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MEDIASCAPE

The Postmodern Scene

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MEDIASCAPE

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THE POSTMODERN SCENE

THEORY WORKSHOPS

Learned Societies / Sociétés Savantes 1986

6 June 1986, The Winnipeg Art Gallery

10:00	**Postmodernism and Aesthetics**
1:30	**Fashion and the Politics of Style (Co-sponsored by C.S.A.)**
3:30	**The Manitoba Vision: Technology and Emancipatory Art Don Proch • Ivan Eyre • Tony Tascona • Esther Warkov**
5:30 — 7:30	**Reception — The Skylight Lounge**

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All sessions will be held at the Winnipeg Art Gallery, 300 Memorial Drive, Winnipeg

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POSTMODERNISM AND AESTHETICS

What is the postmodern scene? Baudrillard's vision of excremental culture *par excellence?* or a final homecoming to a technoscape which even as a "body without organs" (Deleuze and Guattari), a "negative space" (Rosalind Krauss), a "pure implosion" (Lyotard) or an "aleatory mechanism" (Serres) is now first nature, and thus the terrain of a new political refusal?

And what, then, is the place of art and theory in the postmodern scene? Signs of detritus, wreckage and refuse which, moving at the edge of fascination and despair, signify that this is now the age of the death of the social and the triumph of an (excremental) culture? or the first glimmerings of that fateful "no" which, as Jaspers said, marks the furthest frontier of seduction and power?

Is this, in fact, the age of the "anti-aesthetic"? or is the anti-aesthetic already on its way towards the nomination of a new aesthetic moment? Art or anti-art? Postmodernism and the Anti-Aesthetic *or* Ultramodernism and Hyper-Aesthetics? Have we already passed through to that silent region where the only sound is Bataille's whisper that now even desire has lost its sovereignty as the sign of a privileged transgression yet to come? or are we still trapped in that twilight time first nominated by Nietzsche: Dionysus or Christ?

The reviews and essays in this section are only the first "mark" in a continuing series on key ruptures and continuities in contemporary negotiations of the postmodern condition. We invite contributors from *all* artistic and theoretical encounters with the *refusals* of the anti-aesthetic and the *hyper-nihilism* of ultramodernism '80s style.

Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory/Revue canadienne de théorie politique et sociale, Volume X, N. 1-2 (1986).

THE GENEALOGICAL WRITING OF HISTORY: ON SOME APORIAS IN FOUCAULT'S THEORY OF POWER

Jurgen Habermas

Foucault saw himself as a 'happy positivist' because he made three reductions which have major methodological consequences. The understanding of meaning by an interpreter participating in discourses is reduced in the opinion of the ethnological observer, to the explanation of discourses. Validity claims are functionally reduced to effects of power. 'Ought' is naturalistically reduced to 'is'. I speak of reductions because the internal aspects of meaning, truthfulness and value can in no way be completely dissolved into the externally grasped aspects of power practices. The concealed and repressed return and assert their own right — first of all on the metaphysical level. Foucault falls into aporias as soon as he wants to explain how one should understand what the genealogical historian does. The so-called objectivity of knowledge is then precisely put into question by the *presentism* of a writing of history which remains hermeneutically restricted to its starting situation; by the *relativism* of a present-connected analysis which can understand itself only as a context-dependent practical enterprise; and by the *partiality* of a critique whose normative basis cannot be demonstrated. Although Foucault is of course honest enough to confess these inconsequences, he certainly draws no consequences from them.

Foucault wants to eliminate the hermeneutical problematic and with it all self-relatedness, which comes into play with a meaning-understanding approach to the object domain. The genealogical historian should not proceed as the hermeneuticist. He should not try to understand what actors respectively do and think within a context of traditionalism which is intimately linked to their self-understanding. He ought rather to explain the

horizon within which such expressions can appear as especially meaningful, on the basis of grounding practices. So, for example, he will not relate the prohibition of gladiatorial contests in late Rome to the humanizing influx of Christianity, but rather to the supersession of one power formation by another.[1] In the horizon of the new power complex of post-Constantinian Rome it is, for example, very natural that the ruler no longer treats the people as a flock of protected sheep, but rather like a troop of children requiring education — and one ought never to cruelly abandon children. The discourses by which the establishment or abolition of the gladiatorial contests were grounded, thus count only as objectifications of an unconsciously grounded praxis of domination. As the source of all meaning such practices are themselves meaningless. The historian must approach them from outside in order to grasp them in their structure. For this one does not need any hermeneutical understanding but rather only the concept of history as a meaningless kaleidoscopic transformation of the form of the discursive totalities. These totalities have nothing in common with one another except this determination — that they are above all protruberances of power.

Contrary to this objectivistic self-understanding, the first look in any of Foucault's books shows that the radical historicist, too, can only explain technologies of power and practices of domination in comparison with one another and in no way as totalities in themselves. Nevertheless, the veiwpoints under which he makes comparisons are inevitably combined with his own hermeneutical starting-point. This is shown, *inter alia*, in the fact that Foucault himself cannot evade the compulsion towards the implicit 'present-relatedness' of the classification of epochs. Now whether it is the history of madness, of sexuality, or of punishment, the power formations of the Renaissance, of the middle ages, and of the classical age refer always to the disciplinary power, to the bio-politics that Foucault takes to be the fate of our present time. In the conclusion of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, he himself makes this objection, only indeed to avoid it. "This is because, for the moment, and as far ahead as I can see, my discourse, far from determining the locus within which it speaks, is avoiding the ground on which it could find support."[2] Foucault himself is conscious of the aporia of a process which wants to be objectivistic and must remain diagnostical of its time, but he does not give any answer to it.

Foucault only yields to the melody of an avowed irrationalism in the context of his interpretation of Nietzsche. Here, namely, the self-extinguishing or the "sacrifice of the subject of knowledge", which the radical historicist must insist upon only because of the objectivity of the pure structural analysis, to the contrary experiences an ironically different interpretation: "In appearance, or rather, according to the mark it bears, histori-

cal consciousness is neutral, devoid of passions, and committed solely to the truth. But if it examines itself and if, more generally, it interrogates the various forms of scientific consciousness in history, it finds that all these forms and transformations are aspects of the will to knowledge: instinct, passion, the inquisitor's devotion, cruel subtlety, and malice. It discovers the violence of a position that sides against those who are happy in their ignorance ... The historical analysis of this rancorous will to knowledge reveals that all knowledge rests upon injustice (that there is no right, not even in the act of knowing, to truth or a foundation for the truth)."[3] This effort to explain the discursive and power formations under the remorseless, objectivizing look of a distant analyst with no native understanding, but only out of itself, turns into its opposite. The exposure of the objectivistic illusion of *every* will to knowledge leads to the agreement with a writing of history narcissistically aligned with the viewpoint of the historian, which instrumentalizes the view of the past for the needs of the present: "effective history composes a genealogy of history as the vertical projection of its position."[4]

Foucault's history must lead to an acute presentism as well as to relativism. His research gets caught in exactly this self-relatedness which he wants to eliminate by a naturalistic treatment of the problematic of validity. The genealogical writing of history is supposed to make accessible to an empirical analysis practices of power precisely in their discourse-constituting capacity. From this perspective the truth claims are not only limited to the discourses in which they respectively show up. They exhaust their meaning in the functional contribution they make to the self-assertion of a specific discourse-totality. The meaning of validity claims, therefore, lies within the effects of power which they have. On the other hand, this basic assumption of power is self-referring; it must, if it is valid, destroy the foundation of validity of the research which it inspires. But if now the truth claim which Foucault himself links with his genealogy of knowledge really were illusory and reduced to the effects which this theory has among its adherents, then the whole enterprise of a critical exposure of the human sciences would be pointless.

Yet Foucault still pursues the genealogical writing of history with the serious intention of creating a science which is superior to the obsolete human sciences. If its superiority could not express itself in such a way that something more convincing replaces the convicted pseudo-sciences; if its superiority would only express itself with the effect of the actual replacement of the hitherto dominant discourses — then Foucault's theory would exhaust itself in a politics of theory, and indeed in a theory-political goal which would overwhelm the strength of a one-man enterprise no matter how heroic. Foucault is aware of this. Therefore he wishes to distinguish the

genealogy from all other human sciences in a way which is compatible with the assumptions of his own theory. To this end he applies the genealogical writing of history to itself; in its own history of emergence, the difference, which would prove its merit vis-a-vis all of the other human sciences, should be revealed.

The genealogy of knowledge has to make use of the disqualified kinds of knowledge from which the established sciences demarcate themselves. It offers the medium for the revolt of the subjugated sciences. Therein Foucault does not see the sediment of scholarly knowledge which is simultaneously veiled and present, but rather the never sufficiently articulated experiences and the unofficial knowledges of the subordinated groups. It is the implicit knowledge of the 'people' which forms the sediment in a system of power. It is they who experience in their own bodies a technology of power, be it as sufferers or as officials of the machinery of suffering. For example, the knowledge of those in mental hospitals and their nurses, delinquents and wardens, concentration camp inmates and guards, blacks and homosexuals, women and witches, vagabonds, children and the mad. The genealogy does its digging in the dark ground of this local, marginal and alternative knowledge which "obtains its strength only out of the hardness with which it resists everything which surrounds it." This repertory of knowledge is normally disqualified as "not appropriate or sufficiently articulated: naive kinds of knowledge at the bottom of the hierarchy ranging below the necessary level of knowledge and scientificity."[5] In the repertory sleeps the "historical knowledge of the struggles". The genealogy which lifts these local memories to the level of "erudite knowledge" takes the side of those who resist the specific practices of power. From this position of counter-power it gains a perspective which is supposed to over-reach the perspective of the rulers. From this perspective it is supposed to transcend all validity claims which are constituted within the magic circle of power. The connection with the disqualified knowledge of the people is supposed to give superiority to the reconstruction work of the genealogist, "which gave the essential strength to the critique which has been practiced by the discourses over the last 15 years."

This reminds one of an argument of the early Lukács: according to him, Marxist theory owes its ideological impartiality to the privileged possibility of knowledge of an experiential perspective which was formed on the basis of the position of the wage-laborers in the production process. However, the argument was only valid in the framework of an historical philosophy which wanted to find the common interest in the proletarian interest and the self-consciousness of the species in the class consciousness of the proletariat. Foucault's concept of power does not allow for such a historical-philosophical, knowledge-privileged concept of counter-power. Each count-

er-power moves within the horizon of the power which it attacks, and transforms itself as soon as it is victorious into a complex of power which provokes a new counter-power. The genealogy of knowledge cannot break this cycle while it supports the revolt of the disqualified knowledges and mobilizes the subjugated knowledge against "the constraint of a theoretical, unified, formal and scientific discourse." Whoever defeats the theoretical avant-garde of today and overcomes the existing hierarchy of knowledge will be the theoretical avant-garde of tomorrow and will erect a new hierarchy of knowledge. In any case he cannot maintain any superiority for his knowledge on the basis of truth claims which would transcend local agreements.

The attempt to spare genealogical history a relativistic self-denial with its own means fails. When the genealogy becomes aware of its own descent out of the alliance of erudite knowledge with disqualified knowledge, it only finds confirmed that the validity of counter-discourses counts neither more nor less than the ones of the ruling discourses — they too are nothing but the effects of power which they cause. Foucault sees this dilemma but he again avoids an answer. He again confesses to a militant perspectivism only in the context of his Nietzsche reception: "Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal this grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy — the unavoidable obstacles of their passion. Nietzsche's version of historical sense is explicit in its perspective and acknowledges its system of injustice. Its perception is slanted, being a deliberate appraisal, affirmation, or negation; it reaches the lingering and poisonous traces in order to prescribe the best antidote." ("Nietzsche, Genealogy, History").

Finally we have to examine if Foucault succeeds in avoiding the crypto-normativism of which, according to him, the human sciences which insist on being value-free are guilty. The genealogical writing of history should, in a strictly descriptive attitude, reach back behind the totalities of discourse within which alone there is a dispute over norms and values. It leaves out normative validity claims as well as claims of propositional truth and it abstains from the question of whether some discourses and power formations could be more justified than others. Foucault opposes the invitation to take sides; in the interview "Power and Sex" he derides the "leftist dogma" of understanding power as evil, ugly, sterile and dead — and "what power is exercised upon as right, good and rich." For there is no "right side." Behind this is the conviction that politics, which since 1789 has been under the sign of revolution, has reached the end, that theories which have worked through the relation of theory and praxis are outdated. Now even this *proof* of value freedom of a second degree is by no means value-free. Foucault sees himself as a dissident who resists modern thinking and the humanistically-

disguised disciplinary powers. Commitment marks his learned essays also in style and diction; the critical gesture governs the theory no less than the self-definition of the whole work.

Thereby Foucault distinguishes himself from the committed positivism of Max Weber who wishes to separate a decisionistically chosen and openly declared value-basis from a value-free analysis. Foucault's critique is based (according to an observation of Nancy Fraser) more on a postmodern rhetoric of representation than on the postmodern assumptions of his theory. On the other hand, Foucault distinguishes himself also from the critique of ideology of Marx who exposes the humanistic self-understanding of modernity by asking for the normative content of bourgeois ideals. Foucault does not intend to continue this counter-discourse which modernity has led with itself since its beginnings; he does not want to refine and turn against the pathology of modernity, the language game of modern political theory (with its basic concepts of autonomy and heteronomy, morality and legality, emancipation and repression) — he wants to transcend modernity along with its language game. His resistance is not supposed to be justified as the mirror of the existing power. For Foucault, "resistance must be like power: just as inventive, as mobile and as productive. It must be organized and stabilized like power is. It must, like power, come from below and be strategically distributed."

The dissidence draws its only justification from the fact that it sets out traps to the humanistic discourse, without engaging it; Foucault derives this strategical self-understanding from the properties of the modern power formations themselves. This disciplinary power, whose local, steady, productive and all-penetrating, capillary-like character he describes, settles down more into bodies than heads. It has the shape of a bio-power which takes possession more of bodies than of spirits and which subjugates the body to a remorseless, normalizing constraint — without needing a normative basis. The disciplinary power functions without a detour through a necessarily false consciousness that would have been formed in humanistic discourses and would, therefore, be exposed to the criticism of counter-discourses. The discourses of the human sciences fuse with the practices of their application to form an opaque complex of power which makes any critique of ideology rebound. The humanistic critique as in Marx or Freud, which bases itself on the obsolete contrast between legitimate and illegitimate power, conscious and unconscious motives, and fights against instances of exploitation, suppression, repression, etc., rather is in danger of reinforcing the humanism that has been brought from heaven down to earth and has congealed into a normalizing force.

Now this argument might suffice to conceptualize genealogical history no longer as a critique, but as a tactic, a means of conducting a war against

a normatively invulnerable formation of power. If the only concern is the mobilization of counter-power, tricky struggles and confrontations, the question arises why we should resist this ever-present power which circulates through the body of modern society instead of submitting to it. Then the means of struggle of the genealogy would also be superfluous. It is evident that the value-free analysis of strong and weak points of the enemy is useful for he who wishes to fight, but why fight?: "Why is struggle preferable to submission? Why ought domination to be resisted? Only with the introduction of normative notions could he begin to tell us what is wrong with the modern power/knowledge regime and why we ought to oppose it."

Once, in an interview, Foucault could not evade the question; on this one occasion he gave a vague reference to post-modern criteria of justice; "In order to advance against the disciplines, in the fight with the disciplinary powers, one should not take the direction of the old right of sovereignty, but rather ought to move towards a new right which would be liberated not only from disciplines but at the same time from the principle of sovereignty."

Despite the fact that moral and right conceptions have been developed in connection with Kant, which no longer serve to justify the sovereignty of a power-monopolizing state, Foucault himself does not address this theme. Yet if one tries to obtain the implicitly used standards out of the indictments against the disciplinary powers, one encounters known determinations from the explicitly rejected normativistic language game. The asymmetrical relation between rulers and ruled as well as the reifying power technologies which damage the moral and bodily integrity of subjects unable to speak and act are also objectionable to Foucault. Nancy Fraser has proposed an interpretation which does not show a way out of this dilemma but explains where the crypto-normativism of this history, which declares itself value-free, comes from.[6]

Nietzsche's concept of will to power and Bataille's concept of sovereignty take in more or less openly the normative content of the experience of aesthetic modernity. In contrast, Foucault takes his concept of power from the empiricist tradition; he has stripped it of its quality of being a simultaneously frightening and charming object from which the aesthetic avant-garde from Baudelaire to the surrealists have drawn. Nevertheless, power, in the hands of Foucault maintains a literally aesthetic relation to bodily perception, to the painful experience of the tortured body. This moment becomes determining for power formations, which owe the name of bio-power to the fact that it penetrates deep into the reified body and occupies the whole organism in the subtle ways of scientific objectification thus creating a subjectivity through truth technologies. This form of socialization, which eliminates all naturality and transforms creaturely life as a

whole into a substrate of the power process, is called bio-power. The normatively relevant asymmetry that Foucault finds expressed in power complexes, is not between the ruling will and forced submission, but between the power processes and those bodies which are ground up in them. It is always the body which is tortured and which is the scene of the revenge of the sovereign; which is seized by drill, broken up into a field of mechanical forces and manipulated; which is objectified and controlled by the human sciences and at the same time stimulated in its covetousness and exposed. If Foucault's concept of power maintains a remnant of aesthetic content then it owes it to the vitalistic life-philosophical version of the self-experience of the body. At the end of the first volume of *The History of Sexuality* one finds the unusual phrase: "We need to consider the possibility that one day, perhaps, in a different economy of bodies and of pleasures, people will no longer quite understand how the ruses of sexuality, and the power that sustains its organization, were able to subject us to that austere monarchy of sex."

This other economy of bodies and pleasures of which we can in the meantime only dream — with Bataille — would not again be an economy of power but a post-modern theory which could render account of the standards of critique which implicitly have always already been used. Until then the resistance can take its motive but not its justification from the signals of body language, from the non-verbalized language of the tortured body that refuses to be sublimated into discourse.[7]

Foucault, however, may not make this interpretation, which surely finds support in some of his obvious feelings, his own. Otherwise he would have to give, like Bataille, a status to the other of reason which, since *Madness and Civilization*, he has refused to do — and with good reason. He defends himself against a naturalistic metaphysics which idealizes counter-power into a pre-discursive referent. In response to Bernard-Henri Levy in 1977 he states: "What you call naturalism refers, I believe, to two things. A certain theory, the idea that under power with its acts of violence and its artifice, we should be able to rediscover the things themselves in their primitive vivacity: behind the asylum walls, the spontaneity of madness; through the penal system, the generous fever of delinquency; under the sexual interdict, the freshness of desire." Because Foucault cannot accept this life-philosophical conception, he likewise cannot answer the question about the normative basis of his critique.

Translated by Mr. Gregory Ostrander, Political Science, McGill University. This article originally appeared in *Merkur* 429 (Fall 1984), 245-253 and is published here with permission.

Notes

1. Paul Veyne deals with this example in his *Der Eisberg der Geschichte: Foucault revolutioniert die Geschichte* (Berlin: Merve, 1981).
2. M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 205.
3. M. Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, pp. 162-163.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 157.
5. Nancy Fraser, "Foucault on Modern Power," *Praxis International* 1:3 (1981). Vol. 1, N. 3, 1981.
6. In a manuscript entitled, "Foucault's Body-Language: A Post-humanist Political Rhetoric."
7. Peter Sloterdyk develops this alternative with regard to the silent, bodily expressive forms of protest of the cynics, in *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982).

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LIBERALISM GOES POST-MODERN: RORTY'S PRAGMATISM

Michael A. Weinstein

Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism (Essays: 1972-1980)*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982.

The world of contemporary philosophy has become, since the 1960s, a bewildering realm of fragmented and hermetic discourses reflecting a dissolution of social coherence throughout the West. The dispersion of thought has been characterized not only by a variety of substantive theses about some common subject matter, but has reached to a profusion of the very forms of thinking. Not only has the unity of the object been exploded but thought itself has been particularized and rendered functional to specific pursuits. All of the time-worn strategies for unification seem to have failed, most importantly that of the overmastering method, leaving culture revealed as a token of power to be cashed in for academic privilege and preferment, and beyond that for the perquisites offered by the leading institutions of the technological order. Is there a crisis of culture? One might answer in the negative, resuscitating the corpse of William James's pluralism and offering the view that variety means plenitude of possibility, the opportunity to be free to risk oneself and to create something new and better, the latter remaining undefined, of course, until it is brought forth. One has here the essence of liberal Darwinism as it was first fixed by John Stuart Mill: out of diversity shall spring productive invention. It is merely necessary to trust in humanity to separate the wheat from the chaff, which

process will take effect so long as the road to inquiry is not blocked and discussion is left unfettered. Such is the optimistic side of the contemporary replay of the great cultural debate of the nineteenth century between optimism and pessimism. It is the side taken by Richard Rorty, who has become central to current discussions of post-modernism in American philosophy through his attempt to bring pragmatism to bear on a broad range of cultural developments including hermeneutics, deconstructionism, linguistic analysis, and cognitive science. Rorty, most generally, takes a step back from and a step above the contemporary scene, casting a benevolent gaze on dispersion and playing the role of the permissive therapist who dispels the quest for certainty and opens up the playground of experimentation in everything but attempting to gain a secure starting point. His heroes are John Dewey, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Martin Heidegger, especially Dewey.

It is surely a thankless task for an American to dispute Rorty on the only philosophical issue which exercises the American spirit to its depths, that is, how one can justify to oneself taking an optimistic stance towards the world. Rorty is as firmly within the American tradition as anyone in the 1980s could hope to be. Following Charles Sanders Peirce and Dewey he initiates his reflections with a criticism of Cartesian methodical doubt, substituting for it the "lived doubt" of Peirce, which allows one to worry oneself only about matters that in some way are actionable. And, as did his forebears, he terminates his reflections with a moral exhortation to social hope, which is based on a commitment to community, constituted here as conversation hedged by civility, both of which quite purposefully lack precise definition. Indeed, in Rorty's masterwork *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* and in the supporting papers contained in his *Consequences of Pragmatism* American philosophy as a moral quest shines out more clearly than it did in the writings of any of the earlier pragmatists. The purity of the moral quest in his thought is a result of his uncompromising and foundational distinction between explanation and interpretation, which prevents him from grounding his hope in any description of how things are in general (cosmology) or in human nature (psychology). Cosmology retreats to what William James called "conceptions of the frame of things" and psychology is deemed best when strictly causal and behavioristic. Thus, metaphysics is freed to become moral poetry or, perhaps, literary criticism, providing human communities with possible self-descriptions, and psychology is freed from any taint of subjectivism, thereby depriving the individual of any purchase on interiority. Our origin is explained neurologically and our destiny is to deliver ourselves to community through the conversation, a neat update of the scission between pure and practical reason. This way of slicing the pie leaves nothing between origin and destiny that one might

call life or experience. And here is where Rorty purifies the pragmatic tradition, whose classical expositors placed themselves squarely within what they called experience. He can preach a moral optimism with such comfort because he has flicked away concern for the individual as a *res vera.* Thus, the individual has nothing to lose, no one has anything to lose, and, finally, since what will be will be, we might just as well join the fray or join the play (it could be either, depending on Rorty's mood).

Rorty's prime significance for contemporary discourses is to have shown the terms in which the paradigm of American classical philosophy, its move from doubt to moral deliverance, can be articulated once the metaphysical illusion has been dispelled. He reveals, that is, the price at which one must purchase optimism and thereby tests the demand for it stringently. He goes to the heart of the matter in his essay, "Dewey's Metaphysics," where he notes the contradiction between the project of deconstructing the metaphysical endeavor through the criticism of the quest for certainty and the program of creating a metaphysics of experience. Rorty observes that late in his life Dewey wished that he had substituted the pair "nature and culture" for that of "nature and experience." This was an admission of failure on Dewey's part to have found any mediation between nature and culture, and it is just this failure that Rorty takes as his own badge of honor. So, in a sense, his recurrence to Dewey is to a philosopher who never was. Dewey began, as Rorty points out with the wish to institute a new psychology that would replace philosophy by treating of "experience in its absolute totality, not setting up some one aspect of it to account for the whole, as, for example, our physical evolutionists do, nor yet attempting to determine its nature from something outside and beyond itself, as, for example, our so-called empirical psychologists have done."[1] This is the very idea which Edmund Husserl took up and made into phenomenology and which has its resonances in American classical philosophy in Peirce's "phaneroscopy," James's "radical empiricism," and George Santayana's "intuition of essence." It is the alternative to Rorty's dualism, the middle realm between explanation and interpretation, the domain of what Husserl called "seeing." Dewey's career was a long struggle between the phenomenological insight, which culminated in *Art As Experience*, and the scientific method of control, the high point of which is *The Quest for Certainty. Experience and Nature* may be understood as an attempt to heal the split. Dewey, though he confessed failure in his correspondence with Arthur Bentley (who sarcastically called the skin "philosophy's last line of defense"), never did reach Bentley's or Rorty's position. Ironically, it is the other great American naturalist, Santayana, who eschewed the metaphysics of experience and set up a distinction between a strictly scientific "behavioral psychology" and a fully poetic and moralizing "literary psychology." He is far more Rorty's forebear than is Dewey.

