

# EAR de Jour



**far from equilibrium**

# EAR de Jour

A Journal of Enactive Aesthetics Research

*I live on Earth at present,  
and I don't know what I am.  
I know that I am not a category.  
I am not a thing -- a noun.  
I seem to be a verb,  
an evolutionary process --  
an integral function of the universe.*

... R. Buckminster Fuller

**1 1**  
**far from equilibrium**

# AESTHETIC AUTOMATISM

## BEAUTY

is something that shakes you from the inside out,  
something you have no control over,  
something reflexive and brutal and shattering.

## BEAUTY

is a realization of a truth that you can only explain in

## LIES

**We have read the words of the interred written in youthful blood.  
Provoking HATRED when bright red they now weep arthritic wisdom  
onto heads,  
sleeping without dreaming.**

•

The forceful creative dynamic life stabs into unknown potential, slashing revelations at each backward glance. We know only by exploring what we cannot know. We know only to the degree we abandon the search for knowledge and adopt a passion for experiment.

We discover our "SELF" in the intuitive act of reaching spontaneously for what attracts us. Action is judgement; we must judge. An AESTHETIC inevitably forms, freely and beautifully if unimpeded, or warped and deformed if artificially restricted — but it will form whether welcomed or not.

•

The true, personal AESTHETIC is a dynamic, continuously evolving concept of "SELF" in the active pursuit of

## DESIRE...

as revealed and explored through AUTOMATISM

A true, personal AESTHETIC is the natural enemy of all mediated social constructions.  
It is the natural enemy of collective morality.  
It is the natural enemy of religion.  
It is the natural enemy of political systems.  
It is the natural enemy of the status-quo.  
It is the natural enemy of labels.  
It is the natural enemy of

## BANALITY

•

**AESTHETIC AUTOMATISM** will reveal  
"the appalling contrast between the possible constructions of life, and its present poverty."

•

We allow no place for the stagnating orthodoxy of tsetse flies breeding in encephalitic pools, or proxy pontification, permitting and encouraging the masquerading marauders of all hal-lows eve — the ghosts of religion, now shamelessly visible in public spaces meant to attract living organisms.

The very fact that such toxic banality goes unchallenged is evidence of a dangerously creep-  
ing  
catatonic gangrene.

This passivity enrages us, while excuses inspire our disgust.

**A posture of victimization demands aggressive attack.**

barrett john erickson

Wm. Dubin

Celine Myers

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(1995)



# Lines of thought lines of exploration.

(from Frank Antonsen)

Any object will trace a line of evolution, connecting it forever backwards with its own past. Any subject opens up an infinity of lines of desire escaping into its future. Thus, lines are the basic means of exploration of as well space as time.

Nothing, considered as a point, induces a line by its own evolution (its history), thus becoming something. The dialectic of *something* and *nothing*.

A collection of objects weaves a tapestry of space behind them, whereas subjects weave an infinity of possible tapestries of space ahead of them.

This woven (and interwoven) space is the difference between "nowhere" and "now here".

In this manner, the instantaneous end point of a line (a history) of a point (nothing) is an object, and any object is the end point of a line, a history (in the making). This is how spacetime and matter appear in modern quantum gravity. By adding desire (subjectivity) we also get a description of the poetic capacity of life. It is, by the way, also a theme in ancient myths, where the *Norns* of Norse mythology and the *Moirai* of ancient Greece weave the destinies of men, and the tying of knots in various rituals of magic and voodoo. But it is a modern, atheistic version thereof.

The subject is not distinct from its objectified tapestry of its past nor from its subjective tapestry of possible futures. But the object of the past becoming the subject of the present is the intersection, and the matrix, of the spacetime continuum. On the other hand, the objective elements in the past conditions the subject of the present and the desires for the future. Hence, the relationship between the object of the past, the subject of the present, the objective (reified and experienced) past, the subjective

These tapestries and threads also constitute the subjective element of the objectively given, as well as the objective element of the subjective reality.

They also delineate the dynamic within the static, and the static within the dynamic (cf Duchamp). The potential within the actual, the actual within the potential.

These relationships are what *breathes life into space*.

