

"History"

Lecture No. 0040 (May 3, 1974)

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Preliminary remarks

A couple of things before I begin. First of all, I have a number of appointments with you, with some of you, I think, for after this class. And I will certainly keep those, but it will be a bit delayed because I have a graduate exam that I've got to go to. I'm supposed to be over there at 3:00, but I will try to be flexible with it; we'll maybe break a little bit early here. But I will be, anyway, where I'm supposed to meet you at 4:00, which I have forgotten where [*laughter*]. Well, I'll be at least somewhere in the gallery at 4:00. Or around here — wherever it is [*laughter*].

We've said that tomorrow we're going to our national dentist's club [*laughter*; Goldberg may be referring to the Watergate impeachment hearings before the House Judiciary Committee, set to begin in the week following his lecture].

It will be no surprise to me. I haven't voted — I vote regularly, but it's the first time since 1952. I have yet, though, to want to vote for a major party candidate; I'm probably the only person in Dane County who voted for Dick Gregory [*laughter*]. He's a good candidate! But no, I'm just kidding. Let's move on.

Lecture

And so for a brief interlude in the middle of the nineteenth century, masses of oppressed people literally shook the ground from under the advanced capitalist societies. But, you see, from the perspective of the mid-Victorian decades, what really was left of all of that massive insurgency? What was left of all of that inflamed idealism? For in the England of the 1850s and '60s, or in the France of Louis-Napoleon's Second Empire, the bourgeoisie was *par excellence* the conquering class. British capitalism stood astride an informal world empire, subordinating whole peoples and whole economies across the globe, which showered prosperity on that ruling class. And French capitalism — aided and abetted, of course, by the authoritarian Bonapartist state — lurched forward in a veritable orgy of speculation and of profiteering.

But wait, wait — because we must remember, after all, that the victories of the system are perforce ephemeral; that the victories of the system, after all, live almost inevitably on borrowed time; that the prosperity cycles that come forth, they yield and give way to periods of breakdown and of crisis. And that, consequently, the defeats that masses of people have suffered in one

struggle may very well become the lessons learned for the very next struggle; that you must always understand that in that human experience, which is a perpetual becoming, you cannot properly talk about success and failure — that time alone is the great playout of those things.

And it is in that light that we can see the validity of returning yet once more to those insurrectionary months in France in 1848. To look into, in all of its essentials, the radical feminism which exploded in those revolutionary months; to discover how it was a vanguard of militant Frenchwomen discovered the oppression of capitalism over their lives and how they analyzed it; to understand, even more, how monumentally difficult it was for those radical feminists to extirpate, from those kinds of nineteenth-century societies, the practices and the ideology of sexism; and even more, how difficult it was for them to find allies even among men, who were otherwise revolutionaries and socialists and humanitarians; and not least of all, to discover in the work of those radical feminists what there was that was inadequate about their analysis, and what there was that was inadequate about their strategy of struggle, and what it is that we can then learn from those particular networks — which will be valuable and useful for a liberation movement which, whatever its setbacks and however long it takes, must and must one day become irrepressible.

And so if we are to deal with the question of radical feminism in 1848, we cannot do it justice unless we cast the net rather wide, so that we understand something about how it was that masses of Frenchwomen contested the workings of bourgeois society at its very revolutionary inception in the 1790s. And so we glimpse at least a little bit into how pervasive the ideology of sexism became in those nineteenth-century societies, and so that we come to grips with, in some way, the ambiguous and yet critical relationship between socialism and the movement for the liberation of women. And the starting point, inevitably, is the great French Revolution of the 1790s.

And granted, that with the sliver of time that I have at our disposal, I can do no more than give you bare impressions of what is a very complex and rich and astonishing and unprecedented history; and that I must therefore reserve recounting that history to those summer months when I will, as a parting shot, give forty lectures on the French Revolution — and spell out that not only half-hidden, but that deliberately hidden history of the women's role in that great revolution. But we should nonetheless understand that masses of Frenchwomen in the years between 1789 and 1795 intervene over and over again, actively and purposively, in order to accelerate the momentum of the French Revolution; that masses of women live through and experience, especially in those most radical years of 1792 and '93 — when the popular clubs of Paris and when those popular assemblies in the forty-eight sections of Paris were in the hands of left-wing *sans-culottes* — went through an experience of articulation and of participation and of politization, which was absolutely unprecedented in modern history.