But Santayana was not an optimist; indeed, the pragmatists could not abide him because from the split between explanation and interpretation he drew the conclusion that "the only cure for birth and death is to enjoy the interval." Instead of urging, as Dewey did, that we are "all in the same boat" and, thus, should pitch in at least to stop it from sinking, Santayana set sail on his raft with a few companions, deeply doubtful about the fate of Western progressivism but ready to enjoy what his "host the world" offered him. Dewey was enabled to avoid Santayana's individualism by invoking "experience" as a matrix that bound humanity together, leading him to proclaim a "common faith," his version of Auguste Comte's "religion of humanity." Santayana, whose philosophical virtue was "candor" described such projects as "cant." And now the strange predicament into which Rorty has fallen becomes clear. He is committed, through his adherence to the analytic tradition in which he was nurtured, if not to candor then at least to precision. It is such precision which leads him to see that Dewey equivocated between experience as scientific description and experience as moral possibility, which leads him to Santayana's naturalized variant of Royce's split between "the world of description" and "the world of appreciation." Like Santayana, he cannot affirm a Roycian optimism based on the ultimate reality of the world of purposes and the inclusion of the world of causes within it, and he has rejected the foundation of Deweyan optimism in an experience which is the medium of cause and end, that is, a metaphysical category modelled on the human experience of acting, best characterized by George Herbert Mead as a "philosophy of the act." He is left with what he calls in his essay, "Method, Social Science, Social Hope," an "ungrounded hope," that is, he wants to have his cake and eat it, too, to have Santayana's candor and Dewey's optimism. The price of maintaining American philosophy as a moral quest in the 1980s, of satisfying the demand for moral optimism, is to make that optimism a mere opinion, which is just what the pragmatic tradition in political theory sought to avoid. It is deeply ironic that what James would call the "cash value" of Rorty's thought is affirmation of and commitment to the "conversation of mankind," but that the currency is mere fiat money, not even backed by full faith and credit, much less by ontological gold.

Rorty's thought is a symptom of the bankruptcy of American liberalism a generation after the suppression of the movements for liberation of the 1960s. Politically liberalism was eclipsed in the final years of the Carter Presidency when a defense build-up and a deflationary economic policy were put in place, and the internationalist empire was dealt its deepest humiliation in the "hostage crisis." The way was prepared for what was unthinkable even in the light of Kent State, Jackson State, Watergate, and OPEC — the ideological and practical cancellation of the social liberalism of which Dewey was the prophet. Cultural liberalism meanwhile has simply become what

Rorty has made of it, a proclamation of the "conventions" to which we were bred and to which we subscribe. He makes no effort even to justify (in his own terms he could not be expected to ground) his liberalism, but simply makes the analytical point that "there is no inferential connection between the disappearance of the transcendental subject — of 'man' as something having a nature which society can repress or understand — and the disappearance of human solidarity." And then he offers the familiar "two cheers for democracy" of E.M. Forster: "Bourgeois liberalism seems to me the best example of this solidarity we have yet achieved and Deweyan pragmatism the best articulation of it."[2] How far from this is Dewey, who was not a "bourgeois liberal" but a democratic socialist and who did not insert himself into a tradition but looked forward to social reconstruction. For all of his support for pluralism and poetic experiment Rorty's political thought is that of a conservative liberal, endorsing his tradition in a Burkian manner and praising the cherished norms of civility, while affecting a poetic freedom in which the artist is liberated to provide us with new self-descriptions. Again Santayana is a far better key to understanding Rorty than is Dewey. Santayana's political philosophy culminated in his utopia of "rational government," in which Oxonian bureaucrats (the political analogues of behavioral psychologists) would maintain the free cultural space necessary for the artists to offer their literary psychologies. Only Santayana did not believe in "mankind," as Rorty does, and had no interest in defending or, better, proclaiming social hope. Rorty often uses the example of theology, which has been displaced from the center of cultural concern but persists on the periphery, as a model of the future of philosophy. If so, then in the terms of Karl Barth, his political philosophy is "kerygmatic" rather than "apologetic." But it is a very weak proclamation, which is not calculated to appeal to any but those who are already comfortable with the dream of a humane "bourgeois liberalism" in the protective confines of the technological multiversity. Rorty answers to the moral quest of American philosophy with piety towards the tradition of the Enlightenment, not with the affirmation of natural rights or the experimental democracy of self-consciously organized publics.

The social hope that Rorty professes, then, is not the continuation of Dewey's reconstructionist hope that it first appeared to be but an essentially conservative wish that a particular set of practices, conventions, and "language games" persist and spread. This is what happens when Enlightenment ideas are reinterpreted as traditions, a procedure as contradictory in terms as Dewey's of creating a "naturalistic metaphysics," which Rorty, following Santayana, exposes. Rorty tries to avoid the pure conventionalization of politics by proposing to mediate between "the 'classic' Galilean conception of 'behavioral sciences' and the French notion of '*sciences de*

l'homme.'" He observes that Dewey offered a "middle ground" between the two conceptions which "inspired the social sciences in America before the failure of nerve which turned them 'behavioral.'"[3] Here is the point at which the deep weakness in Rorty's thought appears. Is it a "failure of nerve" which turned the social sciences behavioral? Leaving aside the emergence of the multiversity and other conglomerate organizations as a social basis for behavioral science and analytical philosophy (Rorty never touches on sociology of knowledge, though he praises, without using it, Dewey's sociological criticism of metaphysics), in his own terms such an explanation is at best implausible. When it comes to analytic philosophy, the analogue of behavioralism in academic philosophy, Rorty is much kinder, grounding its emergence in the objective of being scientific. He notes the importance of Hans Reichenbach's *Rise of Scientific Philosophy* in forming the historical perspective of a generation of philosophers. He should not be unaware that a generation of social scientists was similarly trained, even to the point of imbibing from Reichenbach. They did not lose their nerve, but, just as philosophers did, turned against the soft, imprecise, and sentimental perspectives of pragmatism, here in its phase of social liberalism. Why should the social sciences have ignored the distinction between explanation and interpretation? Why should psychology be behavioral and social science reformist? These are rhetorical questions, since they were resolved in short order in the 1950s in favor of the idea of an explanatory and behavioral social science. Rorty deplores the assumption of the defenders of hermeneutics that "if we don't want something like Parsons, we have to take something like Foucault; i.e., that overcoming the deficiencies of Weberian *Zweckrationalität* requires going all the way, repudiating the 'will to truth.'"[4] He perorates: "What Dewey suggested was that we keep the will to truth and the optimism that goes with it, but free them from the behaviorist notion that Behaviorese is Nature's Own Language and from the notion of man as 'transcendental or enduring subject. For, in Dewey's hands, the will to truth is not the urge to dominate but the urge to create, to 'attain working harmony among diverse desires.'"[5] The social sciences, then, are somehow exempt from the distinction between explanation and interpretation. They are somehow to be moral *sciences*. And from whence comes their principle of attaining "working harmony among diverse desires?" Is this a natural morality? This is unlikely since Rorty dispenses with human nature. But, if not, it is but a corollary of Rorty's ungrounded hope, quite a weak reed when grant and consulting monies fund behavioral research and even Rorty adjures that psychology be a behavioral science. Dewey could promote the middle way for the social sciences just because he had a metaphysic of experience which told him that experience unencumbered by the quest for certainty contained a drift toward

cooperation. He grounded his optimism and, therefore, his program for the social sciences in something beyond language games. Santayana was under no illusion about such sciences as economics and politics being principled by a moral aim. They would describe equably the dominations and the powers of human life. History was freed for literary psychology. Rorty, who wants both candor and optimism, asks the social sciences to do what he, as philosopher *cum* deconstructionist will not give them license to do, to mediate between explanation and interpretation.

Santayana, in *Character and Opinion in the United States*, reveals the presuppositions of American classical philosophy, its optimistic view of life. Most generally, the denial of any mediation between explanation and interpretation renders, as Rorty acknowledges, ungrounded any hope. But this groundlessness would not, perhaps, be problematic were affirming the hope of "bourgeois liberalism" a commitment involving no silences. For Santayana, however, the American ethos is quite restrictive, being based on what he calls "English liberty," which prescribes the maintenance of each individual's freedom through the compromise and cooperation of all.[6] The practice of English liberty presupposes that "all concerned are fundamentally unanimous, and that each has a plastic nature, which he is willing to modify." These presuppositions are unfounded when individuals or groups claim the absolute liberty to express their particular potentials unhindered by any limitations. At that point the juncture arises for English liberty between itself becoming militant and shattering those who lack plasticity, and its becoming so attenuated that the society fragments, losing its integrity and eventually falling under tyranny, or regenerating itself on the principle of a different form of liberty. Since the 1960s the dynamic of American society has been towards the decline of English liberty and the assertion of absolute liberty by a wide range of groups, as reflected in the economy by overt and covert deregulation, in the polity by the emergence of the moralized politics of the "New Right" and the counterattacks by the successors of the "liberation movements," in the society by the appearance of hermetic lifestyle groups (a society of masses rather than a mass society), and in the culture by the very dispersion noted at the beginning of this essay. It is now opportune to raise again the question: Is there a crisis of culture? Rorty's negative may now be seen not as a permission to experiment and grow through clearing away the obstacles to inquiry but as the febrile death throes of an utterly exhausted liberalism. The step back to bring Dewey into the post-modern era carries only an ungrounded hope, given substance by piety towards tradition. The step above to entertain the panorama of diversity is less like the Confucian ideal of the Emperor who creates sufficient harmony to "let the robes fall" than the practice of the invalid father of the house who waves away the disorder around him, perhaps with

the consoling conceit that things really never were much different and that, anyway, his family is still the best in the world. Rorty's place in the politics of our time is that of the conservative liberal counterpart to the progressive liberal, Jürgen Habermas. Both Habermas and Rorty share a faith in communication, but Habermas promotes an "emancipatory interest" rooted in human nature and aiming at a transcendentalized "ideal speech situation," whereas Rorty proposes an adherence to a given tradition accorded purpose by continuing the "conversation of mankind." It is merely a replay of Kant vs. Hegel, the liberalism of the progressive 1960s against the liberalism of the reactionary 1970s. A pragmatist might ask whether the difference makes a difference, as Rorty asks so many times about other disputes over foundations.

Rorty's liberalism is helpless against the crisis of dispersion, which now may be considered as a genuine cultural crisis, even apart from its social correlates. The criticism of foundational philosophy made by James and Dewey was effected in order to overcome the dead abstractions of modern metaphysics and epistemology, the inert Kantian categories, the detached Humian sense data, the *idée fixe* of the absolute, and the "night world" of positivism. In their place was to be the description of life and experience as individuals lived it through all of its dimensions. Here there was hope for a liberation of potentialities and capacities, just because something lay beneath the rigid formulae, waiting to be expressed and then reflected and projected into action. Husserl, Henri Bergson, Sigmund Freud, Georg Simmel, Samuel Alexander, Alfred North Whitehead, and the American pragmatists all had in common the horror and delight of discovering that field of pure psychology that Dewey identified in his early thought. Carlos Vaz Ferreira, their Uruguayan counterpart, summed up their emancipatory insight in the formula that thought had at last become freed from words. The "depth universal" of life or "pure experience" could be approached in many ways, but as the exploration proceeded it was found to be unfit to satisfy metaphysical aspirations and finally ran up against its limits in the "absurd" of Albert Camus. As the problem of meaning worked its way from Bergson's metaphysical vitalism of the *élan vital* to Camusian absurdism another line of philosophers applied logico-empirical criticism to theory of knowledge, which has ended today with analytical philosophy. Starting from the problem of truth, rather than meaning, they bypassed life and headed straight for language. Rather than proclaiming triumphantly that thought had been freed from words, they worked to absorb thought into its vehicle, language. The cultural crisis today is encapsulated in the formula "language without a referent." Life/experience paradoxically demand a completion that they cannot give and, so, become frustratedly boring. The path is opened wide for a new cultural play, textualism and deconstruction-

ism, the mad dance through the text, the proclamation of the irrelevance of imagination and the exhaustion and implosion of inwardness. All follows from what Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Scheler called *ressentiment*, the sour-grapes response to the collapse of meaning.

Rorty is the legatee of both strands of the current epoch of modernity. He applies a pragmatic criticism to the problem of truth, which yields him the shattering of philosophy as the "mirror of nature," that is, of the quest of philosophers to discover reality in-and-for-itself and to express that reality in its own language. He misses, however, the depth of the cultural crisis because he does not attend at all to the problem of meaning, though two of his heroes, Dewey and Heidegger, were preoccupied with it. He is too fixed on what Simmel called the *terminus a quo* of philosophy, the grounds of knowledge, to attend to Simmel's *terminus ad quem*, the meaning of life; that is, he is preoccupied with the Kant of the first *Critique* and not at all with Schopenhauer and Nietzsché.[7] This is why he can so blithely slay the bogey of realism and then tack on to his deconstruction a groundless hope in the conversation of mankind. He is concerned to dispel the real as in-itself and forgets the for-itself, the life of each one of us, which he has immersed in language games. Failing to reach the heart of the crisis, Rorty embraces textualism and then seeks to moderate it, promotes hermeneutics and then argues that it can somehow be conjoined to natural science, and splits explanation from interpretation and then tries to show that he has not really recreated the split between "night world" and "day world" that so troubled *fin du siècle* thought. His substitute for the Deweyan mediation of "experience" is the "conversation of mankind." This is his "zero term," as Dewey called the foundation in *Experience and Nature*, and it is as amorphous and equivocal as Deweyan "experience" proved to be: it is the master language game, the new pragmatist's counterpart of structuralist rationalism. But what is this "conversation" apart from any specific language games? Is it a mere abstraction? Is it being-itself, presupposing something other than language? Is it the value of shared experience, which was Dewey's highest value? Far from being post-philosophical Rorty is but the latest and most attenuated of the naturalized Hegelians, one of the line that he calls the "weak idealists." Bold in his criticism of realism, he stands politically in the nineteenth century, concerned to carry the Enlightenment ideals forward into the Darwinian struggle of industrial society, a liberal Darwinist.

The failure of Rorty as a practical philosopher, as one who can give an adequate diagnosis of our times, might provide an opening to look at the strand of twentieth-century thought that he suppresses, the one which eschews philosophy as the mirror of nature but which does not conclude thereby that one must retreat to cultural anthropology. Have life and

experience been logically discredited or are they merely inadequate to carry the weight of religious and metaphysical aspirations? It is possible to explore the latter alternative, with the help of such philosophical friends as Husserl, Bergson, James, Freud, Alexander, Whitehead, Scheler, Santayana, and Ortega, all of whom turned inward to grasp life and experience as a radical reality, seizing subjectivity, rather than voiding it into language. A pure psychology devoid of metaphysical aspirations gives the self to the self, first immediately in an act of self-seizure and then through a long march of self-constitution. This is not a post-modernism but an ultra-modernism, a dare not to throw oneself into the tide of significations, but upon oneself, as Descartes did before he fled to the certainty of ideas. It is the *sum*, not the *cogito* that must be claimed, and from there life opens out and conversations occur as the co-constitution of societies by individual centers, inward centers, of the expression of meaning. This is, indeed, a foundation, but not an eternal one. It is what Max Stirner called the "creative nothing" and what Unamuno meant when he said, "Not to ascend, not to forge ahead, but to go within." Is it impossible that we might find the world and others through ourselves?

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Notes

1. Richard Rorty, *Consequences of Pragmatism: Essays, 1972-1980.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 78.
2. *Ibid.*, 207.
3. *Ibid.*, 206.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, 207.
6. For a fuller discussion of Santayana and his relation to the other pragmatists see Michael A. Weinstein, *The Wilderness and the City: American Classical Philosophy as a Moral Quest.* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982), 109-127.
7. For a discussion of the Simmelian distinction between epistemology and philosophy of life see Georg Simmel, *Schopenhauer and Nietzsche*; tr., Helmut Loiskandl, Deena Weinstein, and Michael A. Weinstein. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1986).

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RICHARD RORTY AND POSTMODERNITY: LANGUAGE AS THE MIRROR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Richard Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967.

Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979.

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> To be real in the scientific sense means to be an element of the system; hence this concept [of the real] cannot be meaningfully applied to the system itself.
>
> Rudolf Carnap[1]

> All societies must incorporate in their operational procedures of daily life, devices, 'mechanisms,' social practices to do with 'manufacturing from their newborns the basic elements capable of maintaining their social order, i.e., persons. To the extent that a society remains in existence, these procedures must exist somewhere (nonlocatable) in its ecology, spread out in its constituent interrelations. Thus to us, irrespective of what goes on in people's heads, it seems both an important and feasible endeavour to discover what those procedures are. Thus: ask not what goes on inside people, but what people go on inside of — though if everything is everywhere in an implicate order, it hardly matters, for everything inside is parallelled by what is outside anyway.
>
> John Shotter and John Newson[2]

RORTY AND LANGUAGE

One way of simplifying in order to get a quick focus on the postmodernity debate is to ask people what they think the insides of people are like. Do people have 'dynamic' interiors, no insides at all, or do they carry about Leninesque, "socialist realist" reflections or "social reproductions" of the outside? The perception that there is something called a "postmodern condition" is generally framed by this anxiety about what goes on inside people and whether it has any relation to what Carnap, in the quotation above, calls the system. After all, if the scientific status of the "elements" depends on the "hyperreal" or unconditioned status of the "system," then what is the status of persons, and of their insides?

The system is an ungroundable entity, the product of what I have elsewhere described as the "sociological ego."[3] The characteristic response of the sociological ego to the whole problem of the inside and the outside is to seek and to find something called a "paradigm" or a supraordinate model which will not only guide the study of 'nature,' but incorporate and solve all the relevant questions about 'human behaviour.' The hunt for the paradigm is essentially a form of Rationalism, because the paradigm is always conceived as a model embodying the unconditioned: the system is itself the condition for the reality of everything inside it.

The prime material for the construction of rationalist models in this century is unquestionably "language." Our habits of thinking about language contain lots of fertile ingredients for the construction of a Model System: language appears to be out there where you can observe it (it is textual), it seems to have regularized forms, and to impose these forms on all the parts of a whole, it apparently comes from nowhere (language is still plausibly contrasted with Nature), and nobody has arbitrary control over it. Language is the perfect General Idea for the Age of Sociology.

There is no need to document the grip which the idea of 'system' has on the contemporary imagination, but it is worth noting a certain rough pattern in its development which seems to parallel the transition from modernism to postmodernism. If we think of the contrast between the early Wittgenstein or Carnap and the later, or the shift from Russel to Quine and from Lévi-Strauss to Foucault, it does look as if there is a general tendency in paradigmatic thought to start out as a formalism and to wind up as a pragmatism. To state this in terms of my metaphor of the schizoid sociological ego, there is an emotional, basically projective cycle of idealization and devaluation of the object. The system goes from being something admired for its perfection to something hated for its persecution. But it is always pursued.

What is remarkable about this process is that the idea of language has been virtually immune to these fluctuations in the epistemic mood. Language, after all, has "rules," but nobody made them up; it is natural, but also quintessentially cultural; it is typically human, but not metaphysical; it

is subjective and objective at the same time; personal, social, expressive, and unpredictable, yet simultaneously impersonal, factual, structural, and probabilistic; it allows us to have ideas without having to explain how we got them; it is both necessary and chancy (i.e., "contingent" in the peculiar modern sense of being noncausally causal); mine and yours at the same time — and so on. All the classic antinomies of thought — spirit/matter, idea/thing, freedom/necessity, creativity/constraint, universal/particular — have been experimentally resolved, from Saussure to Derrida and from Pierce to Rorty, in the Great Laboratory of Human Language.

It is not entirely clear whether we feel more uneasy (to use Freud's word) *inside* systems or without them. One of the more interesting explorations of this ambivalence has been Jean Baudrillard's quasi-historical theorization of the "simulacrum" which links the emergence of postmodernity to our ideas about interiority in an inverse relationship.[4] According to Baudrillard, the social "system" has evolved into a reproductive coding machine which plays out varia of an omnipresent, but not necessarily explicate order, a kind of cybernetic surround. But his major point is that this triumph of social communication (which can be interpreted as the apotheosis of the sociological myth of the "laws of collective behaviour") entails precisely the *death* of the social, which Baudrillard cryptically describes as the "implosion of society." Oddly enough, by 'implosion,' Baudrillard does not appear to mean a turning inward, or a privatization, but rather a concentration of social pressures which involves an increasing externalization of the forms of behaviour. The question is, why should this spell the *end* of society (rather than say, the end of the individual, as is usually, and blandly argued)? The answer appears to be that, for Baudrillard at least, sociological "facts" only come into being (or drift into the social scientist's line of vision) to the degree that the social itself loses coherence, and disperses into generalized oblivion. But how can this be? What is the social, if not society, the system, the "code?" Baudrillard's reply is that the idea of society (as ungroundable system, as noncontingent code) is precisely the reduction of the inside to the "anti-aesthetic" of the sociological ego. In the terms of Baudrillard's earlier work, it is the "eradication of the symbolic." On this interpretation, the code, or the interregulation of social codings, gradually assumes the function of the metaphysically real, the unconditioned, or in other words: the "hyperreal." But when this happens, there is a complete vindication of rationalism: the social becomes a mere memory, a dimly-recalled interpenetration of bodies beyond the prehensile shadow of an imagined interiority.

The unstated implication of Baudrillard's thinking on these matters is that the "social," if it ever existed, overlaps what we call the psychoanalytic domain. The irony of this is that, like every other theoretical reflection model of society (Marx's "Mirror of Production," for example), Freud's

"mirror of desire" seems to have arisen at dusk, only to "paint its gray on gray." Baudrillard's nihilism has a utopian obverse, which is never articulated except in the now largely abandoned notion of symbolic exchange. Yet one can try to imagine how the social might have been. It might (for the sake of argument) have had something to do with the experiential layerings of human bodies encountering one another. But in order to appreciate these layerings, "persons" (social beings) would have had to be able to live out a paradox (a logico-linguistic "category-mistake" inimical to the sociological ego). Persons would, in order to be persons, have had, in a manner of speaking, to be the containers of their own containers: they would have been anomalous beings who somehow experienced themselves, on some level, as inside the "internal worlds" (to use Melanie Klein's phrase) of others, and experienced others inside theirs. And all of this social relating would have been going on, not merely as an endless redoubling of a set of interactive rules or conventions (the pseudo-scientific exteriority of the speech act, for example), but as an emergent property of the barely charted aesthetic dimension of the body, where connections to the "grounds of action" (moral, deterministic) are lost, not yet constructed, or barely relevant at all. In other words, this strange and imaginary breed of beings would have existed in a scene quite different from the ideally holistic sociological space, with its omnipresent structural substance. It is the difference between the symbolic ("social") world of the dreamwork, of existential transition, projective identification, splitting, possession, destruction, and reparation; as opposed to the systemic model of elements in a network of discrete paths and junctions, fused by some fluid and diffuse cathexis.