\*

In connecting the interior world of the subject with the (more or less) objective world around it, the eye traces out lines of exploration, scanning the environment, filtering the information. These lines of sight are closely related to lines of thought, and the lines of thought, furthermore, constructs skeletons and scaffolds in the exterior world as points of contact and of reference (cf the early paintings by Matta, or by Dominguez in his "cosmic period").

Thus, the very act of seeing simultaneously *observes* and *constructs* the exterior world. The skeletons and scaffolds become the building blocks of space. Space is constructed by seeing. Or to be more precise: space is constructed out of three elements, the *object* seen, the *subject* who is seeing and the *act* of seeing. The act is what connects the subject and the object. But, even though space is constructed by the act of seeing it is not created in a vacuum, *ex nihilo*, it has a material base.

In painting, changes in the way the act of seeing is performed have led to changes in the way in which space is represented. In modern time this probably began with the *impressionists*, but they had a far too limited view of art. It is first of all with the *cubists* and *futurists* that the eye begins to be accorded its rightful place. With the introduction of *expressionism* (and through a few precursors such as van Gogh), space begins to vibrate, to breathe. The crisis of perception becomes acute with dada and *surrealism*, becoming the crisis of the collective in *Cobra* and the *SI* (which are both to be seen as moments of surrealism). In poetry already Rimbaud had called for the systematic derangement of the senses to arrive at *seeing*.

Our eye carries out a perpetual "*dérive*" of our environs; our thoughts (including dreams and day dreams) carry out a continuous "*dérive*" of

the interior landscape of past experiences and future projections. Both of these "*dérives*" can be made material or physical through carrying out an actual, physical "*dérive*" of one's surroundings. The actual walking or driving around will interweave the three "*dérives*" making them into reflections of a common underlying "*dérive*" - the "*dérive of the dérive*".

It is also through actual physical contact with the exterior world that the subject relates to other subjects. It is even such contacts that *creates* the subject. The subject is *constructed* by interacting with others and other things.

This construction of the subject is the mirror image (or double) of the construction of space. It is the construction of "internal" space.

Sometimes, the tapestries of two subjects can become entangled, leading to a more complex tapestry. *Desire* is a very strong element in this, and, moreover, desire can arise - or, rather, materialize - through precisely such an entanglement. In *love*, and in particular in actual love making, tapestries can merge, thereby weaving ever more complex and beautiful tapestries for the future and the present - even reaching backwards in time and reorganizing the past by changing the view on the past, the present and the future.

It is also such encounters that give the sparks from which *objective chance* can fly. This is so because the underlying reality is based on chance (indeterminism).

\*

The interweaving of more and more tapestries is the birthplace of *revolutions*.

The *body* is the intersection of all these lines or threads. It is simultaneously the cloth woven by them as well as the weaver that does the weaving. And life is a process consisting in the flow from the "interior" world to the "exterior" world and *vice versa*. Consequently, life is the flow from the potential to the actual, the process of making the potential actual.

As the body thus connects the subject and the object, it is the body that acts. Any transition from the subject to the object must go through the body. The body is consequently the interface between the subject and

the object, provided this interface is understood in a proper dialectical manner (subject and object are not static categories).

As the subject and the object are in a perpetual state of construction, their interface undergoes constant changes, which is life. These changes, or flows, make up the body. The body thus consists of flow lines, is a *congruence* of flows.

Once one enters the realm of the body, one enters the realm of *action* and hence of *love, poetry and rebellion*. The body is what opens up these worlds, and it is through the body that these worlds unfold and evolve.

The fear of the body inherent in so many religions and ideologies are merely masking these beliefs' fear of love, poetry and rebellion, the fear of ecstasy and of change. *The body is the vehicle of change.*

Ecstasy is the sudden opening up, realization of or the becoming aware of, a vast ray of possibilities emerging from the existing moment, radiating into the future - with even a few sparks flying off towards the past. At the peak of an orgasm one can in deed feel this sudden opening up, or unfolding, where the boundaries of the subject (the interface between the subject and the object) momentarily recede or disappear altogether. This experience is akin to the dizzying feeling of vast open space suddenly appearing in front of one's eyes.

\*

Lines can take on physical form. What are streets if not materialized lines? Even the body is made up of lines - this is particularly true of the human body - the legs, arms, trunk, neck, genitals etc. all being so many lines meeting, joining. The human body in particular, because of its upright form, can be seen as *homeomorphic* to a pentagram, which is just a set of lines meeting in a common point (the trunk of the body).

