

**Kristeva, J. (2014) New Forms of Revolt. *Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy* 22(2): 1-19.**

### **An Inner Experience**

thirst for freedom of thought 1

new type of angry person 1

new type of intimate revolt 1

the new rebels are enraged, discovering there is no answer to the current impasse without a radical inner experience to escape the technicians of governance, to escape fundamentalism, to propose alternatives, to pass on a language of revolt 2

it is a language of questioning 3

but also of intimacy, of connection 3

a revolt is to break, remember, redo; it is an infinitesimal emancipation to recommence endlessly 3

a questioning of the self 3

“I revolt, therefore we are to come.” 3

### **What Revolt Today?**

challenge existing norms and values and powers 3

a counter conscience that rejects what is taken to be true 3

an alternative: sensible intimacy as an antidote to technical calculation 4

infinitesimal revolts 4

revolts as a return, a turning back 4

### **Similarities and Differences with the “Retrospective Return”**

Socratic questioning of one’s own being; but we have lost that in favor of a stable values 5

nihilism: for her, is the rejection of *old* values in favor of a cult of *new* values that are unquestioned [terrible name for that, but OK] 5

JK: no new dogmas 5

stability of values is totalitarian; such stability is the suspension of revolt, of the retrospective return of thought, which for her is the key 5

we have to relentlessly recommence the retrospective return [i.e. revolt] in order to go to the limits of the representable/thinkable 6

this is man in revolt; rather than religious man or nihilistic man [in the bizarre sense above] 6

### **Psychoanalysis as Revolt**

authority of law is under dissolution today [it is?!] 6

revolt against this authority yields jouissance 7

the psyche is a site of revolt/rebirth/restructuring 7

revolt against the old law causes one’s autonomy to emerge as well as one’s links to others 7

## **Regaining the Sense of the Negative**

the modern age has had too heavy a dose of negative/conflict/contradiction/nothingness/rejection 7  
freedom is often located in the absence/negation of power (e.g. Sartre) 7  
in this context, revolt as a questioning of the self can lead to psychosis 8  
we should expose the psyche to the pulse of being, but we should be careful 8  
we should undertake an archeology of the subject's unity, but it is unsafe to *annihilate* this unity  
9  
two negativities: the rejection (of drives) and negativity (of judgment) 8

## **The Logical Paradoxes of Revolt**

the confrontation between the human and law/being/self 9  
this confrontation produces *jouissance* 9  
*jouissance* is a passage through evil, which is a stopping of representation and questioning 9  
[to put it in a sentence, our only hope is to keep on questioning and rethinking our lives  
together; the worst thing is when we stop questioning. It is all very Ranciere.]  
it is not just in the social/political world that we can revolt, but in the psychic, inner one 10  
we also have an inner desire to *not* know, a desire that urges us to stop the questioning 10  
and, we are stopped from questioning from the *outside*, by the spectacle 10  
psychological analysis can reconcile us with timelessness, our drives [it can help keep the questioning  
(of morality, law, justice) going] 11  
it can help keep our intimate selves in revolt [this is a good phrase for what she is calling for:  
keep oneself constantly in revolt] 11

## **The Need to Believe and the Desire to Know**

### *The Oceanic Feeling...*

the infant does not have borders between herself and her mother; she is *asea* in the world that contains  
her 12  
belief is this feeling of being connected to the world (?) 12

### *The Psychoanalytic Approach to Believing and Knowing*

I believe therefore I have spoken 12  
[perhaps the belief is: there are others out there, and they are like me, enough so that I can speak  
with them and have them understand me] 13  
overcoming the oceanic feeling of being lost in the maternal envelope by connecting to  
others...the father, and beyond 13  
also, the unification with the mother is a unification with an-other in whom I am as well 13  
the child knows that all identity is constructed, so that knowing is a creative act, and it requires belief  
that one can know 14

## **Adolescence: A Syndrome of Ideality**

child can connect to whatever without distinction 14

the adolescent, though, is a believer in the absolute, in the Ideal Object 14

s/he separates from the parental couple (traumatic) by connecting to an Ideal Other, and s/he expects total satisfaction in this connection [of course this satisfaction cannot come]14-15

Ideality dominates her unconscious 15

[and so growing up, I assume, means to get past this faith in the Ideal]

## **Believers and Nihilists**

the “malady of ideality” 15

when the Ideal turns out to be not Ideal at all, the adolescent is at risk of responding by descending into nihilism 15

the psychoanalyst listens attentively to the adolescent’s malady, recognizes it, without validating it 16

in time the analyst can point out the negative aspects 16

the adolescent can then metabolize the need to believe in the Ideal by means of the pleasure that comes with thinking, questioning, analyzing [i.e. revolt] 16

hence the analytical process can help treat the malady 16

in general society today manifests this need to believe by trading its former religious faith for the present ideological enthusiasm 16

this is an illness because we believe in an Ideality that can never come 16

it is an ever-present danger in all of us, not just something that actual adolescents suffer from 17

## **Conclusion**

actual adolescents seem to be manifesting this malady all over France, but especially in the *banlieus* 17

we see an ‘I’ that is *not bound* to others; the result is a ‘radical evil’ that does not see the life of the other as meaningful 17

this is the result when the need to believe (i.e. the malady of Ideality) is not worked through, but collapses 17

we must listen to one another rather than kill one another [cf. Butler’s *Precarious Life*] 18

the proliferation of antagonism is a real danger 18

we can remedy this disease of soul [Ideality] by caring for this malady with delicacy and attentiveness and generosity 18

an active intelligence that continually renews the process of analysis is our best hope 19