Baudrillard's adumbration of the waking nightmare of postmodern social reality is an avowed piece of "sociology-fiction" (S-F) which plays brilliantly with the suppressed referential dimensions of another kind of discourse which takes the system antinomy seriously, as the ultimate aim of all theoretical desire, the exciting object in its purest form. We cannot know which version of our collectivity is "true," but we can ask, with Baudrillard, what we would be like if such and such a model *were* true. From this perspective, postmodernism appears as the regulative ideal of a long tradition of logico-linguistic chauvinism. In recent years, this movement has been radicalized and delogicized by the prospect of discovering a perfectly self-cancelling practice in which the "human" would annihilate itself (at least theoretically) in an orgy of its own purest "ism," the evolutionary status-symbol of *language*. At various times, it has been called positivism, logical empiricism, hermeneutics, structuralism, genealogy, Habermas, deconstruction. Whatever one calls it, it crystallizes in conceptual form the phallic mechanization and anal elimination of the body which so dominates the Baudrillardian construction of the postmodern imagination. In the

Wittgensteinian world of the language game, it rises like the dawn of new truths to come, the harbinger of the end of Ideology — a kind of Gestaltist figure/structuralist signifier of the cure, shimmering against a background of historical disease and metaphysical hallucination. Rosalind Krauss formulates this hope beautifully as a semiotic of the Cartesian ego, which is "the same entity both for myself and for the person to whom I am speaking":

> We are not a set of private meanings that we can choose or not choose to make public to others. We are the sum of our visible gestures. We are as available to others as to ourselves. Our gestures are themselves formed by the public world, by its conventions, its language, the repertory of its emotions, from which we learn our own.[5]

In short, there are "no private languages" and as should be evident from the fact that this is a Wittgensteinian universe, the pan-linguistic reduction of experience is politically ambivalent. It has a liberal wing which clings to the objectivistic promise of the original "linguistic turn." While deconstructive philosophy faces the radical prospect that "language" is the last grand illusion of the "Western tradition" (and fixates mesmerically on its philosophically receding moment), the moderates of socio-linguistic thought continue to mine the traditional antinomies of knowledge and reason. But if the radical side of this tradition has its contemporary Hegel in a writer like Baudrillard, and the moderate side its Kant in Habermas, there is still a third, less absurd way through postmodernity, which has been sketched most deftly by the Anglo-American *philosophe*, Richard Rorty.

Richard Rorty and the 'Consequences of Pragmatism'

> A wheel that can be turned though nothing else moves with it, is not part of the mechanism.
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein[6]

> ... the urge to think the unthinkable, to grasp the unconditioned, to sail strange seas of thought alone, was mingled with enthusiasm for the French Revolution. These two, equally laudable, motives should be distinguished. ... Those who want sublimity are aiming at a postmodernist form of intellectual life. Those who want beautiful social harmonies want a postmodernist form of social life, in which society as a whole asserts itself without bothering to ground itself.
>
> Richard Rorty[7]

RORTY AND LANGUAGE

The Rorty account of postmodernity is a straightforward pragmatist one. It compares with Jean-Francois Lyotard's argument that what characterizes the culture of the present age is the failure of the "grands récits," those overarching metanarratives which sought to determine the grounds for both the legitimacy and the direction of knowledge and history.[8] But there is a crucial difference, for Rorty does not think there is anything new here at all. Postmodernism is just a kind of heightened awareness of a well-worn reality: society has always been a simulation model, and knowledge has always been a loose collection of stories we tell ourselves in different situations, for different purposes, which never have (and never will) fit together very neatly. What produces anxiety about this is that we take the Western tradition of epistemological, psychological, and utopian idealizations too seriously.

For Rorty, the transition to postmodernism is a Quinean "semantic ascent," the "shift from talk of objects to talk of words" (*LT*, 11). There is no compelling "material" reason for it other than the evolution of philosophical language itself, for there has never been an era when people "really" talked about objects; it was just useful for them at one time to think they were doing so. If, as both Sellars and Derrida have argued, "all awareness is a linguistic affair, then we are never going to be aware of a word on the one hand and a thing-denuded-of-words on the other" (*CP*, 100). The epistemological alternative is between language and things, and we have finally come to the realization that all our talk about things is merely a linguistic convention. So postmodernism is just the winning way of words, and not a profound existential predicament. But in order to gain the full benefits of this new and happy medium, we need to give up the idea of the truth. We have to accept that conversation is not about 'coming to a conclusion': like psychoanalysis, it is interminable — it's point is just to keep going. Thus, Lyotard is right about the function of narratives, and Baudrillard, Foucault, and Derrida are right to abandon the whole idea of the Referent, or "transcendental signified" (which would put a reassuring end to the "indefinite referral of signifier to signifier," etc.); but they are wrong, according to Rorty, if they imagine that there is anything sublime or out of the ordinary or historically significant to be concluded from this by way of a moral.

Lyotard imagines that the celebrated indeterminacy of twentieth century science bespeaks a profound change in the 'nature' of science, as if the previous, empiricist account of "scientific method" had once been true in practice, and not just a bad account of science all around (*HLP*, 163). Rorty wants to say that science has always been the way Kuhn and Feyerabend and Hesse describe it, and that only our style of talking about it has changed. But

this involves him in a difficult choice. Either the conversation about science has been getting better since the Seventeenth Century, which would imply, paradoxically, that, say, the less objectivistic indeterminacy principle of quantum physics is actually more objective, more adequate to the actual reality of nature; or alternatively, Rorty must assume at least implicitly that the conversations of science (talk of realism and indeterminacy) have very little bearing on the historical and social practice of science or anything else. Rorty's pragmatic anti-realism forces him to reject the first alternative, but he cannot completely embrace the second, which leaves him in a peculiar position. In denying Lyotard's intuition that the forms of narrative (or of semiological abstraction, in Baudrillard's analysis) are historically significant (i.e., the intuition that the "Postmodern condition" is something startling and new), Rorty must continue to sustain the realist mirror model, because he must hold in reserve the idea that conversations are relatively disembodied processes whose (tenuous) link "to what is actually going on" is ultimately measured by their pragmatic adequacy. This is the reason for Rorty's nonchalant view, not only of Lyotard's "romanticism," but of Habermas' moral anguish as well. In either case, according to Rorty, the presumed historical saliency of the postmodernity issue is an intellectual chimera, "something which an isolated order of priests devoted themselves to for a few hundred years, something which did not make much difference to the successes and failures of the European countries in realizing the hopes formulated by the Enlightenment" (*HLP*, 171). As Rorty admits, he would like to "have it both ways," simply by "split[ing] the difference between Habermas and Lyotard" (*HLP*, 173). We can dispense with Habermas' search for a metatheoretical justification of rationality, but still resist the romantic postructuralist critique of reason, not because it is wrong, but because it is "wildly irrelevant to the attempt at communicative consensus which is the vital force [driving our] culture" (*HLP*, 17).

The focus, then, of Rorty's diagnosis of postmodernity is neither Baudrillard's expectation of catastrophic retribution for the symbolicide of social being, nor Habermas' fear that democracy will sink before the leaks are plugged in its critical vessel. Not that Rorty would attempt to dismiss or to disprove these eccentric concerns. He would simply say that such dramas are difficult to articulate plausibly within the structure of ordinary language, and it is only through the agreed upon ways of talking that any kind of sense can be made of the situation we are in. Anything at all is permissible in conversation, but if talk grinds to a halt because nobody can figure out what to do or say about what has just been spoken, then it is likely that something is seriously wrong, and that the conversants must switch topics or modify their vocabularies until the exchange of views is safely underway again. And so, although Rorty has a great deal of sympathy for the argument that the

traditions of thought since Plato, Descartes, Locke, and Kant need to be deconstructed, he does not expect that the exercise will lead anywhere. His conclusion is, instead, that once we have understood the conversational basis of our knowledge (and that this method of constitution is always provisional), the obvious choice is to keep talking, and to "take truth and virtue as whatever emerges from the conversation of Europe" (*CP*, 173)

Some, having heard Rorty's sympathetic purrings over the "destruction of metaphysics," may be surprised by this conclusion, but it is not so different from Derrida's, and arises from a profound alignment with the mainstream of Twentieth Century thought. For example, Rorty's counsel is that we should try to "suppress" certain "intuitions," particularly the intuition that "language does not go all the way down" (*CP*, xxx). "There is no way to think about either the world or our purposes except by using our language," he explains and this is because "our knowledge is limited by the language we speak" (*CP*, xix, xxxvi). No "intuition" can tell us anything significant about ourselves that language hasn't already articulated, for "an intuition is nothing more or less than familiarity with a language-game" (*PMN*, 34). Though Rorty abjures the linguistic positivism of his forebears Carnap, the early Wittgenstein, and Russel, there is still in his writing the lingering belief that a "bad language [one which "leads to dialectical impasses"] can be replaced with one [a good language] which will not lead to such impasses" (*CP*, xxxvi). In short, "the pragmatist reminds us that a new and useful vocabulary is just *that* [a new and useful vocabulary], not a sudden unmediated vision of things or texts as they are" (*CP*, 153).

Heideggerians, Nietzscheans, and neostructuralists are attractive to Rorty, not because he would betray the analytic tradition and go over to their side, but because they provide him with convenient insights into the paradigmatic autonomy of language-games. The structuralist theorization of power (Foucault) and desire (Lacan) as "effects" of discursive structure lends a credible aura to Rorty's idea of conversation as a supraordinate logic governing the production of understanding, knowledge, and culture. While bypassing the intractable traditional problems of how "sense impressions" get organized by the mind, or what "intuitions" refer to, textuality allows one to retain some residual notion of meaningful behaviour, "because persons like inscriptions have intentional properties" (*PMN*, 33). Moreover, for an analytically-trained philosopher, the notion of *inter*textuality provides a convenient way round the logical conundrums of "intersubjectivity", with all its embarrassing connotations of presence, interiority, and unverbalizable experience. The whole deictic, prehensile, emotive, recognitive problem of actually being a body dependent on other bodies in a physical world can be sidestepped or at least minimized and managed by talking about it as if it were the misleading effects of a linguistic model

designed according to patterns of anaphoric reference. The intellectual scandal of nonlanguage is thus safely relegated to the rubbish heap of the philosophical past, and the postmodern discussion can get on with the business at hand, which is to feed the conversation in ways which make sense, and do not interfere with the growth of knowledge, greater happiness, and respect for one's fellows.

The difference between Rorty's pragmatism and the "textualism" of the French School lies in their different ways of generalizing from constructivist hypotheses about perception. Rorty is quite able to tell the difference between saying, on the one hand, that (a) "What the body picks out in the world (perception) is influenced by interpretation (the assumptions built into language, culture, history, temperament, etc.);" and making, on the other hand, the very different claim that (b) "What the body picks out in the world is constituted by and dependent upon interpretation." The problem with (b) is just that it is the flip-side of empiricism. In fact, both rationalism and empiricism share the premise that perception is a combination of mind as it straightens out the confusion of bodily experience. (Here, "mind" is anything you like: the laws of association by continguity, behavioural conditioning, Kant's categories, Piaget's "sensori-motor development," or Chomsky's LAD). It was a short step from Cartesian dualism to the notion that, given the structurelessness of the given, perception must be entirely contingent on either Universal Mind or Historical Culture (it matters not which), and from there to the notion that this organizing function which saves the body from its own incoherence is just language, which culminates in the assertion that "perception does not exist."[9]

Rorty's capacity to thread himself through this epistemological thicket without appearing to get scratched is a measure of the real efficacy of the pragmatist synoptic. (See *PMN*, Part 2.)[10] Rorty is not fooled by Idealist images of bodily chaos tempered by language, but his reasons are unfortunately bound up with an obscure *a priori* point about the philosophical irrelevance of information about the body. What Rorty wants to argue is that any specifications which a physiologist or an artist or a psychoanalyst or a physicist might be able to offer about matters concerning cognition, perception, feeling, personhood, and the like, will always be, in principle, vacuous, trivial, or at best, ambiguous, because they will never have any real bearing on language games, conversation, and "the whole of language," so far as these holistically determine the interesting and qualitative questions which philosophers ask. Rorty is not naive enough or brash enough to assert that "language as a whole" is the exclusive determinant of perception; he is rather saying that perception is so uninteresting as to be beyond conversation, or in other words, that there is no reason for a pragmatist not to be a realist in minor matters such as what we claim to see, hear, feel and touch.

With his insight that (contrary to the weight of Western thought, especially since Descartes and Locke) perception is not the likely source of ambiguity and complexity in human affairs, Rorty has got himself on the right track, but moving in the wrong direction. To begin with, it does not follow from the probability that sensory perception is a quite ordinary matter (which doesn't need "minds" or "mirrors" because biology basically takes care of it) that finding something out about it can have no interesting consequences for philosophy or social theory. In addition, Rorty can offer no good, essentially philosophical reasons for holding any theory of cognition — even his own pragmatic linguistic one. Certainly, conversation (even backed up by some unspecified sociology of semantics (*CP*, 127)) is not a philosophically superior alternative to the old "glassy essence" of the mind: it is just one very important thing that human bodies do. The relation of the body to the world it is in is extremely complicated and yet it can get along quite well without a language game. Rorty knows this perfectly well, but he cannot allow such a consideration to be relevant because his thought remains continuous with philosophical tradition in the fundamental sense that he needs to be talking about knowledge as if it always must take *one general* form, which is, of course (in Rorty's case), language, since "there is no way to think about either the world or our purposes except by using language," etc. But even if this were true (which it is demonstrably not), one could never conclude that language does this 'thinking' all by itself. There is no denying that language is crucial to the human way of doing things, as Rorty argues; but if you want a different kind of organism (one that does history, culture and politics), adding on the "unique feature" of language will not accomplish the feat, any more than "soft touch controls" and Dolby C will transform an ordinary tape deck into an audiophile's dream. The fact is that we don't even know if we know of all the ways of thinking and perceiving, and we certainly don't know much about the ones we have so far attempted to classify. Language is muddled up with everything else the body does, and there is no *general* reason — even a pragmatist one — to isolate it and declare, this is what we're all about, the rest is conceptually insignificant. (see *PMN*, especially pp. 213-256.)

Rorty's particular way of drawing out the implications of Anglo-American philosophy of language has many advantages, but it only hampers the gamble of breakthrough, which might circumvent the sterile debate between nativism and constructivism in social theory. The linguistic turn is too blunt an instrument for fine-grained insight, as the example of the prelinguistic infant, which crops up occasionally in Rorty's argument, shows. Rorty considers the infant to be a "borderline case" of personhood, like most environmentalists and constructivists, and on one occasion, he compares babies to record changers (*CP*, 11; *PMN*, 110; but see, *PMN*, 241). His point seems to be that the best you can expect from the body-without-

language (the empiricist's hypothetical "sense impressions," or what Rorty scornfully terms the "raw feel") is the typical infant's gut reaction to "coloured objects." Although Rorty is no fan of Piaget, his attitude seems to line up with the latter's attempt to reconcile empiricism and rationalism, and remains in step with the metaphysics which Rorty wants to dispense. Piagetian theorists (who were, until recently, the most open-minded researchers of prelinguistic intelligence, apart from the British school of child analysts like Klein and Winnicott) like to think of themselves as having made the world safe for an "active" (constructivist), as opposed to a "passive" (environmentalist or nativist) theory of mind.[11] What traditional Piagetians tend to do, however, is to reinforce the assumption that physical experience by itself is meaningless and incoherent (natural anarchy versus human (linguistic order) — at least, until the body has been fed for long enough on a rigidly-scheduled diet of "sensori-motor development." But there is nothing especially active or constructivist about this conception of babies. Piaget's child is too much of an isolate, imprisoned by "adualistic confusion" (the cognitivist's equivalent of Freud's "primary narcissism"), to do much more than repeat the behaviours prescribed by the succession of schemata pumped in by means of "circular reactions" (self-sustaining reflexes).

On the other hand, cognitive passivity of the Locke-Hume variety, or anti-constructivism of the realist sort (such as Rorty especially abhors), is not a feature of the more recent research which has been disconfirming the unnecessary metapsychological scaffolding of Piaget's observational work. The emerging evidence is that neonates are gifted with a basic, intermodally-coordinated perceptual ability to distinguish and recognize objects and people, to relate in a meaningful but physically awkward way to the actual features of the immediate environment, and even to translate what others do in terms of their own (unseen) body schemas. This is perception without mirrors, and it does not need to be primed by conditioning or by innate reflex mechanisms. Nor does it require a language-game to make semantic distinctions, or nominative diacritics to divide up the field of attention. Moreover, the prelinguistic infant displays a precocious capacity for (and expectation of) "communicative interaction" and intersubjectively shared experience, together with an ability to participate in complex emotional relationships over time.[12] Now, this still developing outlook on the human neonate has been accused of "innatism" (as if that were a meaningful criticism); in fact, contemporary neonatology is far from being anti-environmentalist or anti-constructivist. It simply grants some of the basic ingredients of feeling and intentionality, as a kind of farewell present from the womb (we do come from wombs); and this only seems like an insult to our intelligence (or to our class- and species-based pride in verbal skill) from

the point of view of the extreme rationalist-empiricist reductionism which, until recently, has shaped the history of European psychology, and which Rorty chooses as his natural, antagonistic, metaphilosophical setting.

Philosophy and the Buzzards

> The leather skin with which the body of the carriage had been covered many years before — the shiny skin which Noah remembered from the first time Jaweh had come as an unexpected visitor looking for sacred champions — had been torn by stones and streaked with mud from the rivers Yaweh and his entourage had crossed. It was also spattered with the remnants of excrement, eggs and rotten vegetables. ...
> The Lord God Yaweh was about to step into the air ...
> To Mottyl [the cat], it was meaningless. Her Lord Creator was a walking sack of bones and hair. She also suspected, from his smell, that He was human.
>
> Timothy Findley, *Not Wanted on the Voyage.*[13]

Richard Rorty cannot allow, in principle, that there is anything other than a general philosophical insight — the insight that our knowledge is determined by our vocabulary — which might settle the old issues, or at least, stop them from crowding out the new ones. He is thus compelled to discount or to ignore all those rich and complicated grades of information, and fragile strains of awareness (about humans as animals living in a physical world) which might otherwise have helped him really to lose the philosophical concerns which now absorb him in his desire to be without them. Like Wittgenstein, he believes that there are some orders of concept, modes of discourse, which actually run the machinery of the world, and others which sadly don't, because "nothing else moves" when they are turned. This implies that he knows what the mechanism must be like: a sort of hodge-podge of Twentieth Century claims about language, from Dewey and Quine to Heidegger and Davidson, which happen to fit the model of the world as a puzzle with the Truth-piece absent. Like Nietzsche with respect to God, Rorty believes that if you take the Truth-piece out of the puzzle, the other fragments will fall where they may. What actually happens is that the puzzle picture of the world remains in tact, while the blank beckons with an irresistible appeal — it is the absence which keeps the "conversation of Europe" going, because the empty space configures the world just as surely as God and the Truth did when they were in it.

But Rorty avoids the estrangement of metaphysical radicalism, and like Gulliver, eschews the natives who sling turds among the trees. He dreams

about the day when we will not know what to do with God or the Truth, even if we find them — because we will not even guess they had a special place. Unfortunately, this is only a dream of polite conversation, of formal and disembodied language. "... If we became wholeheartedly pragmatic in science and morals, if we ever *simply* identified truth with warranted assertability, our fantasts would have no theme, our modernists no irony." (*SP*, 136) In short, nobody would feel anything. Yet there is still something valuable in the difference between Rorty and Deleuze (or Baudrillard): Rorty refuses to believe that we have become what the pious warned we would become if we abandoned God and Truth. If we think we have become simulacra, this is only because we continue to believe in the catechism. But Rorty has no taste for the Bible, Plato, and other prophecies of banishment. He only smiles, and declares that "from a full-fledged pragmatist point of view,"

> there is no interesting difference between tables and texts, between protons and poems. To a pragmatist, these are *all* just permanent possibilities for use, and thus for redescription, reinterpretation, manipulation. ... Occasionally [however] a great physicist or a great critic comes along and gives us a new vocabulary which enables us to do a lot of new and marvelous things. (*CP*, 153)

Rorty's serenity may seem drably Fustian to some, but in a way it is the triumph of our age. Not that postmodern intellectuals are any better at diction than their premodern ancestors; but at least now we have the reassuring knowledge that the sound of whistling in the dark is really the grinding of the wheel that is "part of the mechanism." Science, discovery, creation, culture are whatever happens to spin off from our need to keep gabbing away. There is nothing irrational about this. Pragmatism is the culmination of the history of epistemology. In fact it assumes (without discussing) a lot of the "machinery" that gets left out of the official written transcript of the conversation. Rorty's work is a tribute, not only to Dewey, but to Mills' *Essay on Liberty*, which surely offers the most sensible, and in all probability the most humane option available for any world structured like a cognitive arena.

The conversation which Rorty so cheerfully proposes is nothing other than what Baudrillard calls the "hyperrealism of simulation": the ecstasy of communication without interiority, and of societies without the social. But Rorty knows that the metatheoretical superiority of his own language-game has more to do with his emotional poise and experience than with anything anyone has discovered about the 'structure' of words. The language-game has the same mythical status in post-modernity as the bomb and DNA: it functions like the abstraction to end all abstractions, the moment when the

myth of Nature is cancelled by the even greater myth of Culture. Like the irony that Rorty thinks would disappear with the triumph of pragmatism, the idea of language is a profound metaphor. But this does not mean that it is subject to determination by some still more general language-game. As Donald Davidson (one of Rorty's heroes) has shown, *metaphor has no deep linguistic structure.*[14] There are no formal 'rules' of language which would explain "how metaphor works" — either as a universal feature of language, or as a puzzling anomaly. (Although Davidson does not say it), this suggests that semantics is *not essentially a linguistic affair*; and if this is so, then theories about language can offer us no easy and "simple-minded" pragmatist method of banishing the shadows. Streaks of black inhabit language as surely as they crowd the realms of things and the hollows of "raw feels" which Rorty shuns as impenetrably dark. Consequently, the 'rules' (or alternatively, the 'play') of "our language" can offer us little consolation, no special point of view, and no privileged explanation or understanding of our predicament (whatever it is). They are as illusory as the self-evidence of conscious self-identity; moreover, they are a substitute for the latter, and like Descartes' "I," the "Linguistic We" fails to eventuate.

Ever since the heyday of scientism in the late Nineteenth Century, analytic philosophers, structuralists, hermeneuts, and postmodernists have been trying to soften the positivist vision, to give language a human face — without letting go of the formalism. But in doing this, they have been making language work too hard. It may turn out that Rorty's soft-sell of Wittgensteinian philosophical engineering will wind up doing less credit to the hard facts of the positive spirit than Baudrillard, with his outlandish theory of the Simulacrum. For wasn't it the positivists who said that the power of language was its capacity for literal reference (or failure thereof)? — and that in splendid isolation, language is nothing but a dubious collection of T-statements?

Montréal, Québec

Notes

1. In Richard Rorty, ed., *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 73. Subsequent references to this text will be noted as (*LT*).

2. In George Butterworth and Paul Light, eds., *Social Cognition: Studies in the Development of Understanding* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), p. 50.

3. "Art and the Sociological Ego: A Psychoanalytic Reflection on Value," in John Fekete, ed., *Life After Deconstruction* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming).

4. For a quick study of Baudrillard's recent work, see his "The Ecstasy of Communication," in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Washington: Bay Press, 1983), pp. 126-134.

5. Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (Cambridge, Mass.: The M.I.T. Press, 1977), pp. 28, 270.

6. *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953), p. 95. Cited in Richard Rorty, "Introduction," (*LT*, p. 11).

7. "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity," in Richard J. Bernstein, ed., *Habermas and Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985), p. 175. Subsequent references to this essay will be cited in the text as (*HLP*). References to Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979) and his *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982) will be referred to respectively as (*PMN*) and (*CP*).

8. Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

9. Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 45, n.

10. It is a pity that Rorty does not comment more on the work of J.J. Gibson, which is closer to his own than he admits. See Gibson, *The Senses Considered As Perceptual Systems* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966) and *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979). Gibson shows that perception cannot be understood in terms of the Hume-Kant notion of "sensation," or William James' "blooming, buzzing confusion." For example, seeing depth in space is not a question of the mind adding the concept of space to the two-dimensional retinal image.

11. See, for example, Michael Lewis and Jeanne Brooks, "Infant's Social Perception: A Constructivist View," in L.B. Cohen and P. Salapatek, eds., *Infant Perception: From Sensation to Cognition*, vol. 2 (New York: Academic Press, 1975), where it is argued that either perception is preceded by concepts in the mind, or else "man is ... passive, an organism being acted upon ..." It is this kind of false dichotomizing which tempts Rorty to drop the body out of the discussion entirely.

12. For summaries and discussion of recent neonatology, see T.G.R. Bower, *Development in Infancy*, 2nd Edition (San Fransisco: Freeman, 1974, 1982); Margaret Bullowa, ed., *Before Speech: The Beginning of Interpersonal Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); George Butterworth, ed., *Infancy and Epistemology: An Evaluation of Piaget's Theory* (New York: St. Martin's, 1982); and Edward Tronick, ed., *Social Interchange in Infancy: Affect, Cognition, and Communication* (Baltimore: University Park, 1982).

