

CHECKS & BALANCES: *valeveil* + *A5* collaboration

We are powerless for the present to direct it into another channel, until such time as it will have played itself out. It must wear itself out.

This morning, you decide to come to this lecture. Probably because it was the last opportunity to check off your requirements. You drank more than usual last night, because it feels good to fit in and forget yourself - you like what happens when you're not completely aware.

People imagine we can change the form of development of a revolution. That is a childish illusion. A revolution is such a force that its growth cannot be changed. And a reaction is absolutely inevitable, just as a hollow in the water is inevitable after every wave, as weakness is inevitable in a human being after a period of feverish activity.

Yesterday, you decide to spend time with friends and family. They came to your MA show to support you, and you work hard. It feels good to close the book on your past two or three years at art school.

By bringing to light the plasticity of organizations, the philosophy of evolution has shown the admirable adaptability of organisms to their conditions of life, and the ensuing development of such faculties render more complete both the adaptations and the aggregates to their surroundings and those of each of the constituent parts of the aggregate to the needs of free cooperation.

By showing that the 'struggle for existence' must be conceived not merely in its restricted sense of a struggle between individuals for the means of subsistence but in its wider sense of adaptation of individuals of the species to the best conditions for the survival of the species, as well as for the greatest possible sum of life and happiness for each and all, it has permitted us to deduce the laws of moral science from the social needs and habits of mankind.

The day before yesterday, you decide to choose a new font that you had never seen before. It seemed risky; you are becoming more selective regarding what images and designs are used to represent your thoughts.

And in common with the most advanced representatives of political radicalism, they maintain that the ideal of the political organization of society is a condition of things where the functions of government are reduced to a minimum, and the individual recovers his full liberty of initiative and action for satisfying, by means of free groups and federations—freely constituted—all the infinitely varied needs of the human being.

It is a feeling which we like to call a sensation of 'eternity,' a feeling as of something limitless, unbounded, as it were, 'oceanic.'

Last weekend, you decide not to go out because you weren't finished working. You decide it is more important to work on your project than to socialize with others who you see regularly during the week.

Perhaps we ought to content ourselves with asserting that what is past in mental life may be preserved and is not necessarily destroyed. It is always possible that even in the mind some of what is old is effaced or absorbed.

Last month, there was someone in the parking lot who looked like your mother. You went home and immediately decided to sketch her face in your sketchbook. You wanted to remember that there are women like your mother everywhere, that even though her features are worth documenting, your mother is both unique and not.

Happiness in life is predominantly sought in the enjoyment of beauty, wherever beauty presents itself to our senses and judgement—the beauty of human forms and gestures, of natural objects and landscapes and of artistic and even scientific creations. This aesthetic attitude to the goal of life offers little protection against the threat of suffering, but it can compensate for a great deal. The enjoyment of beauty has a particular, mildly intoxicating quality of feeling. Beauty has no obvious use; nor is there any clear cultural necessity for it.

Last month, you decide to get up early to watch the sun rise. You take a run in the woods, then you notice your surroundings are too perfect to keep running. You stand on the path for a long time, and you realize that you are exactly where you are supposed to be, even though you never felt like you were in control, even though you might forget that you once stood on this path to admire such beauty at some point in the future.

Beauty, cleanliness and order obviously occupy a special position among the requirements of civilization. The last but certainly not the least important, of the characteristic features of civilization remains to be assessed: the manner in which the relationships of men to one another, their social relationships, are regulated—relationships which affect a person as a neighbor, as a source of help, as another person's sexual object, as a member of a family and of a state.

Last year, you sit across the table from an individual you thought you might be in love with. You begin to make plans in your head which he or she is unaware of at the moment. When the individual breaks up with you, you decide to forget by drowning yourself in work, by deciding to love your work more than you love the individual - partially out of spite.

The behavior of human beings shows differences, which ethics, disregarding the fact that such differences are determined, classifies as 'good' or 'bad.' So long as these undeniable differences have not been removed, obedience to high ethical demands entails damage to the aims of civilization, for it puts a positive premium on being bad.

