sexual behaviour is an avenue for vanguard social upheaval: "Thirty years after Wilhelm Reich (that excellent educator of our youth), our would-be "nonconformist" [student] continues to follow the most traditional forms of amorous-erotic behaviour, reproducing the general relations of class society in his intersexual relations." Yet even though this pamphlet promises a consideration of the poverty of student life "in its economic, political, psychological, sexual and particularly intellectual aspects", little attention is paid to the sexual tension that would catalyse the May '68 events, following the protests against single-sex accommodation at Nanterre University. Members of the Situationist International and Students of Strasbourg University, "On the Poverty of Student Life," in Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 412.

¹³ Ralph Rumney, *The Consul*, trans. Malcolm Imrie (San Francisco: City Lights Books 2002), 9.

¹⁴ Guy Debord, *Correspondence: The Foundation of the Situationist International (June 1957-August 1960)*, trans. Stuart Kendall and John McHale (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2009), 71.

¹⁵ Attila Kotányi argued that works of art produced by Situationists should be called "antisituationist" to pre-empt their inevitable recuperation: "...we know that such works will be co-opted [recuperated] by the society and used against us". See "The Fifth Conference of the Situationist International in Gothenburg," in Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 115.

¹⁶ For a fuller discussion of what Martin Jay has called the SI's "denigration of vision" and its relation to larger currents in French thought, see Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes: The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1993).

¹⁷ Kelly Baum, "The Sex of the Situationist International," *October* 126 (Fall 2008): 23-43. See also Guy Debord and Pierre Canjuers, "Preliminaries Toward Defining a Unitary Revolutionary Program," in Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 390.

¹⁸ *Internationale Situationniste* 9 (August 1964): 36.

¹⁹ Situationist International, "Definitions," in Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 52.

²⁰ Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes*, 429-430.

²¹ Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Rebel Press 2006), 133.

²² *Internationale Situationniste* 9 (August 1964): 21.

²³ In a letter to Constant, dated 8th August 1958, Debord stresses the importance of the Situationist International as the “transition from a utopian revolutionary art to an experimental revolutionary art”. Guy Debord, *Correspondence*, 149.

²⁴ Early on, the novel contains the admission that, “there’s something to be said for cleverly using the clichés of one’s time”. Michèle Bernstein, *All The King’s Horses*, trans. John Kelsey (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2008), 29.

²⁵ This is Serge Doubrovsky’s phrase, picked up by Odile Passot to denote “a genre of literature in which the author presents aspects of his real life to the public in a distilled and reworked form”. Odile Passot, “Portrait of Guy Debord as a Young Libertine,” in Michèle Bernstein, *All The King’s Horses*, 115.

²⁶ Michèle Bernstein, *All The King’s Horses*, 83.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

³⁰ The erotic novels written by Alexander Trocchi, in 1960 the only British member of the Situationist International, for Maurice Girodias’ notorious Olympia Press demonstrate other ways of ridiculing mass culture’s inability to represent meaningful sexual experience, via the tropes of pulp pornography. *Helen and Desire* (1954), for example, employs a baroque and comic sexual language, which reads more like a modern romance novel than anything designed to simulate or stimulate sexual desire: male and female genitalia are indiscriminately referred to as the “sex”, the sexual act as the “union” or “consummation”, and semen euphemistically becomes “love”. Alexander Trocchi *Helen and Desire* (Edinburgh: Rebel Inc. 1997), 12-13.

³¹ Michèle Bernstein, *All The King’s Horses*, 131.

³² Kelly Baum, “The Sex of the Situationist International,” 24.

³³ “About the Historification of the Situationist International: Ralph Rumney in conversation with Stewart Home” from <http://www.stewarthisociety.org/interviews/rumney.htm> [accessed 03/04/2010].

³⁴ Jean-Michel Mension, *The Tribe*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Verso 2002), 111.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Raoul Vaneigem, *A Cavalier History of Surrealism*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Edinburgh: AK Press 1999) 51.