13. Timothy Findley, *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (Markham, Ont.: Penguin, 1984), pp. 64, 66.

14. Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean," in *Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), pp. 245-264.

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BACK TO THE FUTURE: RECONSTRUCTIVE TENSIONS IN CONTEMPORARY POST-CRITICAL METAMODERNITY

Michael Dorland

The Structural Allegory: Reconstructive Encounters with the New French Thought. Edited and with an Introduction by John Fekete, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 269 pp., 1984.

> In the liquidation of one literary school by another the inheritance is passed down, not from father to son, but from uncle to nephew.
>
> *Viktor Shklovsky*

> Bertrand Russell warned that pragmatism could lead only to warfare. So be it.
>
> *Harold Bloom*

I

Re-thinking in the epoch allegorized by science

In philosophical tradition, reconstructive strategies would appear to arise at moments of intra-institutional response to catastrophe. In this century and on this continent, John Dewey's programmatic call for the reconstruction of philosophy came just after the first global technological war, while the second edition of *Reconstruction In Philosophy* (1948-49) was produced in the context of a lecture series at the Imperial University in Tokyo where Dewey spoke of "the forces which make intellectual reconstruction inevitable" from a land recently illuminated by the American technological institu-

tion's demonstration of the limited (though concentrated) efficacy of unreconstructed science.

The necessity for reconstruction in philosophy arose, Dewey argued, from

> the discovery that ... science is forced by its own development to abandon the assumption of fixity to recognize that what ... is actually 'universal' is *process*; but this fact of recent science still remains in philosophy ... a technical matter rather than what it is; namely, the most revolutionary discovery yet made.[1]

Dewey noted some of the implications:

> The present reach and thrust of what originates as science affects disturbingly every aspect of contemporary life, from the state of the family and the position of women and children, through the conduct and problems of education, through the fine as well as the industrial arts, with political and economic relations of association that are national and international in scope.[2]

However, Dewey's critique of contemporary science was that its reach and thrust were *not disturbing enough*; its development "is immature; it has not yet got beyond the physical and physiological aspects of human concerns, interests and subject-matters. In consequence, it has partial and exaggerated effects."[3] Above all, Dewey noted,

> The institutional conditions into which it (science) enters and which determine its human consequences have not as yet been subjected to any serious, systematic inquiry worthy of being designated scientific.[4]

Philosophical reconstruction, however, could produce a new "*relational* ... universality," "a generalized reconstruction so fundamental" it would subject "the 'morals' underlying ... institutional custom to scientific inquiry and criticism":

> ... (R)econstruction can be nothing less than the work of developing, of forming, of producing ... the intellectual instrumentalities which will progressively direct inquiry into the deeply and inclusively human. ...
>
> What will now be ... worked out (is) a method of inquiry so inclusive in range and so penetrating, so pervasive and so universal, as to

> provide the pattern and model which permits, invites and even demands the kind of formulation that falls within the function of philosophy. It is a method of knowing that is self-corrective ... The heart of the method is .... (i)ts similar centrality in every form of intellectual activity. ...[5]

In this sense, it may be possible to suggest that the development of the human sciences in the early twentieth-century would not only be formally and instrumentally American — since, as Dewey put it, "... American thought merely continues European thought"[6] — but, because of "the progressive and unstable character of American life and civilization",[7] would triumph concretely as the universalising anti-foundationalist allegory of modernity: the "reign of terror"[8] of scientific method as a perpetual techno-genesis.

Dewey, of course, was neither alone nor first nor last in proclaiming the heuristic universality of re-allegorized philosophy, a strategic paradigmatism already successfully instituted in Western tradition by Platonism (the Ideal, the philosopher, and the city), Christendom (God — the imitation of Christ — the Church), Cartesianism (*deus abscondidus* or the mechanical universe — the method of doubt — the individual), and Productivism (relational science — machines — the collective). Each paradigmatic shift in the anti-foundational allegorical terms, entailing on the one hand the re-vision (re-presentation, re-coding, re-production, re(con)textualization; ie., re-institutionalization) of the preceding foundational allegories, transmitted the de-vision (de-construction, de-coding, de-cadence, de-institutionalization) of the new anti-foundational allegory. For lateral to the allegory itself, were both the allegorizeable and allegorizers, though the relativism of each was always problematic. In Dewey's allegory, the crisis of contemporary existence was "due to the entrance into .... everyday affairs ... of processes" that originated "in ... relatively aloof and remote technical workshops known as laboratories."[9] However, much twentieth-century allegorization would generally be preoccupied less with the foundational allegory itself than with the geographical (spatial and contextual) and organizational (chronological and hierarchical) problematization of these "relatively aloof technical workshops" whose formal (non-local) existence was the subject of an implicit fundamental unanimity which, if anything, at least testified to the appropriateness of the contemporary allegory of the absolute domination of scientistic methodologism in the modern mind.[10]

After all, until mid-century, Dewey's relational universalism was still somewhat local and confined to a mainly American discursive anti-universe or world, though whether through the strong poetry of American modernists like Pound or Eliot or other structuralizing influences, the Americaniza-

tion of British literary studies was underway by the '20s as I.A. Richards would embrace the new allegory with the discovery that "A book is a machine to think with. ..."[11] If continental philosophy was also beginning to internationalize, Husserl, reflecting further on the crisis of the European sciences, would inadvertently expose the limitations of European (and Mittel-European ones in particular) conceptions of exterminism in universalising philosophy:

> Thanks to philosophy, one can determine whether European humanity is the bearer of an absolute idea and not simply an anthropological specimen such as 'Chinese' or 'Indian', and on the other hand the Europeanization of all alien forms of humanity is evidence favoring the power of its absolute sense ... and not an accidental absurdity of its history.[12]

Still further east, in the mid-1920s Soviet revolution in literary studies, Nicholas Gorlov, after observing of the epoch that "just when technology, the machine and mechanized living were crushing ... man, the same man begins to sing the praises of ... technology," would thus break into song:

> In order to transform the whole world into the kingdom of the machine, one must not only possess the machine, but become oneself part of a single machine — the world-wide human collective.[13]

For, and as perhaps only an American neoclassicist could grasp, the Russian Formalists "were positivists with a scientific, almost technological ideal of literary scholarship."[14] The Russian formalist revolt (as too the American anti-formalist revolt) replaced "form" "by a mechanistic concept of the sum of techniques ... which could be studied separately or in diverse interlocking combinations."[15] Though as Wellek also notes, the technological ideal, in its reexportation westward between the first and second global technological wars, was lightened by its "contact with the German tradition of ... totality," and in Prague became the linguistic doctrine called structuralism "because ... the term 'structure' does more justice to the totality of the work of art and is less weighed down by suggestions of externality. ..."[16] In postwar France, the softened linguistic formalism or doctrine of structuralism, re-classicized by academic Cartesianism on the one hand, and on the other furiously (and often para-academically) modernised by its belated encounter with American New Criticism, would congeal into syncretic doctrinal formulations some aspects of which the present collective work under review generally designates as the New French Thought.

II

A Babel of tongues

An efficient approach to the texts of *The Structural Allegory* might begin with Marc Angenot's "Structuralism as Syncretism: Institutional Distortions of Saussure" which, perhaps with some of the ironizing that the Belgian mind has derived from close proximity to the French (and possibly deserved if one compares, say, the work of Magritte with the elucubrations of Breton), usefully and amusingly reminds one that if the transmigrations of what he calls "those blurry, fuzzy sectors of knowledge made out of conflictual traditions, as literary studies are ..." (150), are curious indeed, it may be due, as Harold Bloom has written elsewhere, to literary studies' deep "origins in satire and farce."

For one, as Angenot relates, the *Cours de linguistique générale* (posthumously published in 1915 by three of Saussure's former students) — and which drew together under the influence of the structural label Barthes, Bremond, Greimas, Kristeva, Genette, Todorov, Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Althusser, Foucault, and later Derrida and Baudrillard — was built into "a more consistent theoretical apparatus" (153) by Saussure's editors (who contributed creative and novel accretions such as the work's final sentence as well as "the confusing equations '*signifiant* = acoustic image' and '*signifié* = concept'", 152-153), together with other contributions from the work of subsequent linguists (Trubetzkoy, Jakobson, Hjelmslev, etc.) and other commentators.

Secondly, "Saussure's paradigm took forty years to travel from Geneva to Paris" (153). Blocked from entering French linguistics by Antoine Meillet's "hegemonic influence" (153), Saussure's book migrated eastwards to Russia, then westward again in the '30s to linguistic circles in Prague and Copenhagen. As Angenot notes, except for Belgium, Saussure did not reach French linguistics until just after the Second World War (153).

Significantly, however, Lévi-Strauss, whose anthropological theories were "a kind of synonym" (154) for structuralism as applied Saussurean linguistics, was "initated to Saussureanism in the United States" (154) (together with the Russian Formalists, particularly V. Propp). A parallel break with conventional approaches to literature, briefly coded as the "Nouvelle critique" (Barthes, Mauron, Goldmann), is seen by Angenot as a "polemical ... model ... in which marketing practices are combined with ideological misapprehensions" (154), though the Nouvelle critique was rather more explicitly an attempt to catch up to American New Criticism (understood by Doubrovsky as Spitzer, Auerbach, and Wellek) and its perceived 20-year jump on French critical methodology.

According to Angenot, then, structuralism was a "semantic inflation ...

embracing in a catchall term ... in a suspect way ... all ... the social sciences, philosophy and literary disciplines" (154-5), an inflation that suddenly deflated in 1969-70 with the new inflation of semiotics. If Saussure, as Angenot argues, was, in fact, "the antistructuralist *par excellence*," a gnoseologist whose paradigm for a theory of knowledge was based on the axiom that linguistic praxis does not operate with sounds to communicate, but "with classes determining the identity of sounds, classes ... determined ... by other classes determining the identity of messages," (155)

> French structuralist preaching may be aptly described as a covering apparatus concealing confused skirmishes of incompatible points of view ... serving as a label for major attempts at syncretism. (157)

Angenot conjectures that "Saussure was ... a pledge of non-aggression at a time when ... contradictions between twentieth-century theoretic traditions were stirring ..." (157) and that "this atmosphere of *entente cordiale* ... was something new in the republic of scholarship" (unlike the violent, Byzantine intrigues of modern German or Slavic scholarship). Furthermore, in the postindustrial division of intellectual labour, literary criticism became the "commonplace" of the new friendly syncretism or "factitious amalgamation of dissimilar ideas ... that look incompatible ... insofar as they are not clearly conceived" (159). Syncretism, writes Angenot, "was (and still is) the common horizon of literary scholarship," "a substitutive simulacrum to Marxism" (161-2) against whose "encompassing framework" the liberal societies, swinging wildly in an "ideological stampede" (162) from triumphalism to manic-depressive skepticism, have deployed the strategic defensive initiatives of universities, the humanities, and modern cultural phenomena from movies, TV, to mass literature and other superstructural allegories.

Except for his sudden *ekstasis* of "Marxism," Angenot's tracing of the intellectual and institutional vicissitudes of Saussure does offer one possible path for entering what editor John Fekete, in his introduction to *The Structural Allegory*, calls the "new maelstrom," the dis-orient of "the widening spaces between concept and action" (xi) that "is the Western mind itself" (xii), where if the traditional, classical disciplinary foundations have been destabilized and eroded by the invading ideas of the books of and commentaries upon Lévi-Strauss, Derrida, Althusser or Foucault, whose new organising subjects have repatterned intellectual attention, at least "the structural allegory" (now in its second or post-structuralist phase) is "building upon a firm base in a variety of disciplines": linguistics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, literary and cultural studies, philosophy and history "increasingly share ... metatheoretical parameters and a common method of formalization" (xii). Upon this firm allegorical base, however, the post-

structural formalization or second-stage structural allegory, with its common method in the just-mentioned seven disciplines, "cannot tell if a cup is half-empty or half-full. ...", "cannot differentiate ... and cannot adequately conceptualize ..." (xv): vengeful, nihilistic, marginalized "against the individual and associated selves and their capacities for ... quasi-efficacious self-articulation" (xv-xvi), the post-structuralist critique "in psychological terms (is) the *ressentiment* of the defeated who have no values to affirm. This is not a position to be condemned or dismissed without sympathy ..." (xvi). It might seem that sometime prior to the structural allegory, a profound reversal of sympathy in the form of a radical mutation, de-revaluation or metastasis of language had occurred; indeed, Fekete writes of the "collective drama," (xvi), or allegorical analogization, of "the paradigm shifts of modern biology and quantum physics" (xiii) into the humanities and social sciences from "the worlds of quantum mechanics, genetic variation, and semiotic play (which) form a single major family of regulative metaphors that face us as an unavoidable modality of the contemporary scientific mythos" (xiii).

But in this allegorized mythos, there are no "things"; between "words" and "things" are only structural relational languages — thought (Derrida), custom (Foucault), production (Althusser). "Meanings" are "prior" regularities and processes of signification that de-center and de-construct articulation. Historical and institutional particularities are functions of (re)textualization: "... the structural allegory directs attention to a combinatory dimension ... in the formation of objects: it both denaturalizes and demythologizes, on a methodological principle. By virtue of the ... method, ... inquiry into the 'reality' of 'things' is ... transformed across the range of professional discourse" (xiii). The method of New French Thought "provides the most powerful modernization of theories .... central to Western Marxism. ... The structural allegory renders problematical all ... self-betraying affirmations of the human individual or the progress of history, and ... serves as a valuable critique of sentimental humanism and evolutionary historicism." "... (W)e are provided a stunning intellectual reminder that the power of structures is more effective today than any individual or associated human agency" (xiv). "We", then, might be the *post*-post-structuralist survivors, the de-mean(ing)ed, and so purely relational structural languages of a more effective network of non-local power metaphorically regulated in a transformist professional discourse. Yet as Fekete observes, "A poignant pathos marks the post-structuralist adventure each time it reaches the self-cancelling terminus of its itinerary" (xvi). In a word, there are flaws: "the relationship between microflaws ... in mental structures ... and macroflaws ... in organization ... cannot be assumed to be direct. This distance ... may offer space and time for creativity and novelty" (xvi). And thus, in "a complex of modalities" that can be "romantic, comic, tragic

and ironic," onwards, ever onwards in possible (simulational) space and time, "*beyond*" (xvii) structurality, towards "a less one-sided analogue of the natural (sic) scientific paradigms, drawing, for instance, on the *nonskeptical* implications of quantum mechanics" (xviii), drawing "from the antiobjectivist implications of the new physics a *participatory* theory of the universe ... to promote self-conscious reprogrammings of ... life ..." (xix). For not to press onwards, when biology is opening an era of evolutionary leaps in the extension of life and intelligence, would be "a sign of the most profound crisis of the Western mind, a most profound loss of nerve" (xix). But what is needed, first, before going "beyond the structural allegory" is "a dialogue with the structural tradition, a conversation of many voices" (xx). As John O'Neill recommends to the grand-nephews of Dewey: "We must learn ... a Babel of tongues" (198). Perhaps it was something more than mere wisdom that lead Wellek, conventionalist that he was, to dread the horizon he could see structuring itself where "Literary scholarship is to become a branch of biology."[18]

III

Allegorical voices

In *The Structural Allegory*, one gets one's pick of voices or articulated complexes of modalities. Making use of Fekete's introductory categories of romantic, comic, tragic and ironic, surely Angenot's contribution is comic-ironic, as is John O'Neill's study of the polymorphous perverse politics of Barthes' "homotextuality" (193), while ironically comic might be Andrew Wernick's metatheoretical survey of the eight-centuries-old post-scholastic "fundamental paradigmatic confusion that haunts the entire intellectual context in which the drama of the 'structuralism controversy' has had to unfold" (130-131).

Under the tragic rubric, one could definitely place Baudrillard's desperate argument for "symbolic disorder" and "speculation to the death" (59) from his masterly *L'Echange symbolique et la mort* (1976). And for a less despairing, but nonetheless bleak, assault against professionalizing discourses, Arthur Kroker's powerful mirror-image confrontation of Foucault with Talcott Parsons. D'Amico's anti-extremist belief in the convergence of Derrida and Foucault, "to the extent that discourses or texts are treated as objects in the world. ..." (180), doesn't exactly fall into one of these categories. And if there's a certain romantic *tragique* to Charles Levin's contention that in our time "Only the community challenges with its unpredictable heterogeneity. ..." (224), in his deconstruction of the cupidity of the Derridan text, it would be leaving much out to lump under the general

romantic heading the remaining post-Marxist contributions, from the "meta-observer" (37) Castoriadis' imaginary institution of society, Mârkus' gently ironic study of the "romantic anti-capitalist" (122) ambiguities of the diverse linguistic structurations of Wittgenstein, Lévi-Strauss and Gadamer, to Fekete's challenging multi-paradigm construction of the continental shift in current "intra-institutional" strategies.

If all of the contributions to *The Structural Allegory* roam macrotheoretically throughout the vast empty spaces of Western tradition, there is a relatively unanimous microtheoretical "frustration" (D'Amico, 181) that arises to occasion calls for the transformalization of structuralism/post-structuralism's "criminal" complexifications. In Castoriadis' formulation

> It would be a most serious error, a crime equivalent to the object's murder — *structuralism's crime* — to claim that this (identitarian or ensemblist) logic exhausts the life, or even logic of society. One would have to give up thinking ... (31, emphasis added).

For D'Amico, both Derrida and Foucault share "a fundamental hesitation or impossibility at the heart of thought and representation — we cannot both represent and represent ourselves representing ... One might then ask, in frustration, if there is finally no way to read a book, no way even to judge a reading?" (181). Regardless, each contribution does manage to posit the possibility of an *hors texte* in the text from which it might be conceivable to continue reading, judging, etc. beyond structuralism/post-structuralism's apparent dead-ends: for Castoriadis, the "meta" reality of the social imaginary itself (24); for Angenot, "Marxism" (162); for Mârkus, "the 'practical materialism' of the Marxist viewpoint" (128); for Baudrillard, "death" (56); for Levin, "the community" (224); for Wernick, a "Buddhized *dispositif*" (146); for D'Amico, an autonomous "dispositional character" (Popper) that cuts across "our traditional dichotomy between the sciences and the humanities" (181); and for O'Neill, "the university ... is the institution of last resort ..." (198) for the production of subversive discourse. Only Kroker and Fekete actually name the locus of contemporary reconstructive strategies as North America, and in so doing at last contribute to freeing the debate from its Babylonian exile on that other continent. For this reason, as well as for their profoundly antithetical strategizations, both are worth considering in greater detail.

IV

The continent of the will

For Kroker, who mirrors Foucault in a reflection upon Parsons' grim

realism, the event that took place at the beginning of the twentieth century and clearly divided the modern bourgeois sociology of power from its nineteenth-century counterparts, a division from which Parsons and Foucault follow, was

> the movement from classical physics to ... the new genetic biology ... as the mode of theoretical knowledge that constitutes power ... (75).

This bourgeois discourse claimed "for the first time" that power was "in fact, beyond all specific contents, the form ... or medium, through which the life of the social species was to be prolonged ..." (75). The three combinative threads of the new genetic biology, cybernetic theory, and linguistics emphasized that power as a specialized language "is a 'medium' of exchange ... in the sense that the grammar of power (the 'code' of authority ...) is the discursive form ... within which ... the 'disciplining' of the social species takes place" (76), in the order of difference of a social management of the species that "finds in the need to work on behalf of ... *life* ... a discursive validation for the extension of its order of normalizing practices" (76-77).

As its more intensive, philosophical level, the reconstructive thesis of bio-power — and where the continents of universalizing thought meet — "is profoundly structuralist because it is radically Kantian; and it is Kantian to the extent that the new genetics, language theory and cybernetics are strategies ... for suppressing ... sensuous experience" (78), because the power-discourse "produces objects in respect to its form, not in respect to its existence" (Jaspers). What appears in Parsons and Foucault is "a power ... that operates by transforming its conditions of possibility ... into a methodology of political practice" (79), while insisting that its transformationalist management of the life-functions of society "is 'limitless'" (80). This dynamic instrumental activism — or what Dewey called "instrumental experimentalism" — is Kant's "transcendental reduction" — Kant, writes Kroker, "sensed the terrorism (he insisted that this was freedom) of truth" (80) — re-theorized by Foucault, "the first theorist of power of the modern century," as "an endless play of interventions upon the population and within the body" (81).

"At the heart of power is a war-like relation," writes Foucault, that Parsons specifies as the "contentlessness" of a generalized medium. As Kroker explicates, in its actual operations and circumlocutions, the modern "power apparatus" has developed critical implications "so transformative in its logic, so comprehensive .... that the *noumenal forms* of the life-order

... may have broken free of their anchorage in sensuous experience, moved now by the dynamic impulse of an autonomous life-will" (82). It was the "magnitude" of Foucault's discovery of the "relational" character of modern power to be the "mirror" of "a new continent of the will ..." (82). The "new Magna Carta of power" written by Foucault and Parsons was struck upon four insubordinations or upheavals that retrojectively "undermine ... the *whole* foundation ... of the classical representation of power" (83). Thus, according to Kroker, modern power is non-representational (i.e., constitutive); non-distributive (collective); non-sovereign (multi-disciplinary; i.e., technical); and non-symbolic (pragmatic) — in short, "a pure instrumentality without signification" that has committed "its fate to the amnesic language of formalism. ..." (89), or what Kroker, with Baudrillard, terms a fascist or dead power, a "resurrection effect" or form that, despairing of its rational foundations, violently reactivates the social (Baudrillard). But what makes this dead, fascist power so fascinatingly modern, finally, is that it is "never ... anything but the sign of what it was"; namely, after Parsons, "the product of an 'institutionalizing' discourse that wedded politics to the biological canon" (90), so as to, in Parsons' words, "manufacture a behaviour that .... create(s) a nexus of habits through which the social 'belongingness' of individuals to a society is defined; that is, it manufactures something like the norm" (90). Which is why Kroker states that the modern "mirror of power can be reflected in its production of discursive knowledge" (91).

The "fluctuating medium" (Parsons) of modern "ahistorical and de-ontologized" (92) power, Kroker suggests, is carried forward by the life-managers or technocracy, allegorically: "The primary line of theoretical convergence between Parsons' and Foucault's *images* ... lies in their mutual recognition that power now justifies itself on the basis of an appeal to a biological ethos" (93, emphasis added). But this "mimicry of natural life" (96) is a simulation, "a radical structuralism ... in which all 'events are evacuated of their contents'" (96). "... (T)he secret of power is its transparency" as a relational network or field of relations that "always manages to evade localization in the terms that it mediates" (96). "Power has its own grammatical-syntactic structure" (97) embodied in a professional ethos, where "there is to be found the governing idea that power should speak now, not in terms of transgressions and prohibitions, but ... on behalf of life" (98), a power that expresses itself in the practice, "dull and prosaic", of the human sciences where "a developing technocracy ... prides itself on being a major site for the deployment of 'theoretical knowledge' ..." (99). Kroker concludes this profound deconstruction of reconstruction with Octavio Paz's cry: "*Your image persecutes you.*"

V

From the republics of scholarship to the commonwealth of receptive communities

In his concluding essay, "Modernity in the literary institution: Strategic Anti-Foundational Moves," John Fekete suggests that the modern critical nexus has five institutional dimensions (228-229) — discursive, intentional, modular, and methodical, the fifth being its ethic: "the institution of an anti-foundationalist ethos as a ... mode of justification and legitimation for a succession of theoretical adventures" (229). Fekete characterizes this intellectual institution in formation in North America over the past few decades as "*an anti-foundationalist language paradigm*" whose opening move was New Criticism with J.C. Ransom's 1939 announcement of "The Age of Criticism" (or, as Fekete observes less grandly, in a footnote, what Ransom also called "Criticism Inc."),[19] a critical and speculative revolution founded on the structure and constitution of an object. Ransom's "anti-foundational program" meant the exclusion from *all prior criticism* of everything but literary specificity — "that is, all that would have reduced literature to foundations on which a literary institution could *not* have been built" (230, emphasis added). The exclusion of foundational factors extrinsic to the text was an important strategic move that would not be re-raised until Foucault and then only within a formalization "by then firmly established and looking for socio-political density" (230).