My love is something valuable to me which I ought not to throw away without reflection.

Civilized man has exchanged a portion of his possibilities of happiness for a portion of security. Hunger and love are what moves the world. Hunger could be taken to represent the instincts which aim at preserving the individual, while love strives after objects, and its chief function, favored in everything but nature, is the preservation of the species.

Last year, you harbor a number of obsessions, ranging from how you organize your apartment, to how many times you read a book, to how you choose friends. But your systems were collapsing one by one, and you needed something that didn't yet exist. You decide to create a system which only you are aware of, which makes only you happy.

Starting from speculations on the beginning of life and from biological parallels, I drew the conclusion that, besides the instinct to preserve living substance and to join it into even larger units, there must exist another, contrary instinct to dissolve those units and bring them back to their primeval, inorganic state.

Why do our relatives, the animals, not exhibit any cultural struggle?

Last summer, you decide to house sit for a friend - part of the agreement is to take care of a tabby cat. You aren't connecting well with others about certain concerns, but when you go to sleep and the cat who didn't know you at all curls up next to you without hesitation, you decide to give people another chance and try making art with one or two of them instead of working alone.

As long as things go well with a man, his conscience is lenient and lets the ego do all sorts of things.

Thus we know of the two origins of the sense of guilt: one arising from fear of an authority, and the other, from fear of the super-ego.

After graduating, you decide to switch tracks and become an artist. You feel that there is nothing left to do after working pointless jobs, after studying for exams which get you nowhere except to the next hurdle to jump, after realizing that you aren't reaching your potential.

Since civilization obeys an eternal erotic impulsion which causes human beings to unite in a closely-knit group, it can only achieve this aim through an ever-increasing reinforcement of the sense of guilt.

You are in the bedroom of the person you slept with for the first time. This person is sleeping; you watch them without them knowing it. The person stirs - you decide you'd rather pretend that you're asleep than talk to them about anything romantic or personal. As the person begins to open their eyes, you close your own. You decide not to use a condom - you're hoping for the best.

It almost seems as if the creation of a great human community would be most successful if no attention had to be paid to the happiness of the individual.

You are at a family reunion, and you decide that even though you love your family, you are the black sheep. They are laughing even when the jokes are stupid. You feel most comfortable when you are left to your own devices.

The fateful question for the human species seems to be whether and to what extent their cultural development will succeed in mastering the disturbance of their communal life by the human instinct of aggression and self-destruction. To reject a certain form of collapse one must reject the very possibility of collapse.

You are not sure what you want to be, so you take a trip alone to another country. You decide to learn another language and to not tell anyone about your personal life. You decide to photograph your journey, and later when you return home, you realize that you don't have photos of yourself proving you've been to this foreign place - this is a relief to you.

It then becomes anything you want to call it, but it is no longer the result of the development of society.

Either revisionism is correct in its position on the course of capitalist development, and therefore the socialist transformation of society is only a utopia, or socialism is not a utopia, and the theory of 'means of adaptation' is false.

When you are eighteen, you give away your things before moving out of your parent's house. You want to start fresh, to feel clean before beginning a new chapter. You think that this act will help you become a better person than you were before.

It is a means of destruction of the most extreme revolutionary significance.

We see that we are not moving towards an epoch marked by a victorious development, but rather towards a time when the hardships will increase.

You are seventeen and working your first part-time job. You decide to save money, even though you don't have a clear concept of how much you will need to save to be considered self-sufficient. You think that this money in your bank account will present you with new opportunities. You watch the interest grow day after day with no determined goal in mind.

The present state is, first of all, an organization of the ruling class. It assumes functions favoring social development specifically because, and in the measure that, these interests and social development coincide, in a general fashion, with the interests of the dominant class.

The contradiction becomes progressively sharper.

You are sixteen. Your family throws you a surprise birthday party, but this all makes you uncomfortable. All of the expectations which accompany this public event. You decide to appreciate yourself, with or without such parties.