And of course, we cannot take the time now to recount even all of those *grandes journées*, all of those historic days of the French Revolution when the direct intervention of masses of women was the crucial turning point — like the 5th and 6th of October of 1789, when 20,000 women marched from Paris to Versailles, and brought the king back to live in Paris under the watchful eye of the people of that city, and thereby to thwart a potential royalist counter-reaction in the making. Or like those historic days of the last week of February of 1793, when masses of women were in the streets of Paris day after day, protesting, demonstrating, rioting — breaking finally into the food shops in protest against inflation, the high cost of living, demanding price-fixing, and ultimately getting laws fixing the prices of basic commodities. Or those innumerable times — much too many to even try to mention — when important delegations of women burst into the meetings of the commune of Paris, that revolutionary government of the city of Paris, or into the meetings of the national legislature in order to read their petitions and to make their demands, and to be listened to and heard.

And you should note it well, that a minority of these women — very educated, very articulate, very politized — put forward very precise and very radical demands which, if they had been met, would have revolutionized the status of women in modern society; would have broken the chain of subordination and oppression; would have ended that reign of women as the property of men. And so they demanded equal legal rights in marriage, and they demanded the right of divorce, and they demanded complete equality of education, and they demanded complete equality of employment opportunity, and they demanded the vote and all equal political rights.

And of course, in 1791 we already begin to get the examples of those astonishing militants doing what is so unprecedented. There it is, '91, and the monarchy is still in place. And in the national legislature, the deputies are good bourgeois: economic liberals who have no taste for women's liberation, and have done nothing in two years of the revolution to forward the position of women. And there, suddenly, we see then Olympe de Gouges — that Olympe de Gouges, who was herself the daughter of a butcher in the city of Besançon, and she who read that the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen and said, "It says nothing in it about women. And what about their rights?" And consequently, published herself a brochure called *Les Droits de la femme* (*The Rights of Women*), in which she not only wrote a long prologue, but spelled out seventeen articles which were the coda for women's liberation at that moment. And in that prologue we read, from 1791:

"Tell me, men: what gives you sovereign empire to oppress my sex? Your strength? Your talents? Observe the Creator in his wisdom — survey, in all of her grandeur, that nature with whom you seem to want to be in harmony — and give me, if you dare, an example of this tyrannical empire. Go back to animals, consult the elements, study plants — everywhere you will find them mingled; everywhere they cooperate in harmonious togetherness in this immortal masterpiece. Man alone has raised his exceptional

circumstance to a principle: bizarre, blind, bloated with science and degenerating, in a century proud of its enlightenment, into the crassest ignorance. He wants to command as a despot a sex which is in full possession of its intellectual faculties. He pretends to enjoy the revolution and to claim his rights to equality in order to say nothing more about me or anyone else."

And when she went on, then, to spell out those articles of liberation, they were blunt and to the point and without a single bad word:

"Woman is born free and lives equal to man in her rights... The purpose of any political association is the conservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of woman as well as of man... The law must be the expression of the general will; all female and male citizens must contribute, either personally or through their representatives, to its formation... No one is to be disquieted for his or her very basic opinions. Woman has the right to have a scaffold; she must equally have the right to mount the rostrum."

And so it is, of course, that you're dealing with something extraordinary. And then, you see, the revolution moves to the left, and in September of 1792 it is, of course, a republic that replaces the monarchy. And in the summer of 1793, that republic, which had been under rule of the Girondins — who were, after all, those most moderate of bourgeois, who were the economic liberals, who would make no head to private property and who hated *la canaille*, the mass — those Girondins were then ousted, were thrown out of the National Convention, and the revolution went into the hands of Robespierre and the revolutionary Jacobins, who come to be known to us as "The Mountain," or the Montagnards.

And it is in that period, of course, that there is the alliance and the coalition between a bourgeois government and the people of Paris, and so some of the demands of those women begin to be met. September 20th of 1792 — the very first day that the National Convention, that new revolutionary legislature of the French Revolution, was to be — came the historic law on divorce: that divorce, after all — which was unprecedented, unheard of — that divorce was the imprescriptible right of every man and woman; that divorce was consummated how? By the joint request of both partners or by the insistence of either of the partners that the affair was incompatible.