After the New Criticism, Northrop Frye and his network contributed "a momentous institutional reorientation ... to integrate literature structurally as a decisive internal principle ... in Western civilization. ..." (230), while McLuhan "culminates" (231) the Anglo-American tradition by introducing, via recent French imports, the key mutations of "a cybernetic world on the analogy of the digital language of the text and ... regulatory metaphors of the media of communications" (231), an anti-speculative dissolution of the subject-object dualisms in a monism centred on cultural objectifications that the structuralist phase of institutional development continues in variant forms. French analytic rationalism, imported into North America, however, contributes to the transformation of the native pragmatism, among other traditions English and German. As a result,

> The North American literary institution, in a critical ecumenical spirit, may become the site of a larger intellectual life. The crisis in contemporary intellectual practice suggests that such ecumenicism may prove the most radical strategy (232).

Institutional ecumenicism, then, naturalizes the language paradigm (the

space of literary discourse) with ever greater priority and scope of formalization, for it allows the consumption of the analytic-empirical (structuralism), cybernetic critical and con-textual (post-structuralism), as well as customary (pragmatism), strategies:

> The place of the languages of criticism, meanwhile, is firmly assured, because they can be seen not as supplements but as necessities for the objective existence of the texts, not exterior to the texts but veritable intertexts moved into the gaps within the texts (238).

The shift toward consumption begun by Frye and McLuhan, which makes the role of criticism "indispensable" (239), also prepares the way for reception theory, "a field which ... has ... been gaining importance" (239), though it is only the "gentle" strain in American pragmatism (Stanley Fish's anti-utilitarianism) that completely shifts "the site ... of meaning (and) textuality itself" (239) to reception and its institutions, in a maneuver that "removes the last vestiges of parasitism or inferiority from criticism which (now) ... produces the very objects of its attention" (240). Thus completed as "the thing itself", criticism not only produces its own objects, but also its own communities of consumption that "provide for a full round of practical activities that we are always able to perform" (241).

It may thus be possible, cautiously and skeptically, on the basis of such an anti-foundational variant of pragmatism outside the language paradigm ("value axioms are prior to the practical valuations", 242), to: i) start up a form of history again, ii) articulate universal validity, and iii) "target a future" (242). Or at least this would be "desirable" (243), though "only time and the play of historical practices will prove the truth or give it the lie" (244). In the present *entente cordiale* of intra-continentalism, a

> multi-paradigm anti-foundationalist program can best redeem Saussure's call to study 'the life of signs' if to that study is attached a meliorist project to denaturalize, problematize and revalue the signs of life with practical emancipatory intent (246).

Dewey couldn't have said it better.

VI

American pragmatism and the interrationalist wars

Desirable as all this may be, Fekete, of course, is perfectly aware of the

downside: namely, that what makes ecumenism desirable at all is the prior existence of what he terms "the interrationalist wars" (244). Secondly, as he puts it, "What tends to be unelaborated here is the nature of the intensely interested competition among ... (interpretive) communities that amounts to each being defined against the other" (240). Thirdly, if Fish's new pragmatism is gentle, the more native anti-theoretical American varieties are not so, but deeply war-like.[20] As Harold Bloom cites William James:

> ... if you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any ... word as closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash value. ... It appears less as a solution ... than as a program for more work, and an indication of the ways in which existing realities may be *changed.*
>
> Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest .... we move forward and ... make nature over again by their aid. Pragmatism unstiffens all our theories ... and sets each one at work. Being nothing essentially new, it harmonizes with many ... philosophic tendencies ... nominalism ... utilitarianism ... (and) positivism in its disdain for verbal solutions, useless questions and metaphysical abstractions.[21]

Or as Randolph Bourne would put it, in a remorseful comment upon the implications of the war-like, technical subordinationalism of the young Deweyites:

> There seems to have been a peculiar congeniality between ... war and these men. ... Dewey ('s) ... disciples have learned all too literally the instrumental attitude toward life ... making themselves efficient instruments of the war-technique ... because they ... never learned not to subordinate idea to technique .... it never occurred (to us) that values could be subordinated to technique. We ... had our private utopias so clearly in our minds that the means always fell into place as contributory.[22]

As Kristeva, no enemy of American pragmatism but no positivist either, recently observed, the utilitarianism of American university discourse "possesses an extraordinary ability to absorb, digest and neutralize all of the key, radical or dramatic moments ... of contemporary thought."[23] And Wellek too had not only remarked that "the selection of European writers which have attracted the attention of modern critics in the United States is oddly narrow and subject to ... distortion ...," but also its extreme nominalism.[24]

As an auto-regulative, anti-speculative technique that harmonizes nominalism, utilitarianism and positivism, pragmatism becomes the American philosophy *par excellence*, the technique of the will to will as prior formalizing instrumentality, without cease or foundation beyond the "interrationalist wars", since it is ambiguously 'grounded', at one extreme, in the American burden (meta-language paradigm) of the competitive personality, and at the other by the deep anti-paradigmatic "split in American high culture that will evidently never end,"[25] and so is axiologically etc. structured to swing wildly between triumphalism and despair, between universalising passion and instituted cynicism. If ecumenism there is to be, it is likely as the ecumenism of armies, which may, after all, be fine with Fekete as he says of his ecumenism that it is radical in its assumption of the "full heritage" (245) of Western tradition, which would include its opportunities as well as its horrors.

VII

Canadianizing the United States/Americanizing Canada

Yet it may still be that Fekete's pragmatic wager in *The Structural Allegory* is to introduce for American reception a broader conception of ecumenism. Such a strategy would not only be desirable, but might also be expected of an influential Canadian thinker, who, like Frye or McLuhan before him, subscribes to the traditional diplomatic strategy of Canadianizing the United States.[26] It is significant here that nine of the 13 contributions to *The Structural Allegory* are from Canadian thinkers who form a deeply coexistive (recombinative) network that has revitalized the structural allegory with the nomic and necessitarian insights of the transcultural structural existentialism original to this continent that is distinctive of both Canadian and Mexican intellectual responses to the United States.[27] In this sense, a much broader encompassing or ecumenical paradigmatization of America itself might be able to contribute the quadrilateral side to the Anglo-American triangulation of native, French and German thought in the emerging North American literary institution Fekete describes. Or at least that's a less overtly politicized view of the Feketian wager, and it is not to be dismissed without sympathetic awareness of the risks entailed, particularly in Fekete's own remarks that the inside of Frye's integrative impulse was an isolated, if visionary, idealism, while McLuhan's U.S. reception meant that he "cravenly embraced his culture after a certain point" (231).

In closing, it might not be out of place to recollect that one of the foundational anti-foundationalist texts in American literature was Nathaniel Hawthorne's story "Earth's Holocaust" (1844), in which Ameri-

can reformers, frustrated that mankind, or science, had not yet attained perfection, ignite a giant bonfire onto which they toss the discarded signifiers of unmodern tradition, including books. As the blaze rises ever higher, the reformers fan the flames with the war-cry of triumphant modernity: "Onward! Onward!" And had the fire kept burning, into it might have been cast, among other texts, Arnold's barbaric lines on the barbarians of his civilization:

> ... We admire with awe
> The exulting thunder of your race;
> You give the universe your law,
> You triumph over time and space!
> Your pride of life, your tireless powers,
> We laud them, but they are not ours.

The presence of *The Structural Allegory*'s Canadians, warming themselves at the bonfire of metamodernist meliorizing neo-futurism, may indicate an extraordinary confidence in the cooling powers of a vigorous speculatively critical tradition seeking greater intra-institutional density. Or it may be simply that another network of fascinated spectators has plugged into the spectacular circuits of consumption in the contemporary superstructural simulations of the science of the institutional soap-opera, where, as Wallace Stevens once put it, we "behold the academies like structures in a mist."

Montréal, Québec

Notes

1. John Dewey, "Reconstruction as Seen Twenty-five Years Later" (1948), *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, New American Library: New York, 1950, 12.
2. *R in P*, 16-17.
3. 19.
4. 19.
5. 13, 18, 20-21, 22.
6. John Dewey, "The Development of American Pragmatism," in David Van Tassel, ed., *American Thought in the Twentieth Century*, Thomas Y. Crowell: New York, 1967, 25.
7. *Ibid.*, 26.
8. Morton White, *Social Thought In America: The Revolt Against Formalism*, Beacon Press: Beacon Hill, 1957, 241.
9. *R in P*, 17.

10. "... le signe linguistique n'est si purement et si totalement signe que parce qu'il assume radicalement sa fonction de substitut ...", Groupe Mu, *Rhétorique générale*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1982, 18-19. Pierre Fontanier in his tropological system defines allegory as "... une proposition à double sens, à sens littéral et à sens spirituel tout ensemble, par lequel on présente une pensée sous l'image d'une autre pensée, propre à la rendre plus sensible et plus frappante que si elle était présentée directement et sans aucune espèce de voile. ...", *Les Figures du discours* (1821), Flammarion: Paris, 1977, 114.

11. *Principles of Literary Criticism*, Harcourt, Brace & World: New York, 1925, 1. Cf. "... a novel ... is a machine for generating interpretations," Umberto Eco, *Postscript to The Name of the Rose*, Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich: New York, 1984, 1-2.

12. "Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transcendentale Phänomenologie" (1936), in Emile Bréhier, *Contemporary Philosophy Since 1850*, trans. Wade Baskin, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1969, 242.

13. "Futurism and Revolution" (1924), in Chris Pike, ed. & intro., *The Futurists, the Formalists & the Marxist Critique*, Ink Links: London, 1979, 183-184.

14. René Wellek, *Concepts of Criticism*, ed. Stephen G. Nichols Jr., Yale University Press: New Haven, 1963, 67.

15. *Ibid.* Fredric Jameson's astonishment that Russian Formalism had "so little impact on American critical practices" may perhaps be attributed to the prior impact of such American Formalists as F.W. Taylor, Henry Ford, or T.A. Edison's United Film Protective Association of the Film Manufacturing and Importers of the United States. See *The Prison-House of Language*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1972, 87.

16. Wellek, 67.

17. Serge Doubrovsky, *Pourquoi la Nouvelle Critique*, Denöel/Gonthier: Paris, 1966, 19.

18. Wellek, 64.

19. Another American modernist poet, Randall Jarrell, found that after a few years the Age of Criticism was "beginning to frighten me a little" particularly its "almost-autonomous" style, "that strange sort of Law French which the critic now can set up like a Chinese Wall between himself and the ... reader," "The Age of Criticism," in *Poetry and the Age*, Vintage Books: New York, 1955, 85, 65, 76. Of Ransom's poetical technique, Wellek notes a favoring of, as Ransom put it, a "single extended image to bear the whole weight of the conceptual structure," Wellek, 99.

20. Whatever its other merits, Fish's new pragmatism has contributed to a revival of the University of Chicago's institutional strategy of critical pluralism, a strategy which has been pursued since the 1930s. Of far graver moment is the likelihood that such a critical pluralism would be founded upon the exclusion of all the antinomians, poets, literary dissenters and other American heretics that congregate in the New Haven region, and have already been collectively designated as "revisionary madmen." See W.J.T. Mitchell, ed., *Against Theory: Literary Studies and the New Pragmatism*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1985, 31 ff.

21. Harold Bloom, *Agon: Towards A Theory of Revisionism*, Oxford University Press: New York, 1982, 40.

22. Randolph S. Bourne, "Twilight of Idols," in Van Tassel, ed. *American Thought in the Twentieth Century*, 89.

23. "Psychoanalysis and the Polis," in W.J.T. Mitchell, ed. *The Politics of Interpretation*, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1983, 83.

24. Wellek, 312, 93.

25. Bloom, *Agon*, 331.

26. Northrop Frye, *Divisions on a Ground: Essays on Canadian Culture*, Anansi: Toronto, 1982, 82. For recent Canadian critiques of both Frye and McLuhan, David Cook, *Northrop Frye: A Vision of the New World*, New World Perspectives: Montreal, 1985, esp. 101 ff; Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant*, New World Perspectives: Montreal, 1984, 52 ff. Also John Fekete, *The Critical Twilight*, Routledge & Kegan Paul: Boston, 1978.

27. For a Canadian perspective, Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Landscape*, University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1985. For Mexico, Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, Grove Press: New York, 1961, esp. ch. VII. For an American theorist with a profound sensitivity to both Canadian and Mexican thought, see the writings of Michael A. Weinstein, *The Polarity of Mexican Thought*, Penn. State UP: University Park, 1976, and *Culture Critique: Fernand Dumont and New Quebec Sociology*, New World Perspectives: Montreal, 1985.

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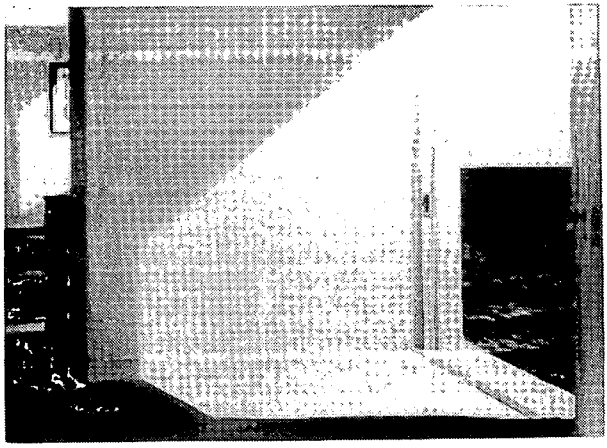
THE AESTHETICS OF SEDUCTION: EDWARD HOPPER'S BLACK SUN

Arthur Kroker

Edward Hopper is the American painter of technicisme. If by technicisme is meant an urgent belief in the historical inevitability of the fully realized technological society and, if further, technicisme is understood to be the guiding impulse of the American Republic, at least since the inception of the United States as a society with no history before the age of progress, then Hopper is that curiosity of an American artist who, breaking decisively with the equation of technology and freedom in the American mind, went over instead to the alternative vision of *technology as deprivation.*

Quantum Physics as Decline

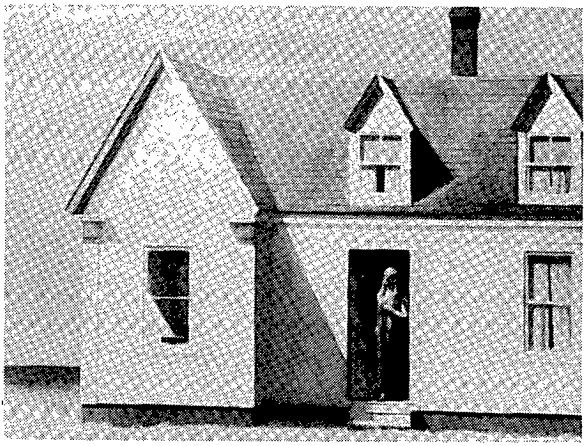
There is, in particular, one painting by Hopper which reveals fully the price which is exacted for admission to the fully realized technological society, and which speaks directly to the key issue of technology and power in the postmodern condition. Titled simply, yet evocatively, *Rooms by the Sea*, the painting consists simply of two rooms which are linked only by an aesthetic symmetry of form (the perfectly parallel rays of sunlight); which are empty (there are no human presences) and also perfectly still (the vacancy of the sea without is a mirror-image of the deadness within). Everything in the painting is transparent, nameless, relational and seductive; and, for just that reason, the cumulative emotional effect of the painting is one of anxiety and dread. *Rooms by the Sea* is an emblematic image of technology and culture as degeneration: nature (the sea) and culture (the rooms) are linked only accidentally in a field of purely spatial contiguity; all human presences have been expelled and, consequently, the



Edward Hopper, *Rooms by the Sea*

question of the entanglement of identity and technique never arises; and a menacing mood of aesthetic symmetry is the keynote feature. Indeed, what is *Rooms by the Sea* but a precise, visual depiction of the postmodern world as first presented in the disintegrative vision of quantum physics, a world in which science is the language in which power speaks to us today. Edward Hopper can paint technology as deprivation so well, just because he was the American artist who first stumbled upon the new continent of quantum physics as an exact, social description of American culture in radical decline. And, of course, since American culture, as the dynamic centre of advanced modernity, is world culture, then Hopper's artistic vision of the black sun which is the emblematic sign of technological society takes on a larger historical significance.

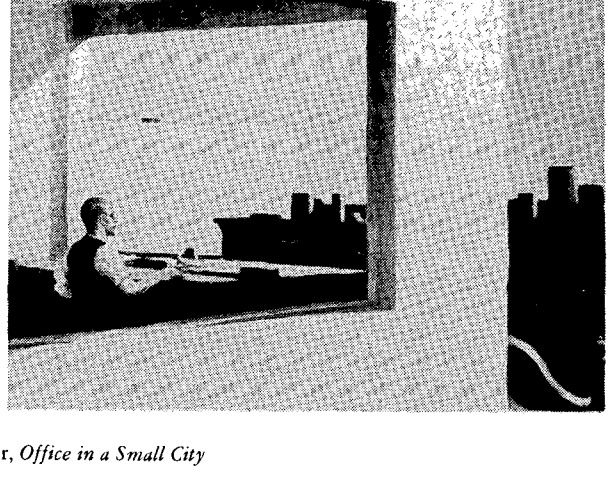
This is only to note that *Rooms by the Sea* gives us an early warning of the great paradigm-shift prefigured by the new cosmology of quantum physics. After all, quantum physics, which is the cutting-edge of the technological system of advanced modernity, holds to a purely relational (and hyper-Derridean) world-view: *aesthetic symmetry* (charm, truth, strangeness, beauty) is its key regulatory feature; random and unpredictable *jumps of quarks* from one energy level to another are its principle of action; purely contiguous relations of a spatial order across bounded energy fields are its horizon; structural relationships of similitude and difference are its basic geometry; an infinite regress of all matter, from the hyper-density of black holes to the purely disintegrative world of sub-molecular particles (the high-energy physics of bosons, leptons, and quarks) into the *creatio ex nihilo* of unified field theory is its central canon; and it now contains a fifth



Edward Hopper, *High Noon*

force — the *hyper-charge* — which is the postmodern contribution to the old physical world of gravity, electromagnetism, weak and strong forces. Quantum physics gives us a world which is a matter of probability, paradox and irony; where singular *events* (with their representational logic) dissolve into relations across unbounded energy fields; and in which the dualisms of classical physics are rejected in favour of structural and, thus, morphological relations of identity and similitude. What is the world of quantum physics? It's what the French theoretician — Jean-François Lyotard — has described in *La condition postmoderne* as the age of the death of the grand reçits; and what, before him, Michel Foucalt said would be the spreading outwards of the discourse of a "cynical power": a power which speaking in the name of life itself would remain a matter of pure relationalism — "groundless effects" and "ramifications without root."

What is then the secret of *Rooms by the Sea*? It shows us that in the new world of technology to the hyper that power no longer speaks in the forbidding tones of oppression and juridical exclusion, that it no longer appeals for its legitimacy to the "grand reçits" of classical physics, whether in the form of Newtonian politics, Hobbesian science, or Spencerian society; but that power, a "cynical power", reveals itself now in the language of an *aesthetics of seduction. Rooms by the Sea* is an emblematic sign of the relational power of technological society as the language of an aesthetics of seduction. Its design-logic is relational *not* representational (the sea and the sunlight exist only to show the absence of any references to nature); its figurations are sharply geometrical as if to remind us of the privileged position of mathematics in the new universe of science and technology; and



Edward Hopper, *Office in a Small City*

its language is purely structural (there is no referential "event", only the empty ideolect of the image itself). What is particularly striking about *Rooms by the Sea* is the mood of anxiety, dismay and menace which it establishes as the emotional counterpart of the aesthetics of seduction. The door opens directly onto the sea; the sun is brilliant, but austere and cold; and the rooms are perfectly empty. This painting is not, of course, about "rooms by the sea"; it is about *us*: it is an exact clinical description of what we have become in the age of cynical power, in an age of excremental culture, the death of the social, and the triumph of the language of signification. *Rooms by the Sea* is, in a word, the truthsayer of a postmodern condition in which power speaks in the language of the aesthetics of seduction.

The American Landscape

If Edward Hopper could paint the dark side of postmodernism so well it was just because his was that authentic American artistic vision which understood exactly, and with no reservations, the intimations of deprival in the midst of the technological dynamo. It was Hopper's fate to understand that the will to technique — the coming to be of a society founded on the technical mastery of social and non-social nature — was the essence of the American polis. Hopper's paintings began, in fact, just at that point when technique is no longer an object which we can hold in front of ourselves as a site of contemplation, but when technique is us: when, that is, technology

invests the realms of psychology, political economy, and social relationships. Indeed, what is most fascinating about Hopper's artistic works is that they represent a recitative of American "being" in the postmodern condition: *waiting* with no expectation of real relief from the detritus of the simulacrum; communication as radical isolation; *endless motion* as the nervous system of the culture of style; *radical dislocation* as the inevitable end-product of shifts in neo-technical capitalism; and profound *solitude* as the highly paradoxical result of a culture in which power reduces itself to an aleatory mechanism, and where even sexuality is fascinating now only when it is the scene of an "imaginary catastrophe" (Baudrillard).

Indeed, an earlier sketch of Hopper's classic painting, *House by the Railroad*, was called simply "An American Landscape". We might say that all of Hopper's artistic productions represent an interrogation of the "psychological" American landscape: one which is charged by the driving spirit of technicisme; and which is typified by a growing radical impoverishment of American existence. And, just as the original sketch for *House by the Railroad* moved from an unfocussed naturalism to the geometrical lines and angular deprivations of the final painting, so too Hopper's vision as it moved from the externals of technological domination (the political economy of *House by the Railroad* and *Gas*) to the psychology of technological society (*New York Office, Western Motel, Approaching a City*) and, thereupon, to the aesthetic symmetries of *High Noon* and *Rooms by the Sea*) traced the landscape of "technique as us" from its surface manifestations to its investiture of the interstices of American being. Thus, Hopper's artistic rendering of the deep deprivations of technological society move from the plane of physical dislocation (*Four Lane Highway*) to psychological displacement (the radical solitude of *Excursion into Philosophy* and *Western Motel*) and, thence, to social displacement (*Early Sunday Morning* is a grisly example of Sartre's culture of "alterity") and culminating in the perfectly aesthetic (because so well harmonized and symmetrical) and perfectly impoverished visions of *High Noon*, *People in the Sun*, and *Rooms by the Sea*. This is just to say, though, that Hopper's artistic vision is unrelenting. Nietzsche might have begun *The Will to Power* with the fateful words, "Nihilism is knocking at the door; whence comes this most uncanniest of guests", but Hopper does him one better. His artistic productions are a grisly recitation of the fact that the *catastrophe* of nihilism which Nietzsche, living in the nineteenth-century, could only predict, has, for Hopper, already happened. The figures in *People in the Sun*, *Excursion into Philosophy*, and *Western Motel* are not waiting for the coming of a radical crisis. On the contrary, they can be so inert and so overcome with a sense of melancholy resignation *because the catastrophe has already taken place, and they are its victims and not so happy survivors.*

Excremental Culture

Hopper's artistic vision might be studied then as a brilliant, visual history of the disaster triumphant which has overwhelmed American public and private life in the late twentieth century. In his works, we are in the privileged position of being present on the dark side, the side of the excremental vision *par excellence*, of technological society. Even the position of observation is perfect: Hopper situates us as voyeurs (*Office in a Small Town*, *Night Windows*, *Morning Sun*) observing victims of a catastrophe. The reduction of the observer to the position of voyeur and of the human figures in the paintings to melancholy victims is accompanied by another great reduction. It is often said that Hopper, in the best of the romantic tradition, uses the artistic device of "windows" to disclose the tension between nature and culture or, at least, to introduce some sense of electric tension to otherwise dead landscapes. This is profoundly mistaken. The windows in his paintings are, in fact, *trompe l'oeils*, diverting our attention away from the fact (and thus emphasizing) that there is no "inside" and "outside" in these artistic productions. Just like the simulated (and post-classical) world of power which they so brilliantly, and painstakingly, portray; what we see on the *outside* of the windows is actually what is happening to us on the inside as we are processed through the designed world of the technological system. And, as if to give a hint that the woman in *Western Motel* is coded by the perpetual motion of the automobile, that the worker in *Office in a Small City* is coded by the logic of bureaucratic industrialism, or that the male figure in *Excursion in Philosophy* is coded by Sartre's logic of the "vacant look"; the windows are perfectly transparent, perfectly mediational, and perfectly empty. In Hooper's world, a circular logic of sign and event is at work. Culture is coded by the signs of nature; nature is processed by technique; and *we are coded* by the false appearance of antinomic reciprocities between nature and culture. This means, of course, that Hopper's American landscape understands technique to be much more than machine objects, but as a whole system of cultural preparation, a theory of labour as estrangement, and, most of all, a relational power system designed to exclude the human presence.

