

# Donald Nicholson-Smith on the *Encyclopédie du monde actuel*

Remarks collected by Gérard Berréby  
31 May 2014<sup>1</sup>

The participation of the “situationist group” in the *Encyclopédie du monde actuel* [EDMA]<sup>2</sup> wasn’t official. There were a few small-paying jobs to which some members of the SI devoted themselves. The work consisted in drafting “EDMA cards” and, eventually, monthly booklets. (Each perforated card included a 500-word-long text; each booklet contained around 30 illustrated pages.) At the start, in 1966, it was my wife, Cathy Pozzo di Borgo, and I who began to produce, on a *freelance*<sup>3</sup> basis, this type of card under the direction of André Fougerousse – Cathy’s stepfather – for publication by Editions Rencontre in Lausanne. Along with Charles-Henri Favrod, Fougerousse had been (in 1962) one of the founders of this editorial project. Later on, we passed the cards “to be done” to friends, including Mustapha and Raoul. Incidentally, Raoul Vaneigem was intimately tied to André Fougerousse; their friendship lasted until the death of the latter. The members of the SI, no doubt with Raoul at the head, had, for the most part, continued to contribute to EDMA more or less until 1974. In this way, many of the booklets were written by situationists or ex-situs – even after the dissolution of the movement in 1972. Guy Debord drafted *Le Surréalisme* in September 1968. *La Poésie française de 1945 à nos jours* is attributed to Raoul Vaneigem.<sup>4</sup> A certain

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<sup>1</sup> Published in Raoul Vaneigem and Gérard Berréby, *Rien n’est fini, tout commence* (Editions Allia, 2014). Translated by NOT BORED! 2 November 2014. Footnotes by the translator, except where noted.

<sup>2</sup> *The Encyclopedia of the Current World* was a weekly encyclopedia published between 1964 and 1971.

<sup>3</sup> English in original.

<sup>4</sup> The publisher’s original preface to this booklet is reprinted elsewhere in Raoul Vaneigem and Gérard Berréby, *Rien n’est fini, tout commence*. A translation of it is available here: <http://www.notbored.org/on-poetry.pdf>. As for why *Rien est fini, tout commence* doesn’t contain any further material from the EDMA, Gérard Berréby says in a footnote that “Here we only concern ourselves with things that are relevant to the subject of this book, and we neglect the diverse themes that [other] authors have broached in its margins.”

number of articles – such as *La Peinture moderne*, published in November 1968; *Les Marxismes*, published in January 1970; *L’Affiche*, in September 1974; or *Le Golfe Persique*, in October 1974 – remained unattributed.<sup>5</sup> These editorial activities certainly couldn’t be described as “situationist.” Nevertheless, specific points of view are sometimes discernible in them. For example, their authors amused themselves greatly while they drafted the card dedicated to the Situationist International in a truly collective fashion.

To my knowledge, there were never any arrangements made between the contributors. We were *grosso modo*<sup>6</sup> compensated per piece and individually by Editions Rencontre. This activity was, for all of us, as tedious as it was pleasant. Each person tried, in a general manner, to bypass or slyly parody the official constraints of “objectivity.”

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<sup>5</sup> Note by Gérard Berréby: after discussions with Mustapha Khayati, Donald Nicholson-Smith and Raoul Vaneigem, and after reading several different documents, we can say that Mustapha Khayati himself wrote the cards titled *Situationnisme* (17 May 1967, card #1775), *Guy Debord* (23 September 1970, card #3875) and *La Société du Spectacle* (25 August 1972, card #5076). He was also the author of Booklet #51, titled *Les Marxismes, ideologies et révolution* (January 1970).

<sup>6</sup> Italian for roughly or approximately.