The democratic forms of political life are without a question a phenomenon expressing clearly the evolution in the state of society.

As soon as 'immediate results' become the principle aim of our activity, the clear-cut, irreconcilable point of view, which has meaning only insofar as it proposes to win power, will be found more and more inconvenient.

You are fifteen. There are moments when people around you say stupid, brutish things which get under your skin. You decide to be more sensitive to others, to not offend, to listen closer before assuming.

From the revisionist standpoint, this conquest of power is at the same time impossible and useless.

In accordance with the nature of things as they are, the chains break quickly, and the paths that the supposed forward movement can take from that point on are many and varied.

And there are 'derangements.'

You are on a sports team, and you are fourteen. You train so hard that you can't feel your body. It's like a runner's high, except more euphoric. You decide that everything you do in the future should make you feel how you felt that afternoon, that you should push yourself to feel that much always.

Since the social reforms can only offer an empty promise, the logical consequence of such a program must necessarily be disillusionment.

It is not an invention. It is a discovery.

You are almost thirteen and on vacation - at a summer camp for gifted and talented adolescents. You feel emotional and are unable to make simple decisions after a long day of playing silly games with the other campers. You go into the woods and find a quiet place to rest. In front of you is a lake - under your feet exists powdery white sand. You pick up a nearby twig and decide to draw a rough outline of what you think your first house will look like. You erase the sketch and start over, dissatisfied with the outcome.

It has not an imaginary existence, but a real social existence, so real that it can be cut, hammered, weighed and put in the form of money.

And the memories and causes of the innovation are extinguished in antiquity and contrivance of rule: because one change always leaves the indentations for the building of another.

You are twelve years old and not considered attractive. But one day, you decide to dress up, to put more energy into your outfit than other days. You are relieved at the outcome. You seem pretty. You realize you have a talent for putting together items which don't go together at first glance - like a puzzle you now know how to solve.

But the difficulties are in the new principality. At first, it is not all new, but like an appendage, so that all together it can be called almost mixed, changes within it spring from a natural difficulty, which is in all new principalities.

It is indeed true that upon acquiring countries that have revolted for the second time, they are lost with more difficulty.

You spend time with your family pet: a small white dog. You go to the backyard so you both can be in the sun. You watch the dog retrieve the red ball as you throw it across the lawn. The weather is perfect, and the air has a slithery quality to it. You are sharing a blissful moment - the dog smiles and barks in anticipation. You decide not to keep this feeling to yourself.

When the states which one acquires are used to living with their laws and in liberty, there are three ways to keep them: the first, to ruin them; the other, to go live there personally; the third, to let them live with their laws, taking from them an annuity and creating therein a state of the few which might keep it friendly to you.

Those private men who become princes by fortune alone do it with little effort to maintain themselves with much; and they have no difficulty on the way, because they fly there: but all the difficulties spring up when they are in place.

In general, you like slumber parties. You pack your favorite pajamas, go to someone else's house to see how they live, and the food that the mother prepares is tasty. But this time, you go to your friend's house, and the food isn't good, and they don't have a plan for the kids when you get there, because the mother is working and isn't around. You decide to be a leader, to take charge and help your friend cook and make up games to play from what is lying around in the house.

Consequently, he must never lift his thoughts from the exercise of war: which he can do in two ways: the one with works, and the other with the mind.

There are two kinds of fighting: the ones with laws and the ones with force—the first is proper to man, the second to beasts. But because many times the first does not suffice, it is expedient to recur to the second.

You're very good at math. The world seems to be made of numbers, signs and signifiers. On the bus ride going home, instead of throwing paper airplanes and yelling obscenities at the bus driver, you draw a series of pictures with your ruler and mechanical pencil, and you decide that everything consists of lines and points and is connected.

The man who is isolated—who is unable to share in the benefits of political association, or has no need to share because he is already self-sufficient—is no part of the polis, and must therefore be either a beast or a god ...