Two paintings, in particular, are emblematic of Hopper's searing vision of postmodern as excremental culture. Titled *High Noon* and *People in the Sun*, these are grisly and overwhelmingly sad portraits of a deadness of the spirit and of a radical impoverishment of the human vision which has been achieved in the last days of contemporary culture. Here, even nature is menacing (the austere and cold sunlight of *High Noon*), the poses are grotesque (the "people in the sun" of leisure society in their business suits), and there is an overwhelming sense of psychosis within the vacant acts of waiting (for nothing) and looking (to nowhere) of the woman in *High*

Noon and the leisured Americans (as victims) of *People in the Sun*. In these two paintings, what is presented in all of its pathos and in all of its "intimations of deprival" is a brilliant vision of technology as degeneration. And, just as Jean-Paul Sartre predicted that the contemporary century would culminate in the detritus of the culture of "alterity", Hopper has given us a vision of such an excremental culture in all of its hysteria. Perhaps what is most unsettling is that Hopper's artistic vision can be so authentically American just because in these scenes of technology as deprivation, we can also recognize that it is *us* who suffer most deeply the "intimations of deprival" of the fully realized technical system. What is *real* cultural degeneration, *real* excremental culture? Well, for Hopper at least, the answer is clear: it is the coming to be of a society founded on the equation of technology and freedom. Hopper is the artist of the chilling vision of the *black sun*. He is, in the prophetic sense, the truthsayer of the deadness within an American, and thus world, culture which reduces itself to the Nietzschean vision of "a little voluptuousness and a little cynicism".

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PREFACE

MEDIASCAPE

The Computer Has No Memory

There was a grisly advertisement in a recent issue of *The Canadian Forum*[1] which has a lot to say about the silent, but very real, impact of computer technology on Canadian society, and about how in the absence of a deep ethical and philosophical reflection on the human context of computer technology, the computer also imposes its (technocratic) form: quietly, pervasively, and seductively.

This advertisement consists of a group shot of the most upscale members of Canada's literary, cultural, and publishing establishments (from Margaret Atwood and Jack McClelland to Peter C. Newman, Veronica Tenant, and Harold Town) posed around the real star of this event: "*A. Macintosh*", an equally upscale personal computer from Apple Computer, Inc. As if to emphasize, and thus to enhance, by way of contrast the moribund, tory roots of Canadian culture and the new technological utopia made possible by Apple Computer, Inc., the setting is properly Victorian, even classical: from the heavy wooden furnishings and the dreary drapes to the classical bust in the corner. It is the perfectly seductive *future* of computerculture versus a dead and dying (because technologically obsolete) representation of the *past* of Canadian culture.

The copy makes the point perfectly. "Announcing the retirement of Canada's most famous typewriters":

> Twenty-five of the finest imaginations in Canadian literature, art and broadcasting have surrendered the traditional tools of their trade for Macintosh personal computers.
>
> This historic event is only the beginning of a major commitment between the writers, editors and artists of McClelland and Stewart and the engineers, software wizards and computer evangelists of Apple Canada, Inc.
>
> Which means that soon the entire McClelland and Stewart organization will be operating their business on Macintosh Office network of hardware and software products.
>
> In the meantime, Canada's finest minds are already busily creating words and pictures on the world's finest computer. And trying to find decorative uses for their typewriters.

Harold Innis — Canada's most trenchant critic of the social and cultural impact of technological media — always warned of the dangers of "cultural astygmatism" when confronted with new technological innovations.[2] In

Innis' perspective, the immediate effect of any new technological medium, from the fur trade and the cod fisheries to television and computer technology — is to induce in its participants an overpowering sense of astygmatism, to blindside those who are being processed through the technological sensorium on the silent impact of technological media on the "social heritage".

If Innis is correct in noting that "cultural astygmatism" is the silent, social context for the mis-reception of new technological media; if Marshall McLuhan is right when he warns us of the very real dangers associated with the "exteriorisation" of the mind in the technoscape; and if, in fact, computer technology, as the most advanced expression of the digital media of information society, imposes a silent language of technological discourse on Canadian society, history, ethics, and political economy, then "twenty-five of Canada's finest imaginations in literature, art and broadcasting" may *not* have just surrendered the "traditional tools of their trade". In suffering "cultural astygmatism" on the real effects of computer technology, they may also be well on their way to surrendering their *literature* (for the dead storage systems of information society), their *history* (the computer has no memory, if by memory is meant a sense of aesthetic judgment and historical remembrance), their *time* (computer technology is a "space-binding" technology which works to privilege the spatial sense, and to nullify the lived, and thus real, time of local culture), their *minds* (McLuhan's grisly vision of the "exteriorisation" of the mind as a servomechanism of electronic, and then digital, media), and even their *country* (communications media as the spreading outwards of empire and technology).

The Canadian Paradigm

This sense of cultural astygmatism on the question of the social and cultural impact of technology is particularly unfortunate because as the various contributions to this special thematic issue on *Mediascape* demonstrate, there exists in Canadian theoretical reflection an intellectually compelling, intensely original, and internally divergent discourse on technology. Indeed, three key theses on the Canadian discourse on technology are put in play by this volume:

1. An *ideological* thesis: Technological nationalism is Canada's dominant ideology.

2. An *ontological* thesis: The Canadian discourse on technology consists of a critical debate among three competing theoretical perspectives (*technological realism*, *technological humanism*, *technology as degeneration*), each

of which brings to the negotiation of the technoscape fundamentally clashing perspectives on the meaning, constitution, and ends of technological experience. This is just to say that three "root metaphors" structure the Canadian discourse on technology: technology as *freedom*; technology as *degeneration*; and technology as containing fully *ambivalent tendencies* towards domination and emancipation.

3. An *artistic* thesis: There exists in the Canadian artistic imagination generally, and in the visual art of four contemporary Manitoba artists specifically (Esther Warkhov, Don Proch, Tony Tascona, Ivan Eyre) a remarkably original and emancipatory vision of the limits and possibilities of technological experience.

Technological nationalism can be Canada's dominant political ideology because the language of technology is the ideolect of the liberal state. In Canada, technology, both in the form of the rhetoric of technological nationalism and in the actual development of technological media of communication, is the basic condition of possibility for the political formation of the Canadian state and its deepest justificatory ideology. This is, at least, Maurice Charland's pioneering thesis on "technological nationalism", and it finds its resonances in all of the articles in *Mediascape*, each of which demonstrates that if Canadian social and political theory is deeply structured as a prolonged and intellectually divergent meditation on technology this may be because Canada itself is that peculiarity of a New World society in which Nietzsche's "technique is us" takes on a special historical significance. For Canadians, technology is always *all threat* (Meisel's *Escaping Extinction* before the American media blast; O'Neill's Foucauldian re-reading of the Innis/McLuhan matrix into a grisly account of "bio-technology"; Atwood's "power is a fish-hook in the eye"); *all freedom* (Theall's eloquent account of McLuhan as a civic humanist par excellence; Cook's deconstruction of Havelock's modest proposal for taking our freedom where we can find it, namely in "dead storage systems"); and *all ambivalence* (Finlay's "Leiss" as a big oscillation line between Habermas's liberal pragmatism and Foucault's relational power; Wernick's "Innis" as a thinker who managed to undermine himself by understanding the New World mediascape so well that he actually subverted his Old World cultural legacy; and Morrow's "Rioux" as a thinker at the crossroads of pluralistic socialism in the twentieth-century).

If the Canadian mind can negotiate the postmodern condition so well, it may be because as the Montréal curator, Bruce Ferguson, has said: In Canada, the technological media of communication are actually viewed as "high works of art". For Canadians, technology can be *first* nature because it is both a necessary means of survival in the northern tier of the New World, and even an integral aspect of the perceptual field itself. Thus, as Don Proch, the Manitoba artist, once noted: technique (farm implements, fencing, and telephone poles) actually provides a third dimension — a "vertical gradient" — to the otherwise atopic and perfect horizonality of the prairies. In a similar way, Canadian *being* is a direct product of a big technological paradox: as a *social* community, Canada only exists because of the spatializing qualities of the communication grid (from canoes and snowshoes to the computerscape) which makes possible discourse across the "distant madnesses" of the wilderness; but, as a *political* community, Canada's existence is undermined by the confluence of power and media — what Marike Finlay calls "powermatics" — which is the deepest language today of the perfectly cynical, but perfectly relational, world of mediascape. Thus, the Canadian fate in the '80s: *all neon brains, techno-bodies and electric egos as we are processed through the mediascape; and all artistic imagination as we try, and desperately so, to "create" our way out of the deeply deprived and seductively nihilistic culture of postmodern technology.*

In the same way that Harold Innis once cautioned that "what you don't know *will* hurt you", Canadians cannot afford *not* to understand technology, both in terms of the "intimations of deprival" which are impressed upon us now as a negative absence in the midst of the spreading outwards of the will to the technical mastery of social and non-social nature, and in terms of the creative and emancipatory possibilities associated with ultramodernism and quantum science. The Canadian discourse on technology is too *Old World* in its cultural sensitivity; and it is too *New World* in its understanding of the quantum condition ever to overlook the ambivalent legacy of technological society. If, in fact, it is the Canadian fate to live with the grim reality (after Thucydides) of "having consciousness of much but the ability to do nothing about it"; then it is also the Canadian circumstance to be in a privileged position to take the full measure of European skepticism and American hyper-pragmatism without surrendering either to fatalism or ecstasy. In the great historical course of things, it is not particularly heroic for a culture such as Canada's to content itself with the therapeutic tasks of lancing the boil in the European mind by *provoking* the crisis of skepticism; and of making the world safe *from* the worst distempers of the revenge-seeking American mind by letting a thousand new "internal checks" bloom and then throwing them one by one into the bonfire of the American

conflagration with the faint hope that one might catch on and serve as a break-wall before (our) disappearance into the scorched earth policies of the American dynamo. This is to admit, though, that while the American symbol might be the conquering *eagle* and while Europe might trace its founding mythology to the *wolf-pack* of Romulus and Remus, the great icon of Canadian national culture is the beaver.

As cultural mythologies go, the beaver would have to be ranked in a modest way. It has none of the magisterial qualities of the preying eagle, and compared to the myth of Romulus and Remus, wherein the figure of the wolf is central to the foundational myth of European culture, the beaver is like a mythological free-fall. There are, however, two qualities about the beaver which are noteworthy and which, taken together, might suggest the beaver as an apt model for a Canadian intellectual strategy. First, the beaver is quintessentially New World. In an intellectual scene in which "burnout" is the new code word for the prevailing *fin-de-siècle* mood (French intellectuals may talk about the "shock of the real" but *Vogue* magazine does them one better: it talks about the "shock of the stiff"); in which "exhaustion" is Michael Weinstein's apt term for the new piety of conservative liberalism (Rorty style) in the United States; in which the *stratégie fatale* is the valorized dead-end of New French Thought; the beaver (just like Canadian theory) is embarrassingly industrious and, even as we live in the grisly shadow of the year 2000, carries itself with a high serious mien. Like the last citizen of the kingdom of the Protestant Ethic, the beaver just keeps working. And why not? The beaver has a broader cultural strategy in mind: a strategy which is instantly set in motion by the slightest sound of running water anywhere, and which instinctively involves the building of dams, both to regulate the flow of the swift currents and to provide a safe habitation *within* the medium of running waters.

Now, refusing the European model of Romulus and Remus and turning away from the American icon of the soaring eagle, *Mediascape* operates under the more modest, but entirely appropriate, cultural sign of the beaver. Why? The mediascape is running water *in extremis* and, as such, represents both a danger and an opportunity. Left unchecked, it will flood the cultural terrain (and *us* with it). However, put a dam across it and the mediascape, just like so many other swift currents before it, may be regulated in its flow and its own energies transformed into something which enhances, rather than destroys, human culture. Damming up the mediascape like cultural beavers '80s style, that's the agenda of this 10th anniversary volume.

This is just to say that it may be part of the Canadian primal to understand, almost instinctively, the *formalistic* and *mirrored-reversals* of the mediascape. After all, Canadians have always lived inside-out in the real mediascape: weather. When Canadians go outside, they actually go inside

(the winter weather as refrigerator); and when they go inside (their homes), they are really going what is outside (for most North Americans). If the Spanish philosopher, Miguel de Unamuno, was correct when he noted that "I am I in the human circumstance and the human circumstance is I", then by climatic circumstance alone, Canadians live inside-out, and thus are almost natural students of the semiological reversals of the simulacrum.

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BIO-TECHNOLOGY EMPIRE, COMMUNICATIONS AND BIO-POWER

John O'Neill

I want to argue that the possibilities of modern bio-technology place us upon a frontier equivalent to that upon which Vico's first men found themselves.[1] Today, we are called upon to rethink the human body. But, as I see it, this involves more than an exercise in the new biology.[2] Rather, in rethinking the body we simultaneously rethink the *body-politic*. This is because the new biology raises the threat of a *biocracy*. It thereby requires us to rethink our attachment to humanism and democracy. In order to show the urgency of the bio-political issues on the new frontier of life, I think it is worthwhile to review the concepts of empire and communication in order to show how far the inscriptions of power recast man's sensory and cognitive experience. To do so, we may turn to Harold Innis inasmuch as he considered empire to be "an indication of the efficiency of communication."[3] That is to say, he thought empire and communication to be inextricable valorizations of power. Moving from Innis to McLuhan, we can see how it is that the inscription of power first creates a *socio-text*, so to speak, a network or tissue of power whose external manifestation is empire. At the same time, empire organizes the *sensus communis*, shifting the ratios of experience and sensibility, to rewrite the socio-text into *bio-text*. We hope to clarify these notions through an historical sketch, or a genealogy, whose usefulness lies only in its contribution to connecting the sciences of power and life.

I. Bio-Power: The Bias of Communication

Innis and McLuhan inspire us to consider all political history to be inseparable from the history of bio-communication systems. Their work

subverts the dualism in idealist and materialist historiography because they never consider human history as anything else than an *embodied history* inscribed upon the *communis sensus*. History is human history or *bio-textual* because it alters our sensory and cognitive ratios but always in concert with the history of our land, its rivers and forests, its fish, fur and minerals.[4] It is the material history of these things that underwrites, so to speak, our mental and sensory histories told in our chronicles, monuments and laws. None of this is caught in the reduction of communication to the techniques of information transfer. Thus in a later time, Innis and McLuhan re-echo Vico's claim in the *New Science* that men first thought the world with their bodies and only later did their sensory mind yield to the scriptural mind with which we have fashioned the conceits of rationalism:

> The human mind is naturally inclined by the senses to see itself extremely in the body, and only with great difficulty does it come to understand itself by means of reflection. This axiom gives us the universal principle of etymology in all languages: words are carried over from bodies and from the properties of bodies to signify the institutions of mind and spirit.[5]

In the light of Vico's axiom, it is necessary to argue that the ground of universal science is the world's body — upon which we inscribe our local logics and ontologies — and that *the world's body is the ecological setting of all our sub-rationalities*. We thereby ground the rational sciences in man's first poetic logic, in his poetic history and poetic economy. We do so, not to pit human reason against itself, but rather to fund the rational sciences in the memory of their first anthropogenesis.[6] Thus, as Durkheim and Mauss recall for us, all later logic is grounded in the act whereby the first men thought the order of things with their familied bodies, creating the world's first severe poem:

> The first logical categories were social categories: the first classes were classes of men, into which things were integrated. It is because men were grouped, and thought of themselves in the form of groups, that in their ideas they grasped other things, and in the beginning the two modes of grouping were merged to the point of being indistinct. Moieties were the first genera, clans the first species. Things were thought to be integral parts of society, and it was their place in society which determined their place in nature.[7]

The first men thought society and nature with their bodies. Thus the first human world was a giant body whose divisions yielded the great divisions

of the universe, of society and nature. These first imaginative universals generated an embodied logic of division and replication from which later rationalized modes of categorization could be developed. Thus the myths of the first men, so far from being poor science, are as Levi-Strauss[8] has also argued, the indispensable origin of human order and commonwealth without which rational humanism and scientism are impossible conceits:

> It is noteworthy that in all languages the greater part of the expressions relating to inanimate things are formed by metaphor from the human body and its parts and from the human senses and passions. Thus, head for top or beginning; the brow and shoulders of a hill; the eyes of needles and of potatoes; mouth for any opening; the lip of a cup of pitcher ... All of which is a consequence of our axiom that man in his ignorance makes himself the rule of the universe, for in the examples cited he has made of himself an entire world. So that, a rational metaphysics teaches that man becomes all things by understanding them (*homo intelligendo fit omnia*), this imaginative metaphysics shows that man becomes all things by not understanding them (*homo non intelligendo fit omnia*); and perhaps the latter proposition is truer than the former, for when man understands he extends his mind and takes in the things, but when he does not understand he makes the things out of himself and becomes them by transforming himself into them.[9]

Let us recall Harold Innis rethinking the nature of empire and communication by rethinking its development in colonial Canada and from this margin deconstructing the monumental histories of the world's great empires. Just as he saw the fate of Canada pivoting upon its rival North/South, East/West axes to be a function of the changing role of the great staples of fish, fur, timber and wheat, so he read the history of the great empires as similarly pivoted upon the staples of communication on papyrus, clay and stone, in print, books, newspapers and radio. What is important in Innis' conception of the material history of power is that he never lost sight of the communicative struggle over monopolies of knowledge, or of the importance of regional resistance to communication empires that weaken democracy:

> Concentration on a medium of communication implies a bias in the cultural development of the civilization concerned either towards an emphasis on space and political organization or towards an emphasis on time and religious organization. ... The Byzantine empire emerged from a fusion of a bias incidental to papyrus in

> relation to political organization and of parchment in relation to ecclesiastical organization. The dominance of parchment in the West gave a bias towards ecclesiastical organization which led to the introduction of paper with its bias toward political organization. With printing, paper facilitated an effective development of the venaculars and gave expression to their vitality in the growth of nationalism. The adaptability of the alphabet to large-scale machine industry became the basis of literacy, advertising, and trade. The book as a specialized product of printing and, in turn, the newspaper strengthened the position of language as a basis of nationalism. In the United States the dominance of the newspaper led to large-scale development of monopolies of communication in terms of space and implied a neglect of problems of time ... The bias of paper towards an emphasis on space and its monopolies of knowledge has been checked by the development of a new medium, the radio ... The ability to develop a system of government in which the bias of communication can be checked and an appraisal of the significance of space and time can be reached remains a problem of empire and of the Western world.[10]

As we shall see later, Innis' sense of the threat of future monopolizations of communicative power requires that we not lose sight of this issue once power shifts into the new site of biotechnology and its computerized synthesis of space and time, establishing empire over life and nature ever more deeply.

Although McLuhan enables us to grasp an intervening stage in this development, his celebration of the electronic synthesis tends to dissipate the energy needed to reconceptualize modern bio-power. If in Vico foresight is farsight, then in McLuhan vision is re-Joyced into tele-vision. By way of Gutenberg, we are returned to our senses: the eye that left its body is restored to its center, a flickering omphalos. Thus, in a repetition of ancient symbolism, the modern house becoming a machine-within-a-machine whose aerial (*universalis columna quasi sustinens omnia*) hooks it into the universe, floating our home in a Milky Way of waxes, deodorants, famines, war and inanity. Vico's severe poem of the world's body is now inverted — Narcissus like — by a world technology that communicates nothing but ourselves desiring ourselves:

> To behold, use or perceive any extension of ourselves in technological form is necessarily to embrace it. To listen to radio or to read the printed page is to accept these extensions of ourselves into our personal system and to undergo the "closure" or displacement of

> perception that follows automatically. It is this continuous embrace of our own technology in daily use that puts us in the Narcissus role of subliminal awareness and numbness in relation to these images of ourselves. By continuously embracing technologies, we relate ourselves to them as servo-mechanisms. That is why we must, to use them at all, serve these objects, these extensions of ourselves, as gods or minor religions ...[11]

In the modern world our vocabularies of public and private space and the arrangements whereby we constitute individual and collective identities are increasingly disembedded from literacy. Our private senses, like our nationhood, have lost their closure. Indeed, if we follow McLuhan, literacy appears only to have been a switching point in the circuitry of retribalization:

> That the abstracting or opening of closed societies is the work of the phonetic alphabet, and not of any other form of writing or technology, is one theme of *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. On the other hand, that closed societies are the product of speech, drum and ear technologies, brings us at the opening of the electronic age to the sealing of the entire human family into a single global tribe. And this electronic revolution is only less confusing for men of the open societies than the revolution of phonetic literacy which stripped and streamlined the old tribal or closed societies.[12]

There is, however, an extraordinary falling off between the prophetic release of *The Gutenberg Galaxy* — which McLuhan considered a footnote[13] to Innis's concerns with the politics of communication — and his own uncritical acceptance of what we might call the McLuhanberg Galaxy. At first sight, we seem to be offered a more profound analysis of the structures of experience required to filter political power and its communicative media. In a critical comment introducing Innis's *The Bias of Communication*, McLuhan calls for the interiorization of Innis's theory of staples which would in effect reveal how the modern state is able to implant the circuitry of power into our very nervous system:

> What Innis has failed to do ... is to make a structural analysis of the modalities of the visual and the audible. He is merely assuming that an extension of information in space has a centralizing power regardless of the human faculty that is amplified and extended. ... Visual technology creates a centre-margin pattern of organization whether by literacy or by industry and a price system. But electric technology is instant and omnipresent and creates multiple centres-

> without-margins. Visual technology whether by literacy or by industry creates nations as spatially uniform and homogeneous and connected. But electric technology creates not the nation but the tribe — not the superficial association of equals but the cohesive depth of the totally involved kinship groups. Visual technologies, whether based on papyrus or paper, foster fragmentation and specialism, armies and empires. Electric technology favours not the fragmentary but the integral, not the mechanical but the organic. It had not occurred to Innis that electricity is in effect an extension of the nervous system as a kind of global membrane.[14]

Rather than pursue the *bio-political* issues in the bias of communication, McLuhan settled for a surrealist celebration of its commercial narcosis, scoring off realists at the expense of moralists. He thereby failed to see in television a political and commercial pace-maker implanted in *the body of desire* — not to release it — but to commit it ever more deeply to the logocentric controls of corporate and global capitalism. In this way, McLuhan abandoned the insights he once had from reading newspapers and listening to the radio, namely, that the mechanical bride marries us to the corporate economy and to its global extravaganzas. In such a marriage our political consciousness is reduced to a private and household amusement, inextricable from the rest of the show-and-tell that inundates us in the name of news and information.[15] In short, we lose sight of the problem of *the monopoly of knowledge*, as Innis called it, which is built into the administration of the media as instruments of bio-power.

II. THE BIO-TEXT: The Communicative Tissue of Power

I now want to show how, despite certain reservations, I nevertheless see McLuhan's thought relevant to the new contexts of biotechnology and its consequences for the body politic. To do so, I want to introduce the notion of the *bio-text*, i.e., the body as a communicative tissue upon which social power is inscribed, at first externally (*the socio-text*) and now perhaps from the body's very insides, if we extrapolate the possibilities of genetic editing. If this argument is at all persuasive, then we have underlined a distinctive contribution in Canadian social and political thought.