And then, of course, in 1793, the women organize to the pinnacle of their power; it is the great year of women's participation. And for eight months, between February and October of 1793, thousands of women in the city of Paris, inscribed in a club of their own — a women's society called the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women — for eight months, that society not only enrolled thousands, but every single day held meetings in its meeting place in the central market area of Paris, very close to where the problem areas of Paris really was strong. And there,

in an abandoned church (the Church of Saint-Eustache), had those meetings of those women, to which hundreds attended.

And I tell you that the Society of Revolutionary Republican Women is on the extreme left wing of the French Revolution, and that it is engaged in a close alliance with those most radical popular leaders who are called the *Enragés*. We're talking about the mad "red priest," Jacques Roux; we're talking about Jean Varlet; we're talking about Théophile Leclerc — those were the men who articulated the will of the *sans-culottes* of the extreme left, much to the left of the Jacobins who were running of the government. And so here you have these women in this club, and I tell you that the scenes are in one's mind, and those women seem to be everywhere.

And there they are between the 31st of May and the 2nd of June of 1793, those memorable days, which were the days when the Girondin deputies were ousted from the Convention, and the entire revolution went into the hands of the Montagnards, the revolutionary Jacobins. And where were the women? The women were at the doors of the National Convention, refusing to let into that meeting hall any supporters of the Girondins. And then, as the deputies were being ousted from a hall who were no longer to take part, they were chased down the streets by those militant women, not to show their faces again in the midst of the revolution.

And in September of 1793, their power was really at the peak. And they are out on the streets every day, with their petitions and with their demonstrations and manifestations, and it is for a law that will pursue counter-revolutionaries, that will extirpate from France those who would sap the foundations of this revolution. And in response, the National Convention does pass on the 19th of September of 1793 that famous law of the suspects to pursue counter-revolutionaries. And then it is for a law to fix the price of the necessities of life, and so the pressure mounts from the women. And the Convention yields on the 29th of September of 1793, and gives up the famous law of the general maximum, fixing the price of commodities that people need in their everyday lives.

And then, note it well, that the breach comes: that at that point, it becomes really too much even for those most enlightened of the bourgeois legislators of the French Revolution, those Montagnards. The women are too much out of place — the women are rioting too much, they are demanding too much. In October, they are demanding a whole network of cooperative workshops for women; in October, they are demanding that the radicalized sections of Paris, that the radicalized sections where the *sans-culottes* predominate, should have a censorship over the central government; they are demanding that price-fixing be reinforced rigorously — they are demanding, you see, between us, a social-democratic France.

And that gets to be too much. The 1st of November of 1793, the National Convention votes the law abolishing all clubs and societies for women. The 8th of November of 1793, it is the

commune of Paris, to which women have come every day, decreeing that they no longer can enter the meetings of that body. And it is by irony that the one that gives the rationale for it is Pierre Chaumette, and it is that Chaumette, after all, who will be on the very left wing of revolutionary Jacobinism. But he remains male, he remains bourgeois, and when he gives the rationale it is this way — and see how deeply mired we are in it, because this is the heroic moment of left-wing bourgeois revolutionary spirit. And here is Chaumette:

"Since when is it permitted to give up one's sex? Since when is it decent to see women abandoning the pious cares of their households, the cribs of their children, to come into public places so frequently, to harangue in the gallery and the bar of the Senate? Is it to men that nature has confided domestic affairs? Of course not. Has she given us breasts to breastfeed our children? No! She has said to man, 'Be a man [*laughter*]: hunting, farming, political concerns, toilings of every kind — that is your task.' She had said to woman, 'Be a woman: the tender cares owing to infancy, the details of the household, the sweet anxieties of maternity — these are your labors.' But more attentive cares deserve a reward. And find you a marriage, and you will be the divinity of the domestic sanctuary [*laughter*] — you will reign over everything that surrounds you by the invincible charm of the graces and of virtue."