In the process of love-making these pentagrams intersect, merge, join, and exchange lines. Just as fluids are exchanged.

(...to be continued)

Frank Antonsen



David Walters  
"Specter"  
Acrylic on Wood panel  
18"x36"  
©1996



**There is no better brand of truth  
than the truth of metaphors**  
(first of a series from Pierre Petiot)

Only the truth of a metaphor may be defined. That is not to say that truth might be in any sense metaphoric. But simply truth is a statement about this distance between metaphor and reality. Truth is an evaluation of the adequacy of a metaphor to reality. It would be absurd to think that truth is *only* that. Truth is that and nothing else. It cannot be otherwise. It has no other mode of existence. This, because there is no evaluation of the adequacy of reality to reality, and besides, there is no need for it.

If this distance between metaphor and reality was ever to be suppressed, then only the “being-there” would be left, the immediate being, perfectly adequate to itself, without any beyond, without any distance, a sort of absolute present, total chance or absolute necessity may be, but chance or necessity, abstracted from this fundamental distance introduced by the image, the model, cannot be distinguished, and — so to say — are not even happening.

When you look at it closely, the “being-there” stands without laws. This because any law is an image too. A law describes a behavior, but the law is not the behavior, it only re-presents a behavior. And there are no laws in Nature except the laws that images introduce into it. It cannot be drawn out of this situation that Nature is chaos, nor may it be drawn out of it that nature is order. Chaos and determinism are 2 variants of the same absence of wits. This because the mind — when it has wits — remembers that chaos and order are still re-presentations, models, images. The “being-there” as regards itself has no models. It is careless and senseless. It does not have anything like a precedent and is no example for anything. As regards what we know about it, Marcel Duchamp once noted, “La mariee n’est jamais mise a nue que par ses celibataires mêmes” ... Magritte made the same quite obvious with “Ceci n’est pas une pipe”. In other words we only get knowledge about reality through a movement by which “this” becomes absent.

[next part is “Perception as metaphor or  
how reality is not captured by our senses”]



Wm. Dubin  
ink on paper  
30x22

# Dwindling

sense of pieces



# All

# is thrust

against pliable shapes

# process.

(from  
barrett john erickson)

# crimson

li and qu

From the first  
emergence

# Turning

slightly

of sub-atomic potential,

against <sup>from</sup>

*Deception multiply beyond the glass.*

the enactive birth of an electron, to

# the another

distant dissipation of the universe,

beyond all

*Exposure in the simplest gestures of transparent evasion.*

cool wind, the

unknowable boundaries on the

# harsh

darkside of our

light of the electron beam

*Reaching for understanding*

sensual activity,

curves

all "things" are embedded

"Reality can only be represented in a state of perpetual transformation."  
...Matta

with her

# breast

processes in  
continuous, inescapable interaction.

*desire becomes slippery and unstable from neglect.*

# indifferently.

The trouble

with

We do before we are.

Refusing

responsibility for

We've learned

believes

to

their

All potential is real.

self creation words

"In short, subversion is the basic expression of creativity. Daydreaming subverts the world." ...Vaneigem

is

is

crave protest

cause and effect,

The fog lunges raven haired.

beginnings and

and renders their

With piercing blue eyes,

impotent endings,

surrendering

to the

Flattened to the thickness of singularity revealed.

banality

imposed by others.

The

as if this were the origin of

she has me by the throat

desire meaning.

before i can scream

"...consciously or not, the decision to employ a particular piece of apparatus and to use it in a particular way carries an assumption that only certain sorts of circumstances will arise." ...Kuhn

"Poetry must be made by all." ...Ducasse

soothing

Intention

is

— where all dimensions intersect — we can understand.

But this is merely

for

irrelevant misdemeanor

and just as suddenly gone

"What we learn about is not nature itself, but nature exposed to our methods of questioning." ...Heisenberg

illusion

without a bruise.

Because the ultimate outcome of

of

any act

In spite of its simplicity, our model succeeds in showing some properties of the evolution of complex systems, and in particular, the difficulty of "governing" a development determined by multiple interacting elements. Each individual action or each local intervention has a collective aspect that can result in quite unanticipated global changes.

