

The Simplest of Pleasures.

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'Homosexuals often commit suicide,' reports a psychiatric study. This word 'often' fascinates me. We might imagine tall, slender, palid creatures unable to cross over the threshold to the opposite sex, in a faceoff with death all through life, only to end it finally by slamming the door with a loud bang (which never fails to annoy the neighbors). Instead of marrying the opposite sex they marry death. The other sex is replaced by the other side. But, the story goes, they're just as incapable of dying as they are of really living. In this ludicrous account suicide and homosexuals are portrayed so as to make each other look bad.

So let's see what there is to say in favor of suicide. Not so much in support of legalizing it or making it 'moral'. Too many people have already belabored these lofty things. Instead, let's say something against the shady affairs, humiliations, and hypocrisies that its detractors usually surround it with: hastily getting boxes of pills together, finding a solid, old-fashioned razor, or licking gun store windows and entering some place pretending to be on the verge of death

In my opinion a person should have the right not to be rushed, which is very bothersome. Indeed, a great deal of attention and competence are required. You should have the chance to discuss at length the various qualities of each weapon and its potential. It would be nice if the salesperson were experienced in these things, with a big smile, encouraging but a little bit reserved (not too chatty), and sophisticated enough to understand that they are dealing with a person who's basically good-hearted, but somewhat clumsy, never having had the idea before of employing a machine that shoots people. It would also be convenient if the salesperson's enthusiasm didn't stop them from advising you about the existence of alternative ways, ways that were more chic, more your style. This kind of business-like discussion is worth a thousand times more than the chatter that goes on around the corpse among the employees of the funeral parlor.

Some people that we didn't even know, and who didn't know us either, arranged it so that one day we started existing. They pretended to believe, no doubt sincerely, that they were waiting for us. In any case they prepared for our entry into the world with great care (and often with a sort of second-hand seriousness). It's quite inconceivable that we not be given the chance to prepare ourselves with all the passion, intensity and detail that we wish, including the little extras that we've been dreaming about for such a long time, since childhood perhaps or just some warm summer evening. Life it seems is quite fragile in the human species and death quite certain. Why must we make of this certainty a mere happenstance (which might suggest, by virtue of its suddenness or inevitability, or air of punishment)?

The philosophies that promise to teach us what to think about death and how to die bore me to tears. I'm not at all moved by those things that are supposed to 'prepare us for it.' One has to prepare it bit by bit, decorate it, arrange the details, find the ingredients, imagine it, choose it, get advice on it, shave it into a work without spectators, one which exists only for oneself, just for that shortest little moment of life. Those who survive, of course, see suicide as nothing but superficial traces, solitude, awkwardness, and unanswered cries. These people can't help but ask 'why?': the only question about death that shouldn't be asked.

'Why? Because I wanted to.' It's true that suicide often leaves discouraging traces. But who's to blame? Do you think it's pleasant to have to hang yourself in the kitchen with your tongue hanging out all bluish? Or to close yourself in the garage and turn on the gas? Or to leave a tiny bit of your brain lying on the sidewalk for the dogs to come and sniff at? I believe that we're witnessing in these times a 'suicidal spiral' because many people are so depressed at the thought of all these nasty things that are forced on someone who's aspiring to suicide (things including the police, the ambulance, the elevator man, the autopsy and what not), that many prefer to commit suicide rather than to continue to think about it all.

Some advice to lovers of humanity. If you really want to see a decrease in the number of suicides, support only those potential suicides which are committed with forethought, quietly and without

wavering. Suicide must not be left to unhappy people who might bungle it or make a mess of it. In any case there are lots fewer happy than unhappy people. It's always struck me as strange that people say that death is nothing to worry about, because between life and nothingness death is nothing but a border. But it is true that this is all there is to the game? Make something of it, something fine.

No doubt we've missed out on a lot of pleasures and we've had some that were pretty mediocre: others we've let slip by out of laziness or lack of attention, imagination or persistence. We should consider ourselves lucky to have at hand (with suicide) an extremely unique experience: it's the one which above all the rest deserves the greatest attention - but rather so that you can make of it a fathomless pleasure whose patient and relentless preparation will enlighten all of your life.

Suicide festivals or orgies are just two of the possible methods. There are others more intricate and learned. When I see the funeral 'homes' in American cities I'm not just appalled by how dreadfully banal they are, as if death had to smother any attempt at imagination, but also I think it's a pity that they serve cadavers and their glad-to-still-be-alive families. Let there be some alternatives for those of little means and those who have grown weary of too much reflection so that they don't have to rely on these prepackaged, boring and expensive expedients. For example, alternatives like those the Japanese have devised (they're called 'love hotels') for having sex. They know a lot more about suicide than we do.

If you have the chance to go to the Chantilly in Tokyo you'll see what I mean. You'll sense there the existence of places without maps or calendars where you can enter into the most absurd decors with anonymous partners to look for an opportunity to die free of all stereotypes. There you'd have an indeterminate amount of time - seconds, weeks, months perhaps - until the moment presents itself with compelling clearness. You'd recognize it immediately. You couldn't miss it. It would have the shapeless shape of utterly simple pleasure.