You are at home sick with the flu. Next to your bed are items to help you get well: tissues, cough drops, a water glass. You decide that when you are better, you won't take your health for granted. You will try harder to make the most out of the days when you feel good. You decide to become a person who gives, even if nothing is given back.

All politics, even in the best case, is dissimulation, it is no longer possible to distinguish the best rule from the worst rule because of reference to regimes and such.

We can call the acts of any government just by the same standards we use in terming just the acts of private vengeance, namely, defensive notions of restraint, constraint, deterrence and self-defense.

You are ten years old, and you are allowed to do what you want. Your parents give you freedom, as long as you don't cause trouble. One day, you do something you aren't supposed to do to see what will happen. You find it exciting to act out of character. You decide that there will always be rules but they are easy to break - and sometimes, you are the only one in the world who knows that you broke the rule at all.

If justice's failure to appear just results in the actual rule of the unjust, then the just must accustom themselves to the rule of the worst men.

The best men or women must concern themselves with rule, because this is the only prospect, however tenuous, of bringing virtue to the lives of the many.

You are nine years old, and in the neighborhood, you are considered witty and colorful. Your life is pleasant but bland. Recently, a new kid moved in down the street who isn't predictable. He doesn't get along with others, and you find yourself curious about him. You try to be his friend, but he rejects your suggestions to go on nature hikes or to play soccer. You decide to just be present and helpful; over time, he warms up.

Once the obligation to act according to natural or divine standards is removed, the question that remains for the most able men is how to participate in the management of political appearances to secure their own interests.

In refusing to blur that line, they refused to join a common tendency in law, and especially in international law, to identify legitimate authority with the government that held the control of any territory as a matter of brute fact.

You are eight years old; you are attending your first funeral. It's your first significant encounter with death. Your mother asks you to go to the coffin and say goodbye to your aunt. You are not excited by this idea, but when you get to the edge of the coffin, you see her face, and you decide to touch her hand, not knowing that touching a dead body is considered by some spiritual defilement and not recommended.

Through this maze of conditions, this rudimentary momentous point: it was indeed possible that people vested with sovereign authority could offend the deepest principles of lawfulness. They might kill without justification, they might visit injuries on people without regard for innocence or guilt, and they might embark upon this course for no purpose other than entrenching their own arbitrary power as an end in itself.

They knew in the first place that a government restrained by law was morally superior to despotism.

It was only against these enduring principles of lawfulness that one could measure the acts of a sovereign and find him to be lawless sovereign.

You are almost seven years old. You have developed a tendency to not listen to people when they are talking. Your teacher calls your parents for a meeting, and she asks your parents questions to better interpret your personality. When your parents return home, they push you to talk to them about what is perceivably wrong. You go along with their inquisition, but all that you want to do is return to your room to finish reading. You decide that the world isn't as fascinating as fiction, so you're going to try to make reality more like the stories you read.

Laws derived from the pure source of equality and justice must be founded on the consent of those, whose obedience they require.

Moral understandings are 'socially constructed' from one locale to another, according to the vagaries of what is called the local culture.

You are six, and there's something magical about not being in kindergarten anymore. You waltz around with an authority that you've given yourself because you're good at skateboarding and baking cookies and tidying up. You decide it's satisfying to help others, you decide that you are useful and attentive.

The concerns for safety and the weight of interest could still overbear the sentiments that attach people even to a decent government.

Modern natural right was anchored firmly in the presence of self-preservation.

It isn't clear yet whether it's significant. But it is clear that we must investigate to see whether or not it's true.

You are five. You feel confused when people ask you complicated questions, but you try your best to answer them. You decide that the answers to these questions are in the overgrown field behind your house. Every day after school, you take your little brother or sister, and you try to find them there.

And a law is correct if it prescribed what is to the ruler's own advantage and incorrect if it prescribes what is to their disadvantage. The rulers are sometimes in error to what is best for themselves.