...Ilya Prigogine & Isabelle Stengers Order Out of Chaos

as

consequence of

Subject and object intimately merge.

presence

is unpredictable,

the action itself must be without

not just consistent with, but

Polarities consummate annihilating union.

identical to our purpose

mass

illusion

without a bruise.

concrete events

No time to taste the fear she leaves softly on my lips.

as the

begging re-

No time for the ephemeral bouquet of passion.

bridge

solution.

abandoned.

No time for the whisper of recognition.



Softly <sup>As individuals,</sup>  
*Metaphor can bring an intuitive revelation*  
as a <sup>of</sup> **even more effectively in small groups,**

*the marvelous unity*  
*at "ground level,"*  
**we can**  
feather <sup>so far below,</sup> **construct**

**situations which**  
*more basic and yes primitive,* **touch**  
*than* **liberate the imagination.**

*"Vice, virtue... It's best not to be too moral — you cheat yourself out of too much life."  
...Maude to Harold*

*the*  
**Our "limits" are dynamically contextual,**

*escalating layers of useful abstractions*  
**descending** <sup>emerging as an</sup>  
*and*

*illusions,*  
**an illusion of separation.**  
*which analogy simply bridges* **to** *at any distant*

*"There is no art, there are only artists."  
...Duchamp*

**Living** <sup>height,</sup> **arouse,**

**is inherently creative,**

*The displacement of*  
**the sweet breath of** *poetic metaphor*

*by utilitarian analogy*  
**exploring and experimenting**

*-- our estrangement from "daily life" and its banalities --*

*"When one ceases to feel, I am of the opinion one should keep quiet."  
...André Breton*

*is the emptiness of* **sensually,** *pragmatism.* **mortality**

**in the humid evening,**  
**The existing order —**  
**a former**

*An ill-formed shadow*  
**lover** *haunts me,*

**— is a process**  
**emerged from chaos,** **arrives** <sup>an "isle of boole"</sup>  
*pleading for grounding,* **far from equilibrium.**

**Its "attractor" is** *in a*

**mobius** **POWER**

**and its stability** **landing,**  
*complaining of vertigo and centrifugal confusion.*

*"The Department of Labor wishes to report that the workers of Freedonia are demanding shorter hours."*

*"Very well, we'll give them shorter hours. We'll start by cutting their lunch hour to twenty minutes."  
...Duck Soup*

**is tenuously maintained by**

*I feed it scraps*  
**the falsification** **trying**

*of bewildered amazement,*  
**and** **not**

**to be** **manipulation**  
*"Plus, if you own a small car, your life could be in danger. We'll tell you more when we come back."  
...KSTP news anchor Kally King leading into commercial break 10/2/96*

**too** **of** *still glowing from some internal chain reaction.*  
**judgmental.** *desire.*

But In such systems,  
revenge

*There was a whisper*

even minor perturbations  
lurks  
may be amplified —

*far  
from  
equilibrium*

by the very processes which in the

otherwise assure stability — fourth

*in the corridor*

*... and a movement.*

dimension,

to the point where they may

with the provoke  
a pre-bifurcation chaos.

*The lights are out  
and they grope*

audible

The events critical  
to the preservation or

*in the darkness for*

hum of destruction

of

familiar objects.  
alternating  
a system's stability, ultimately

*But in this spatial contortion*

occur at the system's boundaries —

current

*there are no familiar objects.*

at its interface with chaos.  
ungrounded.

True "revolutions"  
are the twisting  
result of system destabilization.

The  
*unpredictable*

beam  
The characteristics of post-bifurcation  
stability (the "end")

dives cannot be predicted.

Only the act (the "means")  
matters.

*intention  
is  
irrelevant —*

And it *always* matters.  
intentionality is not.

Because  
the existing order depends upon a moment of

*Escape is deafness.*

*Evasion is blindness.*

their falsification,

*If the bells do not ring*

*it's because the aural path has been*

*auto-severed in futile*

*"self" defense.*

"People who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring 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."  
...Vaneigem

if we "take our truth desires for reality"

Then — spontaneously pursuing them wherever  
they lead —

turns away, any act,

*The mute armless retreat witnessed*

averting every act,

*into hallowed cocoons  
of recent decades can only result in a*

a disaster of has

*fossilized carcass*

revolutionary

potential. *or glorious metamorphosis.*

discovery.