And once, of course, the revolutionary Jacobins fell from office in July of 1794, it was even much worse. Because then they were replaced by the so-called Thermidorians, by very conservative bourgeois who took over the revolution, who went back to economic liberalism, who protected every *arpent* of property, and who had not the slightest sliver of sympathy for women's liberation in any way, shape, or form. And so they took the leaders, the best of those militants of the Society of Revolutionary Women that might give us a Claire Lacombe — write her in your book — if I say nothing else about her, she should have been noted: that she, after all, so *déclassé*, actress in her life, disowned by her bourgeois family, and she was on every fighting front; and her sister in the very spirit, that Pauline Léon, and both of them picked up now by the government and thrown into prison for two years; and that Olympe de Gouges, herself picked up and guillotined. And consequently, the movement truncated.

But note it well: that in the Year III — which is one of the saddest years in the revolution's history, the year 1795 — that the last real protests in the French Revolution in that Year III, in 1795, come from the women. All that they have learned in the earlier years they now put into practice: they go into the streets and demonstrate for bread, and go into the streets and demonstrate for the rights of workers, they invade bakeries and food shops, and they establish *taxation populaire* (popular price-fixing), and they insult and they push around the police and the National Guard and the magistrates. And yes, yes, they join insurrectionary secret organizations aimed at throwing over this now-reactionary government of the revolution. And finally it culminates in the days of Prairial — those last days, really, of mass demonstration in the

Revolution — the days of Prairial, the last days of March, the first two weeks of April of 1795. And in those days, they were the women who lead the insurrection. And by this time, the respectable bourgeois have had it with them, and so they say that these are furies and these are harpies and these are prostitutes and these are loose women. And the repression is savage, and the movement is killed off.

And yet, of course, that anti-feminist reaction of the late 1790s was only a small step in the direction toward that volcano of vituperation which will erupt all across the nineteenth century against women: that the intrusion of women into the public place and into public life; that the mass action for women under their own flag without the tutelage of men, and in fact against the tutelage of man; that their declaration of independence against the narrowly confined role which was assigned to them in society — that all of that added up to a terrible assault on male domination. And no, no, that could not be. And consequently, there will be a frenetic counteroffensive inscribed in law and ideology which would teach women where their place was, and would protect them as being property of men.

Now, you are all conscious enough, for sure, of how ubiquitous oppression of women is in modern and contemporary bourgeois society: that it permeates every cell of those societies, that literally an army of ideologues have always been at work to prove the inferiority of women; that men, working-class militants, and their movements have rarely confronted that imprisonment of women and have done very little about it; that, as Ralph Ellison once described blacks in racist white societies as invisible, that after all, the racist practices were so ubiquitous as to render the deadly humiliation of blacks part of the accepted landscape — so it became with the daily humiliations of women: that even for masses of women, those practices became part of the acceptable social norm. In 1816, the parliament of France — reactionary, counter-revolutionary, the first Bourbon parliament of the Restoration — abrogated the right of divorce. And in so doing, it seemed to be saying, for those bourgeois societies of the nineteenth century, that women have best now know their place and go into it.

Now, we have not the time, unfortunately — nor do I the stomach — to wade through the mountain of pseudoscientific writing by doctors in the nineteenth century, or those imperatives commanding women into obedience and subordination, which passed for Christian morality in the nineteenth century. It suffices to say, and it is important for us to remember always, that doctors and clerics and a veritable army of moralists were at work repeatedly creating, inventing, the ideology of sexism, and that they grasped onto straw of science or pseudoscience — Darwinism in the last part of the century, for example — to prove that inferiority.

But note it well: that in France it had a very special meaning, because there it was to bar the route — to prevent the passing of any other recurrence of that subversive threat against the foundations, culturally, of bourgeois society which those masses of women in the 1790s had

made — that that will not happen again. In that light, we can appreciate better the defiance of a Fourier or of the early Saint-Simonians and the indomitable courage of that vanguard of Frenchwomen who translated the inspiration of these ideologues into the first revolutionary initiative in the 1830s toward an authentic women's liberation.