You just turned four. You make a fake camera out of a wooden block. Well, it isn't a real camera but a block of wood with a hole cut out of the middle where you insert pictures that you draw by hand and pull them out one by one. You approach your relatives and pretend to take pictures, then you run away for five minutes, draw their faces on square paper napkins, only to return with a finished portrait that you pull out of the wooden block. They are pleased. You decide to become a photographer.

A good judge must not be a young person but an old one, who has learned late in life what injustice is like and who has become aware of it not as something at home in his own soul, but as something alien and present in others, someone who, after a long time, has recognized that injustice is bad by nature, not from his own experience of it, but from knowledge. Such a judge would be the most noble one of all.

You are three, but you are not aware of it. Yet, people keep telling you your age, and they seem thrilled. You smile when they smile. You like to go up and down the staircase in your house and pretend you are mountain climbing. You like climbing, of getting to the top and winning a prize like a glass of chocolate milk. You have the feeling that one day you will be good at winning, without understanding what the word 'win' means yet.

And someone loves something most of all when he believes that the same things are advantageous to it as to himself and supposes that if it does well, he'll do well, and if it does badly, then he'll do badly too.

But if we discover what justice is like, will we also maintain that the just man is in no way different from the just itself, so that he is like justice in every respect?

Until philosophers rule as kings or those who are now called kings and leading men adequately and genuinely philosophize, that is, until political power and philosophy entirely coincide, while the many natures who at present pursue either one exclusively are forcibly prevented from doing so, cities will have no rest from the evils, nor will the human race.

You are barely two; you are a little prince. You hardly ever cry and sleep without blankets because you get flustered at night and kick them off. Your mom positions a small lime green fan by your crib. You watch the fan blades move and hear the quiet buzz. You love this sound. You dream of sound waves, soft animals, pastels and your emotions are real. You subconsciously decide that you're a sensitive creature, attuned to quiet details.

Then opinion is neither ignorance nor knowledge? New ideas germinate everywhere, seeking to force their way into the light. The need for a new life becomes apparent.

In front of you is a cupcake with a single candle lit. Someone blows it out for you; you watch them wide-eyed. Your hands are stuck in it; there is purple icing between your chubby fingers. You wipe it on your face aiming for your mouth. Someone helps you get the cake in your mouth. You like the feeling of soft things in your hands, you subconsciously decide that you are good with your hands and continue using them any chance you get.

Action, the continuous action, ceaselessly renewed, of minorities brings about this transformation. Courage, devotion, the spirit of sacrifice, are as contagious as cowardice, submission, and panic. Indifference from this point on is impossible. No society is possible without certain principles of morality generally recognized.

Life is vigorous, fertile, rich in sensation only on condition of answering to this feeling of the ideal. Act against this feeling, and you feel your life bent back on itself. Be untrue often to your ideal and you will end by paralyzing your will, your active energy.

You're three months old. You try to flip over, but you can't because your muscles haven't formed completely. But you keep trying; you've got places to go. Above your head is a mobile: the Kandinsky-inspired kind with geometric wedges and wires. You want more than anything to reach the red wedge floating above your head, even though you don't know what 'red' is, or any other color. You subconsciously decide to create art in the future which always incorporates red. You wait to use: wine red, fire hydrant red, cherry red, orange-red, blood red.

It is evident that in human societies, a still greater degree of solidarity is to be met with.

The principle of development contains further the notion that an inner destiny or determination, some kind of presupposition is at the base of it and is brought into existence. This formal determination is essential.

You are born. It is your first day in the world. Your desires are too big for words. You are vulnerable, and your soft spot is present on your skull. You are aware of so much and of nothing simultaneously. You are in between, and this is why you decide to keep breathing. You desire to be more a part of the world than to be in between - each gesture you make pulls you closer to the world.

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Appropriated Texts

Sigmund Freud - *Civilization and its Discontents*.

Friedrich Hegel - *The Philosophy of Hegel* (selections from *The Philosophy of History*).

Peter Kropotkin - *Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings*.

Rosa Luxembourge - *Reform or Revolution*.

Niccolò Machiavelli - *The Prince*.

Plato - *The Republic*.