To the civilized mind, it is a mark of savagery that its people produce very little else than themselves. They do not much alter their natural environment and, as it seems to us, are thereby committed to a minimal existence. We think it is a mark of civilization when the individual is severely marked off from the state and the economy and even from his/her family. In this scheme of things, the individual is characterized by his/her power to negoti-

ate exchanges, to accumulate rights and properties that exercise and consolidate a separate identity. Thus the civilized individual is horrified by the nakedness of the savage man/woman because their condition reveals that they have not acquired the power to separate the public and private realms. The naked savage is a social body, a *socio-text*. Indeed, savage societies appear to be distinct from civilized societies precisely because they write themselves, inscribe or incise themselves upon the flesh of the savage — scarifying, cicatrizing, circumcising the body that civilized men and women withhold from society with the same determination as they guard their genitals. Civilized man is a phallocrat, his body is his own, exposed on its own terms, a charter of freedom. It is only in his prisons, mental hospitals and torture chambers that society still writes upon the flesh. As Kafka puts it:

> "... Whatever commandment the prisoner has disobeyed is written upon his body by the Harrow. This prisoner, for instance" — the office indicated the man — "will have written on his body: HONOR THY SUPERIORS!" ... Many questions were troubling the explorer, but at the sight of the prisoner he asked only: "Does he know his sentence?" "No," said the officer, eager to go on with his exposition, but the explorer interrupted him: "He doesn't know the sentence that has been passed on him?" "No," said the officer again, pausing as if to let the explorer elaborate his question, and then said: "There would be no point in telling him. He'll learn it on his body."[16]

McLuhan ignored the *disciplinary or punitive codes* that are the message in the media. However, once we do invoke this perspective, we can see that *all technology is bio-technology*. In other words, we have to begin (however briefly as in this essay) to analyze the various historical strategies whereby the living bond between the individual and society is ritualized (ritual is the origin of technology and the *socio-text*) and thereafter continuously reproduced in historically variable secular technologies of bio-power. Of course, the first technology was what Rifkin nicely calls "pyrotechnology" and this can be set off from the new "biotechnology" within which Rifkin again differentiates three further stages, i.e., genetic engineering, organism designing, and the engineering of entire ecosystems.[17] We shall turn to these specific stages, or rather the first two, in our later analysis of the political economy of the new *bio-prosthetics*. For the moment, what it is important to see is that in every case man's power over nature — or his power over life — is a power over himself (as *bio-text*) inscribed through the state and the economy, and its laws and sciences (*socio-text*). As I see

it, then, all of these disciplinary strategies of power may be thought of as bio-technologies. This move is intended as a deconstructive strategy — a deliberate "misreading," if you will — whose aim is to bring bio-technology as a series of specific biological and medical engineering practices within the realm of the bio-political. Thus we are concerned with how it is that in modern society we are devising a technology for rewriting the genetic code much as savage societies once rewrote the flesh — but in a different key, played first upon the body of desire:

> For capitalism is the stage in which all the excitations, all the pleasures and pains produced on the surface of life are inscribed, recorded, fixed, coded on the transcendent body of capital. Every pain costs something, every girl at the bar, every day off, every hangover, every pregnancy; and every pleasure is worth something. The abstract and universal body of capital fixes and codes every excitation. They are no longer, as in the bush, inscribed on the bare surface of the earth. Each subjective moment takes place as a momentary and singular pleasure and pain recorded on the vast body of capital circulating its inner fluxes, ... in short, there is ... a going beyond the primary process libido to the organization man. The dissolute, disintegrated savage condition, with the perverse and monstrous extension of an erotogenic surface, pursuing its surface affects, over a closed and inert, sterile body without organs, one with the earth itself — this condition is overcome, by the emergence of, the dominion of, the natural and the functional. The same body, the working body, free, sovereign, poised, whose proportion, equilibrium and ease are such that it dominates the landscape and commands itself at each moment. Mercury, Juno, Olympic ideal.[18]

The bio-technological history of the modern body is only now emerging. It involves a simultaneous rewriting of the history of the human sciences. This is difficult to understand because social scientists are unaccustomed to dealing with *the embodied subject* whose life is at stake in their enterprise.[19] We are, of course, speaking of the human discursive productions varying from poetry to medicine, from psychoanalysis to penology, from commercial jingles to the most sacred rites of passage. Here we must focus on the historical convergence of medical discourse and the vocabularies of state and economic power which operate on the new frontier of bio-technology. Our interest, as I have said earlier, is to deconstruct our preconceptions of political economy and of the physical body ruled hitherto either by force or by the seductions of private desires into a public economy. On the former view, the body is recalcitrant to political and socio-economic discipline. The

constraints of society and the state, so long as they can only be enforced externally, require terrible impositions of power and discipline to make an example of the poor wretch on whose body such pain is inflicted as will inscribe in the mind of the public the law's sovereign intent. A decisive shift occurs in the history of power once the state finds a medium of communication that enables it to exploit the connection between minds and bodies more directly than in its early theatre of cruelty. This shift occurs, as Foucault has argued, when the modern state discovers that the will to knowledge can be conscripted to rewrite the *socio-text* into the communicative tissues of life, extending bio-power to every vital function of individual and collective life:

> To analyse the political investment of the body and *the microphysics of power* presupposes, therefore, that one abandons — where power is concerned — the violence-ideology opposition, the metaphor of property, the model of the contract or conquest ... one might imagine a political 'anatomy' ... One would be concerned with the '*body politic*,' as a set of material elements and techniques that serve as weapons, relays, *communication routes and supports for the power and knowledge relations that invest human bodies and subjugate them by turning them into objects of knowledge*.[20]

Here, then, we find a history from Innis, through McLuhan to Foucault, and work of our own, describing an *archaeology of power*, moving from the state's territorial inscription (the *socio-text*), with its theatre of cruelty, to the state's discovery of the discursive production of human knowledge, desire, intelligence, health, sexuality and sanity as a communicative network of bio-power inscribed within the body, binding every body into a new Leviathan, or *bio-text*. Obviously, this history cannot be told in all of its detail by any single historian or social scientist. We are engaged here in an exercise of conceptual analysis and contrast in order to mark an historical divide. Thus the modern state in its therapeutic aspect is now concerned to legislate the origins and ends of life, to contracept and to abort, to marry, separate and divorce, to declare sane and insane, to incarcerate and to terminate life with more intensive strategies than feudal and absolute monarchies could muster. Of course, modern states also exercise power in foreign affairs, in wars and as a major component of the economy. These strategies of power are not always congruent. In liberal democracies state power simultaneously defends and undermines the mental and bodily integrity of its subjects.[21] At its lowest points, the state now practices forms of torture equal to the horror of Kafka's penal colony. In its seemingly benign form, the modern state like the corporate economy seeks to control

minds, to cajole necessary behavior into desire rather than to command it with the ultimate sanction of bio-force. In practice, the state and the economy move between these two extremes. Increasingly, however, the therapeutic state seduces us into conformity through our desire for health, education, and employment — not to mention happiness, at least as an American aspiration.[22] This is what I have in mind when I say all of our technologies are bio-technologies and that in turn they are all strategies of bio-power.

We wish, of course, to avoid genetic damage, and we may wish to counteract infertility or dangerous births. Our motives in this are at first humane. Yet our technologies for delivering our humanity in this respect may be inhumane. Indeed, there is already enormous concern of this score and considerable legislative activity that we cannot possibly recount here.[23] Our focus must be on how the basic metaphors of communications serve to extend *biocracy*. I do not want to exaggerate the implications of biogenetics for our political lives. Nevertheless, we should be aware that a double claim is entered in the debate on genetic engineering.[24] The first is, of course, the *technological a priori*, i.e., "if it can be done, it must be done." There is, however, a rider in the second claim which brings it much closer to the first, namely that, "in science, of course, what can't be done now, may well be possible *later*." Thus the only solid objection to the technological *a priori* is, "even if it can be done, it *shouldn't* be." Here, however, the life of science, and not only of the life-sciences, is likely to be invoked as the highest conception we have of ourselves. This view is likely to prevail, I think, because we now conceive of life itself as the very elemental structure of communication (the DNA code) into which all other discursive codes can be channeled in order to amplify the expression of life.[25]

Bio-technology must presently be seen in terms of two prosthetic strategies, one now largely available, and the other increasingly possible:

(1) *spare part prosthetics*
(2) *genetic prosthetics*

We might think of these as two strategies for rewriting the biotext from spare-part man to self-made man.

> In the mechanist vision, each organ is still only a partial and differentiated prosthesis: a "traditional" simulation. In the bio-cybernetic view it is the smallest undifferentiated element, it is each tiny cell that becomes an embryonic prosthesis of the body. It is the formula inscribed in each tiny cell that becomes the true modern prosthesis of all bodies. For if the prosthesis is ordinarily an artifact which supplants a failing organ, or the instrumental extension of a body, then the DNA molecule, which contains all the relevant

> information belonging to a living creature, is the prosthesis par excellence since it is going to permit the indefinite prolongation of this living being by himself — he being nothing more than the indefinite series of his cybernetic vicissitudes.[26]

The two strategies, although seemingly on the same bio-medical frontier, are in fact as far apart as early and late capitalism. That is to say, the economy of spare part prosthetics involves us in a combination of medical craft and commercial banking and distribution procedures. Such systems may be entrepreneurially or state managed and both may draw upon voluntary donors. As Titmuss has shown in the case of blood supply.[27] there are a number of problems with quality and continuity in the supply of spare-part prosthetics. These problems could be circumvented in a number of cases, if it were possible to anticipate genetic faults and to correct them at the DNA level. Indeed, to the extent that genetic engineering is possible, we might than implant the basic market rationality of efficiency and choice at the DNA level. That is to say, we could contemplate parental choice of biologically perfect embryos. A mark of such perfection, from the point of view of the parent, might consist of the embryonic replication (cloning) of themselves. If that were indeed a possibility, then biotechnology would finally deliver the myth of Narcissus from its mirror. Rather, as I see it, it would defamilize the body and the imagination of future individuals making them the creature of the dominant ethos in either *the market or the state as matrix*. Under such conditions the institution of life, and not only its bio-constitution would be radically altered. Our religious and political institutions, the Bible and Parliament, will cease to be our originary institutions. In the laboratory and the clinic life no longer has any history. Birth will become a consumer fiction like Mother's Day, and thereafter our hitherto embodied and familied histories will float in a commercial narcosis monopolized by an entrepreneurial and a statist biocracy, realizing the nightmare of 1984.

Genetic engineering is enchanting therefore because it re-animates *the myth of prosthetic man*.[28] It is all the more engaging since it appears that the bio-text for this refurbished myth is encoded in the basic material of life. Even though he dismisses much of the science fiction surrounding genetic engineering, it is nevertheless interesting to see how Medawar's formulation of the historical and demographic implications of bio-technology echoes the utopian dream of the administrative state with which we have flirted ever since Plato first devised the *Republic*:

> At the root of all genetic engineering lies ... the greatest scientific discovery of the twentieth century: that the chemical make-up of the

> compound deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) — and in particular the order in which the four different nucleotides out of which it is assembled lie along the backbone of the molecule — encodes genetic information and is the material vehicle of the instructions by which one generation of organisms governs the development of the next. If the DNA message is altered, the effects of doing so are, in their context and of their kind, as far reaching as the effects would be of altering the wording of congressional or parliamentary legislation or the wording of telegrams conveying diplomatic exchanges between nations.[29]

Although Medawar dismisses the wildest versions of biocracy, it is significant that he, Rifkin, and Leach, whom I have quoted earlier, all consider that we are on the frontier of a potential constitutional change. For the matter is that, whether we consider our fundamental charter to lie in the Bible or in Parliament, we now envisage it being rewritten. We do so, however, with the worry that the constitutional changes involve a simultaneous rewriting of the body politic and of the politics of the body — but from an *extra-political site.*

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Notes

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McLUHAN, TELEMATICS AND THE TORONTO SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION

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In order to understand Marshall McLuhan and the force behind the Toronto school of communication, culture and technology, it is only necessary to reflect on the book which McLuhan always said he wanted to write and never did —*The Road to Finnegans Wake*— for more of his vision of an electronic Utopia emanated from the esthetics of post-symbolism, Dadaism and Surrealism and from a pansemiological hermeneutics of post-Viconian hermeticism than from a preoccupation with popular culture and the products of the media.

Therefore, I would like to begin by reflecting on the work of the art historian, Siegfried Giedion, on some modern artists and poets and on the writer most quoted by McLuhan, James Joyce. To commence, *Mechanization Takes Command*, the title of Siegfried Giedion's anonymous history of cultural objects, provided one of those descriptive tags of the early part of our century, which in itself is a key insight. In the Twentieth Century the "machine" became universal in its domination of the world's everyday activities. Naturally, it also became a major preoccupation of artists and poets. Whether adulatory, like Futurist paeans of praise, or satiric like Dadaism, or reflective like Cubism and Constructivism, mechanization invaded drama, the visual arts and poetry. It also invaded the arts of literature and music, architecture and the dance, leading ultimately to our uneasy contemporary alliances between art and technology.

It is in this context that during the composition of *Finnegans Wake*, James Joyce described himself to Harriet Shaw Weaver as one of the world's greatest engineers, if not the greatest, in addition, (of course, in his mind) to being a great musician, a great philosopher and a host of other things. While the remark may have a ring of Celtic bravado, its announcement was

accompanied by a stricture concerning Joyce's seriousness about what he was doing and by a description of how he was in the process of "designing a wheel and squaring the circle."

Comparing the artist and the engineer was a familiar theme for Joyce and his contemporaries. Growing up during a thirty year period which Péguy described as having seen more change than the previous 3000 years, their sensibilities were acutely tuned to tools, instruments, mechanisms and human invention. Paul Valéry, participating in the resurrection and revaluation of Leonardo's image, argued that the method of the engineer and that of the poet were the same, thus reasserting a Renaissance theme where the poet was frequently compared with *captains strategematique* and cunning artificers and engineers, since they all shared the property of being illuminated with the brightest irradiations of knowledge and of the *veritie* and due proportion of things.

Consider for a moment the particular historical context in which McLuhan was born. Like Joyce, he was born into a marginal culture — the Dominion of Canada; marginal to the United States as well as to Canada's colonial roots in Great Britain and France. Within the thirty years or so before McLuhan's birth, most of the major inventions which would affect so profoundly the transformation of the first half of the century were coming to maturity — Edison's and Tesla's discoveries of electricity for power and lighting; Lumiere's cinema; Curie's discoveries of radium; Bell's telephone; Marconi's wireless; and the Wright brothers' airplane. Einstein had articulated his theory of relativity and Ford had completed the process of mechanization taking command with the mass production of automobiles.

It is not surprising, therefore, that McLuhan's sensibility was dominated by a sense of mechanics which reflected the sense of mechanics in the intellectual world stretching from Freud's dream world to Mallarmé's sense of the book as a literary machine, which Joyce developed both in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. McLuhan shared the sensibility of his fellow Canadian Malcolm Lowry, who provided a remarkable explanation of the newly emerging work of art. Lowry says of the modern work of art:

> It can be regarded as a kind of symphony, or in another way a kind of opera — or even a horse opera. It is hot music, a poem, a song, a tragedy, a comedy, a farce and so forth. It is superficial, profound, entertaining and boring, according to taste. It is a prophecy, a political warning, a cryptogram, a preposterous movie, and a writing on the wall. It can even be regarded as a sort of machine: it works too, believe me, as I have found out.

Marshall McLuhan initially began his university studies as an engineering

student and never lost afterwards a fascination and a fear for the mechanical when he turned to the world of literature. Together with the critical writings of Paul Valéry, James Joyce's work confirmed for McLuhan the validity of the interest he had developed in the artist as a super-engineer and in the cultural critic as the quality control analyst. Through McLuhan's writings, the insight of avant-garde artists into the modalities of mechanization and electric power taking command of man's culture were turned directly toward the problem of the effect of the cultural artifact on the human sensorium. Media as the visible post-mechanical, electric mode for achieving esthetic effects, while simultaneously being manipulated by man and being a manipulator of men, early attracted McLuhan's attention. What he later called media massage in one of his more complex puns — "the Medium is the Massage" — had the overall effect of elevating man's sensory involvement, hence creating a kind of synesthetic tactility. The force behind the massage, though, flowed from mechanics metamorphosed into electricity, which itself was about to be further transformed by the silicon-chip.

Engineering implies technique, just as massage implies technique and just as the art of rhetoric or the art of poetic implies technique in persuading and making sense. McLuhan, seeing "know-how" as the shared wisdom of artist and engineer, viewed technique as a creative force which had made man's culture rather than one side of that schism between creation and know-how, which was a key presumption and presupposition of the romantic spirit.

The basic thrust of the so-called Toronto school of communication rises from McLuhan's inter-relation of his classical knowledge of the history of poetics, grammar and rhetoric with its emphasis on technique as the basis of artistic creation and of his contemporary knowledge of avant-garde art and literature and its sense of the poetic work as the product of engineering, a literary machine, joining this sense of the classic and the avant-garde with his interpretations of popular culture and rapid changes of the world of communication media, reflecting the dominance of mechanical and electronic power and by implication, their social and economic concomitants in the shaping of the contemporary sensibility. This led to a major reassessment of the relocation of the value of education in an emerging telematic society and a concomitant reassessment of a need for a new role for the humanities. It involved the total rejection of the primacy of high culture; a new sense of the interpretation of the cultural artifact and object within an integrated sensory-intellectual language and a new interdisciplinarity turning towards worldliness away from the specialized disciplines of academia.

A particular type of cultural study arose in the Toronto group which had roots in the arts, in classical thought, in the social sciences and in poetics. One early precursor of the Toronto school was the classicist, Eric Havelock,

who shared with McLuhan an interest in the continuity of techniques. In *The Crucifixion of Intellectual Man* Havelock explored the relation of the myth of the Promethean discovery of fire to the emergence of arts and science as a revolution of intellectual man. In *The Preface to Plato* he discussed the effect of writing as a technique on the oral culture of Plato. The real complement and goad to McLuhan, however, was the historian of political economy, Harold Adams Innis, who turned his attention from the transportation routes by which the fur trade and the railroad were developed in Canada and transformed Canada into an empire to the trade routes of the mind by which knowledge and information were transmitted, preserved and controlled. Innis provided a socio-cultural and material basis for McLuhan's conviction that technique had important ramifications for transforming man's sensibility.

The fact that Harold Innis, even though he died before living long enough to genuinely comprehend the nature of the cybernetic revolution, anticipated the major redistribution of power and control implicit in the ever-accelerating revolutions of transmission and processing of knowledge is in itself remarkable. He extrapolated from the experience of earlier communication revolutions to the ongoing effects on cultural, political, social and economic life which would be achieved by still further changes in these relationships. Without developing in detail Innis' many contributions to McLuhan's thought, including his particular type of writing history, Innis' insight about media transformations alone provided McLuhan with the reassurance necessary to perpetrate the academic heresies of *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding Media* in which he married Giedion's "anonymous history" of cultural objects by which "mechanization takes command" to various of the esthetic visions of modernism. Thus, the basis was laid in the Toronto school for developing a concept of an ecology of sense which could provide the only means of comprehending fully the potential humanizing dimension of the marriage of cybernetics and telecommunications that is shaping our new telematic age.

One of McLuhan's last published articles, in the *Journal of Communications*, explored the theme of the shifting awareness by "Ma Bell" (the International Telephone and Telegraph conglomerate) that their business was to create a total environment, not merely to deliver oral messages. According to McLuhan the ever-accelerating information technology transformed the sense of the telephone as a simple instrument into a conception of the telephone as provider of a new space. McLuhan even goes on to argue that the major social effect of the telephone is to remove the identity of the caller. The caller, therefore, becomes truly disincarnate and, in a psychic sense, uncontrollable. Losing touch with geographic location and social function, he is according to McLuhan, a potential "phone polter-

geist," which in its worst manifestations produces the obscene phone call. It is natural, then, in such a world where the phone transforms our relation to our world, to adapt ourselves to the still greater abstractions of the information revolution and to incorporate its drive towards hybridization of media, interaction with equipment and decentralization of activity. But McLuhan's reasons for believing this to be true, as he does, are quite different from those technologists who speak of computer networks and resulting decentralization. McLuhan's interest is in the transformed sensibility which will permit — in fact, accept — the new modes of implied social relation. For him the corporate battle between IBM and the phone company is not an Innisian conflict of power and control (though he assumes that as a background to his analysis), it is a race to see who first makes the imaginative leap to realize the full extent of the potential transformation of the human sensibility and hence the willingness of human's cultivated by the phone network and a new sense of acoustic space to accept, in fact, need such changes.

In *The Medium is the Rear View Mirror*, I described McLuhan as a poet-manqué, as a creator of a new form — the *essais concrète* — marked by such productions as *The Medium is the Massage* and *Counterblast*, works evolved in the tradition of Mallarmé, of Dadaist collage and of Wyndham Lewis' experimentation with headline and display print forms. Both of these factors suggest that McLuhan himself is a mixed medium poet and essayist (and perhaps, occasionally, even a mixed-up medium). He uses esthetic form as a mode of critique and interpretation in order to focus attention on the intellectual-sensorial qualities of the network of cultural artifacts. Let's remember McLuhan's fascination with Eliot's description of the effect of the typewriter on the writings of poets. From quill pen to word processor represents a route of change — man's sensibility is changing through such changes, just as surely as Siegfried Giedion pointed out in a more serious and deep way that it was being changed by the mechanized abbatoir or slaughterhouse, which as the early McLuhan himself pointed out in *The Mechanical Bride*, led directly to the horrors of concentration camps concealed in the insensitivity of a 1930's advertisement for coffins:

> There's deep consolation, serene through shower or heavy rain for those who know that the casket of a dear one is protected against water in the ground by a metal grave vault.

Of this ad, McLuhan himself says, "I cried until they told me it was watertight." But behind the wit is the critique of a newly emerging kind of sensibility.

McLuhan who became an uncritical, positivist-oriented optimist when he

became a theorist, never rejected his early fear of the new technologies. He merely developed an expanded vision where the total impact of the whole change through mechanical and electric to electronic ultimately could provide the possibility of social redemption, although as he explained in a *Playboy* interview, he personally disliked and feared the intervening stages of change. To return to Eliot and the typewriter, for McLuhan, the image of the word processor and the techniques it makes readily available to the individual as a maker of texts, would represent a realization of the tactile and the acoustic world in the process of what heretofore was the mechanical side of composition. Texts could become simultaneously available to the writer. Whether McLuhan, if he had done the analysis, would bother to have thought about the greater modes of precision and exactitude which could be achieved by composing on a word processor, one does not know. (That is, for example, the possible effects of greater condensation and greater precision in printed messages.) But that he would have noted and responded to the immediacy of production and particularly to production that could be realized on a screen alone without the interaction of print, or in the not too distant future by a voice synthesizer, would have confirmed his vision of the "reamalgamerging" (as Joyce would have said) of the senses in a new individualized, decentralized world of production and in a new sense of the surround of acoustic space.

Such vision, is a poetic mode. It is allusive, image-ridden, ambivalent, invites interminable interpretation and presents a kaleidoscopic perpetual refocusing of the object each time it is reconsidered. Nevertheless, it draws direct attention to the neural effects of social change and it simultaneously implies and sometimes achieves a realization that accompanying changes in individuals are creating a greater need and hence acceptance of such a world. As many of those who came to him from the perspective of the left have felt, McLuhan appears to be indifferent to sociology and to politics. While this may be true, it may also be that the saving grace of his allusive method is precisely to include the socio-political in spite of himself. In a more positive vein than I argued in my book *The Medium is the Rear View Mirror*, McLuhan could well have turned from *The Mechanical Bride*, because he did not know how to encompass at that early stage the complexities of the social, esthetic and neurocultural components of the texts which he felt had to be simultaneously held in perspective to meet the demands of his multidisciplinary program for a new humanism.

For McLuhan at that time the only way to realize this goal was through the practice of the artist. Interpreting the essay tradition inherited from Montaigne, Bacon and Pascal as essentially an artistic way of rendering "*la peinture de la pensée*," McLuhan conceived of a post-surrealistic essay technique à la Joyce as a way of developing a poetic critique of culture and technology. His foci became culture and technology in spite of his early

interest in communications, because like some semiologists he saw communications as the bridge between culture and technology. In a strange way, communications represented both the main problem and the immediate technological involvement of the present moment. At one end of the spectrum from Dewey and pragmatism, with its incipient semiological interpretive interests, the study of communications represented the route to community and social communion; while at the other end, with the emergence of cybernetics and Bateson's early realizations of the neurocultural and sociopsychiatric significance of cybernetics and the principles of information science, it represented the link of the sociocultural to the techno-economic realities of the newly emerging society. The two polarities encompass an essential ambivalence which ultimately makes McLuhan's themes important to critical scholars of the left, such as some of the *Telos* group or Murray Bookchin, while simultaneously his work can conceal an esthetics of fascism which is retrograde and dangerous — the thrust that developed his recommendations, even if meant poetically, as to how to dampen the heated up quality of the Vietnamese war by controlling the media mix through which it was delivered. Nevertheless, his basic thrust provided a deeper way of relating the problems of community, communion, and sensibility with the exploration of the possible development of the potentialities implicit in the forms of modern communication and technology. They produced the dilemma that we still confront the way that the simplistic dystopianism of George Orwell's 1984 confronts the seemingly naive tribalism of McLuhan's electronic Utopia which is apparently focussed on the growth of the new economic empires of Bell and IBM.