How, in this brief time, to come to grips with Charles Fourier? How to come to grips, after all, with that creative imagination? How to find the words to translate that astonishing vision of his of human liberation? We're talking about a reasonably isolated, rather obscure traveling salesman who lived alone in a sixth-floor flat in Paris, surrounded by twenty cats. And who became what? A Surrealist, a hundred years before [Guillaume] Apollinaire invented the word; an ecologist, in the period when the bourgeois had no idea that the earth was exhaustible, or that industry was anything but a positive good; a prophet of sensual pleasure and the sexual liberation, in an age of very repressive Christian morality and bourgeois hypocrisy; a Freudian and a Reichian, decades before the birth of Sigmund Freud and of Wilhelm Reich; a bachelor, who understood in the very marrow of his bone what the oppression of women was about, and who dared to write it out on paper; a homosexual, who had the courage to glamorize and glorify and celebrate the creative variety of the human experience.

We're talking about a Fourier who for most of his sixty-five years, from 1772 to 1837, really lived in a veritable frenzy of imaginings and of visceral insights about the ways and the workings of human liberation. Let us be slow to laugh at Fourier or call him a fool. For most certainly, those socialists and communists of the nineteenth century who understood about the oppression in the daily life of those bourgeois societies, for women who translated his words into their militant action, Fourier understood much more about what human liberation is — about what the dimension of socialism must be — than many of those erudite intellectuals who donned the mantle of socialist, but who never confronted and certainly never defied bourgeois convention. [Friedrich] Engels, who had all kinds of working, subversive liberationist impulses, went to the heart of the matter: "The little finger of Fourier contains more wisdom and truth about the happiness of humankind than all the encyclopedic books which desiccated professors, like Herr Eugen Dühring, have pieced together in the writings of others."

And yet, you see, that this man who really was talking about what it takes to make an authentic socialist culture: not a socialist culture that merely mimics, in a dull way, bourgeois culture — replete with a very egoistic nuclear family, replete with social relationships of dominion and subordination — but a socialism which really rests upon a wholly new terrain of human association. That Fourier did not have a vast impact, in his time or later; that for almost a hundred years after his death in 1837, Fourier was little discussed in socialist circles and almost never mentioned in the sacred writ of orthodox history.

And how, after all, are we to explain it? In part, of course, it is the style, it is the vocabulary, it is the idioms, it is the imagery — it is the discourse of Fourier. For in his printed works, and even more in that mass of unpublished manuscripts in the Archives nationales in Paris, there is a touch of madness. So that, most certainly, the vocabulary is dissolved, often inaccessible, invented by Fourier to accommodate this extravagant imagination, and so the images, most generally, burst beyond the bounds of everyday logic. How are we to take a Fourier seriously who writes that "grapes are the product of a copulation between the sun and earth"? How are we to take that Fourier seriously who tells us that in the age of harmony, which is this description for the future socialist society, that "a drizzle of semen will turn all of the seas into health-giving lemonade"? [laughter]. How then are we to take seriously that Fourier who tells us, with mathematical computation, that "in the age of harmony, human beings will engage in 36,000 varieties of lovemaking"? [laughter]

But then, you see, before we laugh too much, we must try to understand what it is that Fourier is doing: that in the first place, after all, in these concrete images, rather than in abstract principles, he is trying to say something graphic about the infinite possibility and potentiality of human existence; to use the physical universe itself — the copulating plants, their fractious orgasm — as a mirror in which to refract the inhibitions, the restraints, and the repressions of bourgeois society. And in the second place: to understand, after all, that the soul of his work — the essence, after all, of his subversive project, of what his huge utopian design is all about — the essence of it is an everlasting nay — a refusal to compromise with the paralyzing restraints of that bourgeois society; not to accept reforms with the terms of that society, not to accept the terrain carved out by the enemy, but to carve out a wholly new terrain itself.

Three years ago, I wrote an introduction to a very strange collection of photographs and designs put together by a great friend of mine in Paris, an elderly man now, who was a great, gigantic architect in France, André Bruyère. And André, toward the end of his life, made a design for another skyscraper and he wanted to make a book about it. And after talking to me nonstop for three days and three nights about it, yes, yes, I wrote the introduction. And it is about the construction of a 54-story skyscraper in the shape of an egg [laughter]. And so I wrote the introduction to his book called *L'Œuf*, or *The Egg* [laughter], and in which you see pictures of this skyscraper, this egg standing amidst other quadrangular buildings [laughter]. And what André Bruyère was about, of course, and what I tried to convey, is that quite obviously, the idea that you cannot have an egg skyscraper, as he said, is absurd to begin with. But more than that, when you begin to think of the genius of this man in designing it:

"I went to collaborate and I began to study all of those books about eggs and what an egg is about, and then about angles and what an egg is not about. And I traced back and found how it was in sixth-century BC Miletus, there was the first breakthrough of the right angle. And then the angular city, the quadrangular city, the angular streets, the angular

building, all of that became possible. And look at it there at the time of Hippodamus, who first made the right angle, look at it back there: that it is a magnificent defiance of nature, no? That nature says, 'My shapes are not right angles.' Nature has never made a right angle — man makes right angles. My shapes are caves, they are curves, they are strange, they are ellipses.

"And this is defiant, no? We are, after all, rational human beings; we will make our own structures and our own defiance. And we do that to the point that we become prisoners of the revolt. And pretty soon we have lost all touch with what were the shapes of nature, or with what other way might have been possible besides these rational ways that are imposed upon us — all of this ultra-rationalism, after all, that has led us to such great heights of civilization as repetitive imperialist wars.

And what is it, after all, that the egg represents? It is magnificent: no human being could have made an egg. An egg has a shape that is unique. You put twelve eggs together, and they don't stand together; each is an individual, and consequently something different. And what would it be like, for example, if you walked down to Rockefeller Plaza in New York one day, and against all of those angular skyscrapers there was a huge 54-story egg? [*laughter*]. And would it not be possible, after all, that you would think anything possible?

And so at the end of that introduction, I said what I think really captures what Fourier is about in this whole thing:

"We wouldn't think of constructing an exclusively egg-shaped city, or designing an entire neighborhood in the form of a hen's egg or another in the form of a thrush's, or even of juxtaposing angular and oval streets. On the contrary, we think that the egg-shaped structure will be fascinating precisely because it will be unique, contrasting so marvelously with all those principled skyscrapers, appearing as beautiful — to use [Comte de] Lautréamont's striking image — as the composition of an umbrella and a sewing machine on a surgeon's operating table. To put it in words as startling as Lautréamont's, we might well believe that New York will look upon this egg nestled among her skyscrapers like a hen that's hatched a dumpling.

"But to conclude on a rather more philosophical note, we can pose a question worthy of our most serious reflection: Why shouldn't we dream of constructing, among all of our angular buildings, another kind of structure — not based on any previous model, not even the progenitor of future buildings — just as we may dream on some hazy or melancholy evening of another kind of history?"

So there is a point to the Fourier images. And the images, obviously, to tell you how to really push it — that imagination, that sense of a possible — as far as it will go. But there is yet another reason why the intellectuals in socialism and why the academics in history have really ignored Fourier, mentioning him only, after all, to say that he was the inspirer of a group of utopian colonies, of phalansteries, so-called utopian communes — many of which were implanted in the United States, all of which were very pale, dehydrated versions of what Fourier was talking about when he talked about harmony.

But there is yet another reason why he is denigrated, and that is that he is an autodidact: that he is not an intellectual. And there is something totally irrational about the style of his writing; it doesn't have that discipline that comes out of the gut of experience and observation. You must understand that this is a man who hated capitalism because of his own confrontation with the workings of a market society, which he knew damnably well. He was, after all, born the son of a cloth merchant in Besançon, and he consequently had to work as a child in his father's business. And he had to learn very early to lie: to tell the customers it was better quality cloth than they thought that it really was, and to shortchange or shortweight them on the quantity that they purchased. And so he writes later, "At the age of seven, I took the same oath as Hannibal took against the Romans at nine: I swore eternal hatred of business, profiteering, and the whole civilization they had permeated."

But, you see, having sworn that hostility, it became his whole life. His father died when he was nine, and after a desultory high school education, he was put out as an apprentice in a commercial house in Lyon. And all the rest of his working days, he was a *commis voyageur* (a traveling salesman), going from city to city taking orders — but everywhere, everywhere observing, everywhere seeing the disorder, the exploitation, the repression in the society. And finally he decided that he had to riot, and he quit his job and he lived very poorly in Paris. And his sources are bizarre: a reading here and a reading there, very helter-skelter, but masses of newspapers.

