



The Living, the Dead

“There are legacies that climb over the walls to go and fall into the eyes of wolves.”

In the mid-1960s, as part of an exhibition that wanted to claim absolute detour of a consumer and machine society that at the time was taking its first steps, there was someone who thought of creating (and wearing) a particular costume, that of Necrophilus. It wasn't so much a question of paying homage to a notorious 19th-century French desecrator of tombs, but above all of mixing and negating the boundaries between life and death – a way to overturn resignation in the face of fatality, to invite one to grasp desire and freedom all the way into the abyss, despite and against all social convention. The public appearance of Necrophilus stunned all the bystanders, who immediately made way for him in order to keep their distance from him. But their amazement grew immeasurably as soon as they saw the writing visible on the back of his cloak, and so only after he passed: *Death, life lies in wait*. In this overturning of common sense, doesn't one perhaps find the most formidable challenge that one can launch against every form of realism and reasonableness, in their insipid, logical complacency?

More than half a century later, mercantile and technological society has triumphed to the point of proceeding almost undisturbed in the extermination of every residual form of otherness. Standardization has reached such a level of unanimity that it is no longer the *detour* from but the *sharing with*, no longer the *desertion* from but the *presence in and agreement* with this deadly society, which is being loudly claimed today even by its critics (whether they are moderates or radicals). The midnight darkness has become a gloom without clock hands, the winter of the spirit has crystallized into an ice age of intelligence and sensitivity. The awakening of the dawn, the seed under the snow ... pathetic and embarrassing lullabies. From a possibility, extinction is coming to be a certainty. On Earth there is no longer a struggle between contrasting vision of the world and of life: there is a one-way massacre, as blatant and shameless as the genocide now going on in Palestine.

Have we reached the point of saving who we can? In fact, within this society that gives off the stench of decomposition from all its nooks and crannies, one is allowed to imagine surviving through resilience, but not opposing with resistance. Because when death looms everywhere, concrete and tangible, logic and reasonableness demand that one can only strive to conserve life, certainly not live it. In fact, to live it you need to know how to go meet death, not submitting with head bowed to the one imposed by others, but to confront, with your head held high, the one decided autonomously, against and beyond all propriety. Would we then find ourselves in a tiny company? In space, yes, but certainly not in time.



Because there are dead who with their words and actions remind and criticize us, spur us on and question us, inspire and console us. We may no longer be able to look them in the eye, but they are there, at our side – perhaps inciting us to unleash the bad passion, not take over the means of production, to savor joy armed, not chase after worker's power. They are not the ones that we want or need to take leave of, but rather the many who are alive only because they breathe.