³⁷ Jean-Michel Mension, *The Tribe*, 121.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁹ Michèle Bernstein, *All The King’s Horses*, 41.

⁴⁰ Indeed, Henri Lefebvre’s article “Vers un Romantisme Révolutionnaire” prompted Debord to make contact with the sociologist. See Michel Trebitsch’s “Preface” to Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life Vol.2*, trans. John Moore (London: Verso 2002), xxii.

⁴¹ Guy Debord, *Complete Cinematic Works*, 146.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 153.

⁴³ Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 26.

⁴⁴ Consider, for example, the incongruity between Debord’s (imagined) gallantry and Valerie Solanis’ Society for Cutting Up Men (SCUM).

⁴⁵ “Pro-situ” is the derogatory term Debord uses for peripheral members of the Situationist International and hangers-on in *The Real Split in the International*, trans. John McHale (London: Pluto Press 2003).

⁴⁶ Guy Debord, *Guy Debord présente Potlatch 1954-1957* (Paris: Gallimard 1996), 269.

⁴⁷ Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 182. Both of these are, of course, détournements of Sade’s “Frenchmen! One more effort if you want to be Republicans!”

⁴⁸ From *Up Against the Wall Motherfucker! An Anthology of Rants, Posters and More* (Parkville, Australia: Homebrew Press 2007), 54. The text includes: “What is our program? We’ll know we’ve got it if it makes us feel good”.

⁴⁹ Tom Vague (ed.), *King Mob Echo: English Section of the Situationist International* (London: Dark Star 2000), 91.

⁵⁰ See Debord’s account in “The Latest Exclusions,” in Ken Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 375.

⁵¹ From “A Hidden History of King Mob (Posters/Cartoons)”, at <http://www.revoltagainstplenty.com/index.php/recent/34-archivelocal/128-a-hidden-history-of-king-mob-posterscartoons> [accessed 03/04/2010]. Malcolm McLaren remembers that, “King Mob printed all these posters for a Vietnam demonstration. We all went around flyposting London with this image of a girl’s crotch and the slogan over the top of it that announced; ‘Keep the Dialectic Open’.” Tom Vague, *King Mob Echo: From Gordon Riots to Situationists and Sex Pistols* (London: Dark Star 2000), 47.

⁵² This is not to say that there isn’t an element of humour in the SI’s détourned porn, but I would suggest the humour there relates to the form and the juxtaposition of elements. On the other hand, humour for King Mob is much more aggressive and accusatory, as well as more bitter and feral.

⁵³ Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Jonathon Cape 1977), 36.

⁵⁴ Dave Wise and Stewart Wise, “The End of Music,” in Stewart Home (ed.), *What is Situationism? A Reader* (Edinburgh: AK Press 1996), 69.

⁵⁵ See Dave and Stuart Wise, “A Hidden History of King Mob,” at <http://www.revoltagainstplenty.com/index.php/archive/34-archivelocal/93-a-hidden-history-of-king-mob> [accessed 03/04/2010].

⁵⁶ Roland Barthes, *Sade, Fourier, Loyola*, 10.

⁵⁷ Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press 1995), 163-164.

⁵⁸ From http://www.hervia.com/p47/Cowboy-T-Shirt/product_info.html [accessed 03/04/2010].

⁵⁹ My own détournement of a piece of May ’68 graffiti: “SEX: It’s ok, says Mao, as long as you don’t do it too often.”

⁶⁰ Raoul Vaneigem, *A Cavalier History of Surrealism*, 50. Vaneigem mentions the Romanian Surrealist Gherasim Luca, who offers what we could imagine to have been a subtextual project of the Situationist International: “the limitless eroticisation of the proletariat”.

⁶¹ Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rochill (London: Continuum 2008), 19.

⁶² Leo Bersani, *Homos*, 121-122.