*Desire is not binary.*



**Wm. Dubin**  
ink on paper  
30x22

## **THE TRIANGULAR WINDS OF CHANGE**

### **Point One: The Vibration of Sound, or The Word**

(from Celine Myers)

Woke up to a death. Tiny symbols of destruction and decay swarmed before and in my eyes forming patterns like a voodoo design caught in a kaleidoscope. When I breathe the air does not run through me but it is as if I am rushing with it, through I am without apparent movement. A still stream of energy.

I could not feel my body at all. There was a vast cool void where my chest should have been and I felt if I resided anywhere it was in this nothingness. I felt nausea, but no connection to this sickness and when I sat up I found the body to be unbelievably light and massless. A thought that I could levitate, if I so desired.

I turn on the light as if that could chase my fear of this process away and though it dissolves the visions it only intensifies the sensations. As the nausea persists I am aware that it is not of the stomach but of my fear and that I must cast this fear away if I am ever to be well.

A calm chaos, but a disorder none-the-less. A gentle violence that cannot harm me but which continues to alarm me. With a lucidity of which I have never encountered I realize that I must go beyond love and all its attachments if I am to be fully without this fear. This is not an easy action for me for the roots of love are the fattest and most life sucking of any I have encountered. This does not involve a dissolution of "love" but just the opposite. I need to stop "feeling" love, to become it.

The pain is intense though again there is a feeling that it does not really belong to me. I am neither above or below my body nor am I in it. I cannot pinpoint where I am or if I really exist at all except that this pen scratches the symbols that I will. But there is no meaning and I feel an exhaustion which is immeasurable. I begin to feel my head and my neck and a heaviness is apparent but again, I wonder whose head and limbs these truly are. Something runs through my bowels and there is a screeching sound outside my window. The sound of painful, hurtful movement. A groan that emanates from an open mouth only to find itself unembodied and with less strength than the wind. It looks at itself and finds nothing but invisibility.

The vibration of sound needs immense power to move objects and yet it needs very little to be heard.

## Perception as a metaphor or how reality is not captured by our senses

(second of a series from Pierre Petiot)

What our senses show to us is not reality but only what they think of it. Our senses are not receivers, they are not even actors. They are actions, processes. To perceive does not mean to access reality, but more to act, to build, to construct an image, a map related to this part of reality that our senses presently have to deal with. The stimuli-response model has certainly proven to be useful, but it is nevertheless a lie. We do not react to external events. Our perceptive activity builds these events. Nothing ever happens to non-living beings. What is there has no history, although it has a history for us, for us for whom having a history has a meaning. We credit the inanimate with this sort of autonomy we have as living beings, but the inanimate has no autonomy. We see forms, shapes, patterns in the world, things with a sort of own destiny comparable to ours, things with their own properties and reactions where it might be after all, that only a monstrous wave function exists.

We never really got out of animism. We only exchanged the “soul of things” into the “laws of nature”. And yes, it seems to work better. But we are still going on with the same old story, along the same old road, casting our point of view as living beings onto the world and believing so deeply into it that we always mix-up the prey and the shadow — in other terms the sign and the thing — what we know of the world and what the world really is, that is to say an enigma until a better suggestion is proposed.

We never really got out of the monotheist point of view either. We still persist in thinking that there is something such as an absolute point of view about the world, a point of view that would not be the point of view of flesh, a perspective that would be independent of this condition we are in: the condition of living beings. We do not see that the concept of perspective only exists for living beings and that it is a real misuse to extend its meaning out of this original scope of validity. We stick to the belief that there is an absolute truth when truth may only be — *is* per definition — the truth of an image.

To perceive is to work out a model. That is to say — essentially — an imperfection from which by a sort of strange trust, we expect a certain degree of faithfulness (of truth). Faithfulness to what, then? Not to reality obviously, since we only know about reality by means of our senses. But faithfulness to life without any doubts since as far as we see, we do not die that often of trusting what our senses tell us. In this, in this fragile reason, in this risk, stands all

the truth of perception. And out of this we have gained something like an understanding of the miracle. So that we are no longer surprised, as the Greeks used to be, that our senses might sometimes be misleading. What is a real surprise to us now is that perception is, after all, relatively reliable and this is the basic reason why we are still alive. And well, being alive, whatever people might say or think about how charming death may be, being alive is the fundamental surprise.