You see, Fourier had an eye, and quite magnificent, for what is called *l'ordre subversif*, for the subversive order. He read in the press what the French call the *faits divers*: the miscellaneous facts about brawls, about murders, about things that are considered the aberrations, not the big news. And in all of this he heaps together the image of something bubbling, turbulating, toiling under the society — that there was always a kind of resistance to, a revolt against, all of this repression, which revealed how much repressed need there was in society...

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... those who were the *fourieristes* of this time, the 1840s, good human beings in general. But, you see, they would not publish — would not publish — the mass of manuscripts that he left. He

gave a direct order of how they were to be printed, in which order, and so forth; they suppressed nine-tenths of them, and even in the printed books that were available during this lifetime, they reprinted new editions in which they expurgated certain parts. You see, they were perfectly ready to accept Fourier's critique of market societies. They were social engineers who liked a great deal the idea of building phalansteries, these economic cooperatives, but who could not handle his critique of marriage, of family, of sexual repression, and who certainly could not handle his project for egress — his project of liberation.

In that sense, they are very much, those *fourieristes*, like those so-called Marxists of the Second International: those like [Karl] Kautsky who, after all, compressed and trivialized Marx's vast revolutionary project into economic determinism and into electoral socialist parties, so that one revolutionary socialist named [Alexander] Parvus could say at one point, about Kautsky and his ilk, that they took Marx's good, strong raw dough and baked matzos [*laughter*]. And the same was true, after all, of those who came after Fourier of what it was that he did.

In *Le Nouveau monde amoureux*, for example, he takes these stories — and you've got to understand that this is a man writing in the 1820s, before that — and he takes these stories. He reads a story in the paper about a Russian aristocratic woman named Princess Stroganoff. And this Princess Stroganoff was growing older, and got very jealous of her young, rather beautiful housemaid, and abused her very cruelly as a result. Fourier reads about this and then he says,

"Well, this aristocratic woman of Moscow, having seen herself grow old, was jealous of the beauty of a young female servant. She had her cruelly tortured. Now, what are we to make of it? Was it simply jealousy? No, it seems obvious to me that the princess was a lesbian without daring to admit it. Now, if she had only known and believed that her real needs were admissible and possible, she could have found an outlet for them. But under the pressure of her society, her passion became deformed; she tortured the one she might otherwise have loved. All imposed deprivation leads to a barren fury. Others inflict collectively, in our so-called civilized societies, the kind of atrocities which Princess Stroganoff inflicted individually."

Now, you must understand that we are three-quarters of a century before Freud, and we hear of the theory that very criminal behavior may come from misdirected passions, and that collective homophobia may reflect sometimes feelings of homosexuality. And you read a number of the unpublished manuscripts of Fourier and you are onto the Oedipus complex: "There exists a rivalry of sons with their fathers, for marriage as it is practiced gives the exclusive right over the woman to her husband, and hence generates the jealousy of sons." But Fourier was a revolutionary, and he saw that this would disappear in his wholly new society: "At issue is the coercive and absolute power of the father. Our social system turns sons into a troop of

conspirators against their fathers. But in that harmonious society, the father's absolute power would be broken and the rivalry would disappear."

Now, that Simone Debout — to whom we owe so many of the manuscripts of Fourier, who has devotedly given us that magnificent 500-page edition of the *Nouveaux monde amoureux* — and I was with her in a colloquium on Fourier five years ago, and she made a magnificent intervention on the superiority of Fourier to Freud in terms of the direction; that she said Fourier, after all, was an optimist, because the resolution of these problems to him lay in praxis, lay in other kinds of human and social relationships than the ones that were distorted. But for the analyst, the therapy is in the word; the therapy is in the vocabulary; the therapy is in the long discussion, which is the journey back into the past. But once Freud and the analysts have the past, what can they do with it? They cannot remake that perverted childhood, they cannot remake that kind of paralysis that set in in that childhood.

And so Freud gets very pessimistic, and toward the end of his life he transcends, after all, the whole by talking about the death wish — the instinct, after all, to return epistrophically to the earth, to the sea, and you get rid of the whole problem that way. And for Fourier, it is the revolutionary solution. But women, and the women of the 1830s and their connection to Fourier, we'll do that next time. [*applause*]