However the “being-there”, this “this” that our senses are talking about is what we do not see, what we do not hear, what we do not touch or feel, what our caress never discovers nor uncovers. This because perception is poetry, because perception is “to do, to make”.

We have learned from recent science that perception builds maps in the brain. But a map is not a location. A map may be reliable or wrong. On the opposite, a location is absolutely exact. It has an immediate, total and inevitable exactitude. The location is not true, it is real.

From the fact that perception builds maps, it would be erroneous to derive that perception is abstract. First, perception is real and concrete in its results. The maps that it builds are real, just as real as what they represent. A map is a code. Items of a code are always real and they *must* be so since a code must be perceived and read. But even in what seems abstract and non-immediately tangible in perception, which resides in its process, in its movement, perception belongs to this world: it happens. Before perception takes place is not the same as after. Perception emerges, springs up with the same degree of reality as a barrage crumbles down or as a flake of snow softly lands.

What was said above seems to be a confirmation of the platonician vulgate according to which we only see shadows. However the same movement shows that this antiphon is invalidated on a certain point, a huge detail which lies in the word “only”. This because to *see* is to produce shadows. And it appears that the light that produces these shadows does not lie beyond our reach. This light belongs to this world and this light is us. There is no other light, no other intellection than this one, this fragile and risky light of living beings. We are the fire that produces knowledge and there is no knowledge which is not produced by this uncertain fire of life.

We are now led to re-formulate the quite approximate assertions we initially made. As our senses only provide images, metaphors, to *us* and nothing such as actual reality, the best we can reach is a certain level of consistency between what our senses let us know and these other images, metaphors, models which our representations are made of. The problem is now to make a bit more explicit what this sort of consistency is made of.

[next part is “Metaphors propagate or ‘Les mots font l’amour’”  
to be included in the next EAR de Jour]

## *phantom limbs*

*we encountered an absence, an absence preceding us, engulfing our investigations. we probe it with phantom limbs — appendages of dimensionless copulation of the kind which inspires both fear and aggression in a field of thunderbolts.*

*“logic” is a useless plaything in this setting. “reason” worthy only of derisive scorn. what meaning can be found in the pursuit of “cause” and “effect” when linearity has been willfully destroyed — fragged while dreaming of apples in a rain forest?*

*we are showered with the bloody debris from this heroically creative act. and while some take cover, looking for answers in self-mutilation, cannibalism and the rape of corpses, or jerk out their tongues with the aid of pliers and a utility knife, we applaud.*

*their whimpers and cries form a discordant melody which stimulates a passion for blood. and we see in their stretch marks a horrific testimony to the deformations required to maintain a lust for pyrite.*

*we bathe our erogenous zones in their suffering.*

*...barrett  
(posted to alt.surrealism)*





***"Everything tends to make us believe that there exists a certain point of the mind at which life and death, the real and the imagined, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, high and low, cease to be perceived as contradictions."***

**...André Breton**

*"...Cognition as embodied action is always about or directed toward something that is missing: on the one hand, there is always a next step for the system in its perceptually guided action; and on the other hand, the actions of the system are always directed toward situations that have yet to become actual. Thus cognition as embodied action both poses the problems and specifies the paths that must be tread or laid down for their solution.*

*"...Intentionality includes how the system construes the world to be (specified in terms of the semantic content of intentional states); second, intentionality includes how the world satisfies or fails to satisfy this construal (specified in terms of the conditions of satisfaction of intentional states). We would say that the intentionality of cognition as embodied action consists primarily in the directedness of action. Here the two-sidedness of intentionality corresponds to what the system takes its possibilities for action to be and to how the resulting situations fulfill or fail to fulfill these possibilities."*

*...from The Embodied Mind*  
by Francisco Varela,  
Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch



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Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson, and Eleanor Rosch  
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**Raoul Vaneigem**  
from *The Revolution of Everyday Life*

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## **Coming Next:**

### **the existing order**

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*(a loose alliance of artists and writers  
of surrealist genealogy)*

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