In the after-image of 1984, the world is neither the nightmare of Orwell nor McLuhan's dream of plenty, yet if Orwell's vision appears to be an extrapolation from the past, McLuhan's appears to be an attempt to use the Thomistic described art of natural prophecy (now honoured with the title of futurism) as a way of using the signs of history to construct a hypothetical (fictional) future. Our dilemma is that while both analyses may provide us with a moment of insight, neither set of perceptions provides an understanding of the actual historical reality which we face on the other side of this mythical past of 1984. What the perspective of the Toronto school does provide, however is the means by which we can begin to develop a new humanities combining the arts, social knowledge and the sciences necessary for understanding the current technological scene — the threshold of the telematic society with its concomitant challenges to equalization of social goals and to the realization of a knowledge base so infinitely powerful as to be beyond the reasonable control of any small, limited group — providing we can re-educate society's understanding of the new significance of common sense.

In an interview with *Playboy* magazine McLuhan described his stance,

like that of the artist or the sleuth, as antisocial. He always viewed himself as satirist, or wit. In fact, he even attributed the quality of wit to the historical writing of his Toronto colleague, Harold Innis (a feat which took some imagination). Wit is certainly a quality for demystifying the unconscious. Joyce's literary engineering produced a dream language out of the techniques of wit and metaphor. This strategy, however, links up with one of McLuhan's central conceptions, which he would attribute as a concept of key importance in our telematic society and its future manifestations — the concept of the *sensus communis* extracted from Aristotelean and scholastic philosophy and refined from the perspective of Shafesbury, Vico and others. The theme of the *sensus communis*, or common sense, underlies the way McLuhan joins his view of tactility, his conception of the interplay of the senses, his awareness of a new holism based on the bonding of sense and intellect with the themes of communication, social communism and community. This Aristotelean-scholastic concept of the *sensus communis* stresses the process of the mind which integrates the information provided by the various senses. Joined to the more recent conception of common sense as the basis for human communication and community, McLuhan imaginatively integrates the psychological with the social through the probing and exploratory revelations of wit and metaphor. In the 60's he could easily be linked by young enthusiasts with Marcuse and Marcuse's Schiller-derived emphasis on the play of the senses.

The doctrine of the commonsense is McLuhan's basis for a poetics and a hermeneutics. Paralleling the *sensus communis* in McLuhan's account of mental faculties was a conception of the *nous poetikos*, a faculty borrowed from neo-Platonism and scholasticism, which he mischievously conceived of as remaking the sense through a poetic activity from the presentations of common sense. It provided the basis for his matching and making of sense that he explained in *From Cliché to Archetype*. "One of the etymologies of "matching" is "making"", McLuhan tells us. "This polarity is inherent in consciousness as such. Certainly in the cliché-to-archetype process, if cognition is matching our sensory experience to the outer world, re-cognition is a repeat of that process." Wit and metaphor along with poetic interpretation is a special way of making sense out of a rapidly changing environment and of permitting it to continue to be a public world shared with a community. Its ambivalence provides its own self-criticism — a fact which makes all McLuhan's weaknesses so visible in his own work. Yet it is the only way for our instantaneous electric age, in which our human coexistence with our technological instruments creates a crisis, to realize McLuhan's visionary program:

> Our extended faculties and senses now constitute a single field of experience which demands that they become collectively conscious.

> Our technologies like our private senses, now demand an interplay and ratio that makes co-existence possible.

In *From Cliché to Archetype*, McLuhan restates this theme redeemed through the poetic making of sense:

> By way of resonance and repetition, "The soul is in a way all existing things." As the hand, with its extensions, probes and shapes the physical environment, so the soul or mind with its extensions of speech, probes, and orders and retrieves the man-made environment of artifacts and archetypes.
> A cliché is an act of consciousness: total consciousness is the sum of all the clicheés of all the media or technologies we probe with.

As Roland Barthes, whose works so often paralleled interests similar to McLuhan's realized, the cliché (or the myth), decontextualized and poetically interpreted, brought the context of everyday life to consciousness. This perception was shared by McLuhan's vision of a future marrying eros, ethos and apocalypse as a result of the evolution of electronic tribalism. McLuhan too easily can become a target for the conservative academy with its continuing emphases on specialization, positivism and empiricism, just as he also can too easily be a target for the left with his lack of consistent, reflective, critical analysis of society. Yet to perform such analyses without balancing them against his actual poetic method, is to miss the point that McLuhan followed Joyce in trying to evolve a new intellectual-emotional language of discourse to bring to consciousness the hidden depths of the social change wrought by the new society. Such a project involves implicit critique (often only partly conscious to the writer himself) and the very ambivalence of the poetic method makes it possible to see the contradictions of the world which McLuhan reflects. Therefore near misses in metaphoric insight, such as his potentially misleading concept of the "global village," can be as valuable as his many perceptive hits, such as his transformation of his own slogan the medium is the message into "the medium is the massage."

The telematic society has set humanity adrift in a world of intense abstraction. The potency of data banks and information processing at first shock is overpowering to the human sensibility, and potentially intensifies the dissociation of sensibility which Eliot perceived in the post-Cartesian world. Yet it is simultaneously a world of wonder, of intellectual richness, capable of intensifying sensuous and erotic experience. McLuhan sets forth the paths to be explored in understanding that world as it evolves. It will only be when the technological is encompassed in its poetry and drama that it will be humanized; from the Dadaists and the Surrealists through histori-

ans like Giedion and poetic visionaries like Joyce to the themes McLuhan introduced there is a beginning of understanding of the relations of culture, communication and technology.

There are similar questions being raised in different intellectual traditions: Barthes' concept of mythologies or of semiology; Deleuze's anti-oepidal schizoanalysis and conceptions of transverse communication to suggest only two. But none of these raise the same problems in the same form or with the same basic poetic stance as the unanswered questions of McLuhan. What he provides, with all his weaknesses and all our exasperation, is an opening up of discourse — a prosaic realization of the poetry of Joyce's last book — a book of coming forth by light, a strategy for consciousness which we must return to and put in dialogue with other major works. The insights of the Toronto school, if they are the insights of McLuhan's poetic vision, are yet to be deeply explored, because the richness of McLuhan's legacy may have been obscured by the faddist debates about his immense popularity in the 1960's.

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THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK? HAVELOCK'S PLEA FOR SPACE

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It is perhaps fitting that this essay should begin with the remnants of the oral tradition. In particular, with reference to October 14, 1978 when Eric Havelock delivered a paper on Harold Innis at Innis College in the University of Toronto.[1] The commentator on the paper was Marshall McLuhan who, although in ill health, nevertheless, still represented the figure of the author of such books as *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, or *Understanding Media.* For Havelock, who had left Canada many years earlier for the larger empire of the United States, it was a return to recognize the similar solitudes of his own career, in particular to that of Harold Innis', but also to mark their differences. He shared the late Innis' thesis of the bias of communication, having arrived at the same conclusions through the study of classics. But to the message of this bias they differed in the end. Innis, for Havelock, looking backwards to the oral culture that began Western European civilization finally entered a plea for the values of the classical European past: epitomized by Innis' essay "A Plea for Time".[2] Havelock, as I shall argue, entered a plea for space: a plea for empire.

Havelock's case begins with his examination of the foundation of Western culture. His most celebrated achievement, and what links him most directly to McLuhan, is tracing the change which occurs with the introduction of written language in ancient Greece. In general terms, this is the replacement of Homer by Plato, a drama that today for Havelock is still being played out between Plato and the giants of the twentieth-century. The change from the oral to written, from the ear to the eye, influenced the social and political structures of the classical world, and quite appropriately raised the question of the effect of such changes in technology on contemporary life. For Havelock this question was answered by understanding its

roots of technology in the classical culture and, as I will argue, its application in North America.

To Havelock the classics establish human ontology as technique; thereby creating a tension in Western culture. The main elements of the tradition surround the myths of the closed society and of the decentralized political organization; the 'polis' bound by the timeless predicates of being. According to Havelock, this has led on the one hand, to the abandonment of the ethical values Innis sought, and, on the other hand, to the dominance in modern thought of the will to power. Against this stands the tradition with which Havelock identifies the open society of empire, scientific, progressive and utilitarian, with the technological "individual" becoming in Havelock's view the true individual.

In this theory, space conquers time in the reality of the New World. This vision, from a form of overseas Karl Popper, rests on the revision of the Western tradition through North American experience. It is curiously more "Canadian" in an odd way then Innis' final resting place as one who looked back to Europe. Havelock is, from my viewpoint, the theorist of technological humanism; the defender of the 'liberal democratic tradition overseas'; the promoter of the empire; and the rationalizer of the information society.

I turn to the presuppositions of Havelock's case, or what Northrop Frye refers to as the mythological background upon which the questions of the social and political rest.[3] Havelock called for such a preface, a preface if you will to his well known *Preface to Plato*.[4] Though lacking the detail of the latter work, Havelock provided this ground in his commentary on Aeschelyus' *Prometheus*.[5] For Havelock, myths are technologies which order a society by encoding its rules and procedures. It is clear in Havelock's writing that rules and procedure as customs are the foundation not only for order, but for justice.[6] In that sense they have a priority in advancing an understanding of a culture. There is nothing 'natural' about these myths nor is there a transcendental claim in the philosophical sense, yet there is the prior claim in memory as the primary storehouse of culture. This will reappear in modern societies in the form of the centrality of information storage.[7]

In this sense for Havelock, Western culture has two primary myths which have similar structures, but radically different conclusions. They are familiar myths. The first is the Christian myth of the fall, and the second is the Promethean myth.[8] Each myth has the same structure in relating the subjugation of humans at the hands of the gods. Each predict a form of persecution that Havelock sees repeated throughout Western culture, and in that sense gives rise to Havelock's view of the centrality of conflict or war to the Western identity. Thus Western society is formed by the interaction of technology and violence. This problem underlies Havelock's view of *The*

Iliad, as we shall see. But more directly the two myths pose the master-slave relation as the central political concern to be overcome in order to set the individual on course as free and equal.

Within mythic consciousness itself rebellious action is not in question for it is precisely a sign of an oral culture, for Havelock, that it has yet to invent the concepts of space and time necessary to the creation of the Western political actor. The sense of being beyond space and time makes all oral societies static; the process of overcoming the master-slave relation requires something like the Hegelian individuation occasioned by the struggle for consciousness. In each myth the struggle is depicted socially. In Christianity for Havelock it is 'resolved' unsatisfactorily, yet powerfully, in the creation of religious consciousness characterized primarily by the postulation of ideas that are timeless. Hence there is a link for Havelock with philosophies of being that are not Christian, such as Platonism or Marxism but which show a similar structure. In fact, it is Plato who symbolizes this for Havelock through the attack on the poets and the creation of being-itself captured in the verb 'to be' as that of the logic of identity. The timeless nature of this solution ultimately reinforces for Havelock the anti-democratic character of politics as his critique of Plato and Aristotle show.[9]

Against this Havelock holds that Prometheus' revolt against the gods, while engendering persecution, is fundamentally better directed. Rather than knowledge being at the root, the 'thief of fire' Prometheus, here viewed as symbolic of technology,[10] provides the individual as tool-maker the wherewithal to fight the 'good fight.' This fight is one fought in the arena of space, or what might be called under the 'architectural eye'[11] for Havelock where being is "prescenced" as becoming. Individuals 'appear' in a space with the view that through technology they will add to their human nature. It is apparent that Havelock's reading of the problem of being ascribe to technology the revelation or unveiling of being. This becomes what Havelock calls the myth of the 'science of man'.[12]

The question of technology represents the first engagement in the battle, expressed in Havelock's terms, of democracy against the totalitarian rule of oligarchy. As we shall see, these myths pitted Ionian science of the pre-Socratics, or its descendant, according to Havelock, the liberal democracy of today, against Platonic sophistry whether it be from Plato, Aristotle or the modern inheritors, particularly the idealist elements of Kant and Hegel's thought. The result, historically, was a split decision. In the material world, a world of utilitarian calculus and science gained the ascendancy. In the political world, or more notably that of the world of power itself, philosophy triumphed in the form of nihilism with the attendant destruction of the gains of science. This tension between democracy and oligarchy also illustrates the danger inherent in technology when the poetic and the practical, or

language and tools, are severed as they are for Havelock's Plato, and as they become for Havelock himself. Democracy is then left dangling in the worst fashion dependent on 'common sense'; that is entrapped within the economic calculus of the market. To cite an example, Athens with an empire, even without the help of Plato, ends in defeat, and by extension the same fate is being played out in Havelock's North America.

It is this 'confused' result that restrains Havelock from pursuing the source of a revitalized form of oral culture which Havelock rather spitefully attributed to Innis.[13] This is the Innis whose early farm life was structured by the predominance of oral stories over written. On the other hand, the glitter of McLuhan's global village sent Havelock back to the safety of the 'storeroom' of dead ideas, most notably and ironically Kant's scheme for a universal history with a cosmopolitan purpose as the basis of his liberalism. I now turn to establishing this case.

Havelock's analysis of the problems of the modern period stem from his adherence to the liberal myth of freedom and equality which demands that space and time be conceptualized in a particular 'scientific' fashion. This is precisely the point at issue with McLuhan and Innis, and especially with Innis who saw the "bias of communication" as upsetting the balance of space and time — hence Innis' pessimism and McLuhan's guarded optimism. Havelock is also aware in seeking out these myths that twentieth-century physics has altered the concept of space and time by conflating space/time; thereby provoking an attendant identity crisis for the Western individual. For Havelock, the answer as to the origin of this crisis of space and time will be found in the changes in communication which gave rise originally to space and time. For space and time, as is science itself, are inventions. Thus the formation of each concept becomes linked to the change in oral culture that prompted these inventions on way to the written world. I would like to highlight three aspects of the change according to Havelock:

1) the nature of oral society according to Homer;
2) the invention of time by Plato; and
3) the invention of space and democracy by Euclid and the pre-Socratics.

For Havelock, the Homeric poems represent in the most fundamental sense constitutional documents of a society.[14] By encoding the practice of that society they are political in their regulation of social relations. As Marshall McLuhan noted in his comments on Havelock's case, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are in a sense the ancient Greek equivalent of Ann Landers.[15] Strictly mimetic in character they supply, in digestible form, examples of appropriate conduct taken from the past of the society. Their appeal is to memory not vision, they hold the past not the future, but are able to order

the present.[16] The "storing" of the past legitimizes the exercise of political control which, by being rooted in the practice of the society, is non-repressive for Havelock. Disputes, at least internal to the society, are regulated by appeals to this customary practice. These are usually made as is known, in the agora, or assembly of citizens.[17]

Much of Havelock's later work, *The Greek Concept of Justice*, concentrates on showing the agora model of association as being inherently fair and as setting the conditions for a transition to democratic forms — albeit ones which are predicated on a class basis. An example, amongst many given by Havelock, is the opening of the *Iliad* where questions of what to do with Agamemnon's claims are resolved in the assembly of the Acheans. This is a form of 'justice' devoid of the concept of the "Just". It is predicated on the exchange of opinions, and not on the contest of ideas.[18] It is also the prevalent form in oral societies (which is, of course, Havelock's point). The fact that the process is given poetic form again reflects the absence of written cultures. The contrast of this type of poetry to the visionary aspects of a William Blake is complete. In Homer's case, the imagination serves merely to recall from memory what has been done; this in sharp contrast to the creative utopian elements of Blake.[19] This distinction, which I will return to later, was well known in the Enlightenment period — witness Kant's *Critique of Judgement* which distinguishes the creative genius from the judging spectator precisely on the grounds of the use of the imagination.

Havelock, in his exposition, takes great pains to stress that the Homeric world is dominated by "appearances", either through the 'reappearing' of the imagination in poetry, or before the assembly, or, if you are a god, from the wings. These appearances are locative — that is, spatial — and provide a 'de-powered' site for the creation of the will which informs action. This model is fine if the community either is all-encompassing, an end Havelock himself finally admits, or if it is self-contained, that is a polis — and end that Havelock vociferously rejects.[20] It is apparent that part of his rejection of the decentralized political model rests with the Homeric poems themselves; for even a random opening of Homer yields a story of war or of travel outside the polis itself. This leads Havelock to two conclusions:

1) that war is endemic in Western culture because of the polis which creates differences amongst individuals, hence creating strangers.
2) the overcoming of war resides in the friendly reception of the stranger,[21] which is the prerequisite for trade and economic relations.

Again returning to Homer but this time in the *Odyssey* many of the encounters, including the reception of Odysseus when he returns home, are incidents surrounding reception of the 'unknown' guest. Unlike Camus' *The*

Stranger where the existential is developed *with* the social differences, Havelock interprets the *Odyssey* strictly in social terms as the story of the adverse effects of not granting the Xenos, the stranger, the 'amity' of the social 'good will.' Havelock's dependence on Aristotle's ethics is clear. That friendship conquers war may be, for Havelock, Homer's message, despite the rather bad time of it had by the Trojans accepting gifts.

I believe there are three critical points here:

First, the usual sense of the localized nature of oral societies is directly challenged by Havelock in his assertion that the Homeric poems transcend the polis; thereby linking all parts of the Athenian empire. That is, oral cultures are spatially expansive.

Second, the chief vehicle calling for friendly reception is that of economic relations. Trade, even with the enemy, as our own history of war with the Americans suggests, can be more powerful than war. And it is powerful because it operates in the guise of the free market, of mutual interest and hence desirable relations, as well as sharing a similarity in structure to the exchange of the 'assembly'.

Third, the chief attitude of the trading individual — practical and utilitarian — is precisely that of the technological individual. I will not describe the details of Havelock's analysis of the *Iliad* from this viewpoint but much of the text, including the war sections, deals with the technological requirements of outfitting the invasion or of seamanship.[22] Seamanship is, of course, crucial to the political and economic future of Athens as an empire.

Thus, we have a view of oral society painted by Havelock essentially as spatial-oriented in its practical, utilitarian economics which accords with a sense of justice as custom law. For Havelock, it is this society that comes under attack by Plato in the famous rejection of the poets in *The Republic* and this attack is continued, in his view, in Aristotle's *Politics*. In Havelock's perspective, the defense of oral society is found in the pre-Socratics. I will take each in turn.

The outlines of the case against Plato as a supporter of authoritarian anti-democratic political structures is well-known. Havelock's contribution to this position, and its importance here, resides primarily in his claim that the political organization favoured by Plato is linked with the replacement of oral cultures with the written word.[23] The chief elements of this switch reside in what is called, by Havelock, Plato's invention of time. This creates in Havelock's mind the individual against the society through an appeal either inwardly to the soul or outwardly to the Forms.[24] In each case, this is predicated on the existence of concepts beyond the Homeric world. Havelock demonstrates this through his analysis in *The Greek Concept of Justice* in terms of the change in the use of the verb 'to be' from its

measuring of 'presence' in Homer to the sense of 'absence' according to Plato in which the Forms may exist, though in no specific place.[25] A similar analysis is given to the term justice; moving from the sense of a decision from the assembly to an appeal to everlasting principles. The political repercussions are straightforward. The polis is protected and becomes a closed society even by those whose souls are best suited to be governed. Common opinion is relegated to the common man. Techne, or one's virtues, are arranged hierarchically, thereby reinforcing the master-slave relationship. Aristotle adds to this in the opening chapter of the *Politics* reinforcing the 'naturalness' of hierarchy, denying the political use of friendship, and denigrating economic activity by consigning it to an ethically inferior level.

In contrast to this indictment of the founders of Western thought, Havelock attempts, through a reconstruction of the fragments left to us from the pre-Socratics, a case for the liberal, democratic society. This case rests on the view expressed in a middle work of Havelock's entitled *The Liberal Temper of Greek Politics*. Here, Havelock argues there was a significant group of early Ionian thinkers who supported a concept of the individual which was based on equality and rooted in a view that the individual developed in a natural and evolutionary way.[26] That is, the individual could be seen as the tool-maker, or technologist, who progressed through the application of science. Havelock paints the contrast between this view of the individual as progressive, and the sense of human history as regressive, and hence as nostalgic for a golden age. This view is expressed not only by Plato, but is also found, for example, in Hesiod, and most powerfully expressed in the Eden myth. The science of the human rejects the religious-metaphysical basis of these myths for the biological-historical view found in Havelock's Prometheus, and perhaps more significantly, in writers like Democritus. Democritus becomes a model of the 'anthropological' thinkers who see the fight for survival being resolved in a form of modern liberal contract theory.[27] Havelock draws explicit comparisons to Hobbes and Bentham, linking the view of the individual as a technologist directly to the calculus of pleasure-pain.[28] Similar conjectures are made in reference to the known fragments of Protagoras and Thyrsmachus, the elder Sophist.

One must add to this the group the influence of Euclid. Perhaps one of the most influential single articles on Havelock's and, to some extent, Innis' thought was F.M. Cornford's the 'Invention of Space', written in 1936 in a collection for Gilbert Murray.[29] Here, Cornford sketched the change in Greek science affected by Euclid's concept of the infinity of space. This underlies the atomists' view of the physical world which Havelock described as Hobbesian, and which he related to their politics. And, as one would expect, Cornford identifies the opposition to the 'science' coming from

Plato, and, in particular, from Aristotle. When combined with Havelock's position against Plato and Aristotle we have a very strong counter-theory to the Platonic emphasis on philosophic reason being in time. This theory rejects the hierarchical anti-economic society for a technological science, being as 'being in space', and a liberal-democratic society.

And thus my opening position. I perceive Havelock and Innis as occupying polar positions. Innis, the political economist, moves towards redress of what he sees as a dangerous overbalance, in North America, of space over time. The politics of space has ended in an empire where culture has been, or is on the verge of destruction. This analysis rests on Innis' important studies of political economy, but ends in his turning, as Havelock indicates, towards the moral science of the empire. Innis' "Plea for Time" signals the moral bankruptcy, from Havelock's position, of Innis' return to the Kantean metaphysics of morals.

Havelock, on the other hand, having left England as an emigrant to the New World, experienced the influence of North America on exploding the closed society. For him the vehicle all along has been the view of the individual as a technologist whose industry creates both the "empire" and the "good will". A return to oral culture is rejected by Havelock. The very nature of technology is, for Havelock, history as progress. The very message of oral society was to encourage the expansion into space to overcome oral culture. This is the legacy and task of economics. This is strikingly illustrated in Havelock's *Prometheus*.

> As the time range extends, so does the orbit of persons and interests. The mind enters into a calculation. What will this momentary utility mean to my further utility, the day after tomorrow? Then if necessary the first utility is remodeled to suit the second, but the second meanwhile is remodeled to suit the third, till the process is pushed to the point where 'utility' takes on the meaning of a common denominator between 'myself' and an expanding range of men's interest. This common denominator automatically involves a harmonization of interests, because the task of predicting what 'I' will need, at a further and further stage of foresight, can be carried out only by trying to imagine a hundred other relationships in which 'I' will be involved and in predicting a thousand action in which 'my' needs, in turn, depend. This perspective extends, if pushed far enough in time's length, to the point where it takes in city and state and family of states, and the estate of the unborn.
>
> The conclusion would seem to be that if man cares to prethink far enough, his forethought becomes increasingly moral and philanthropic in its direction. Man cannot prethink evil, but only good.[30]

We are now back at classical utilitarian liberalism. The maximization of each interest leads to the harmonization of all interests. The 'orbit' of this harmony expands through both time and space swallowing up the Burkean contract of all generations in the sweep of the 'family of states.' The future, then, extends from the old world to the new through the imperialism of economic activity.

Havelock's defense of the empire is, at this point, complete. Liberal democracy based on the technological individual assures in the long run, if we only think scientifically about it, the harmony of wills. The individual in the dramatic reversal of the Hegelian retrospective rejects the past and turns towards the future where only the 'good' can be thought. That is, Havelock's case rests on the claim that ethics can be established through the progress of science which controls the will: science as technology, as craft knowledge, as the way to do things, as the way to act. This completes the Promethean myth. Havelock has refounded the liberal democratic tradition from a North American perspective, however, much the origins of that myth are found in the pre-Socratics' view of science as technology.

This vision underscores much of the commitment to technology in North American society as it is articulated in liberal thought. Havelock's use of the technological has it roots, as I have argued, in the understanding of the poetry of oral societies as technology. In each case the techne of the poet is for Havelock purely mimetic, re-creating the status quo. This might be called the shopkeeper mentality. The poet keeps the store. This function is at the root of communication for Havelock, and it is one with the 'progress' of Western culture to literacy. Havelock sees "an improvement in storage method' as the centre of culture control. I quote from the Epilogue of the *Greek Concept of Justice.*

> In the developing story of human culture, speech, on the one hand, and the invention of tools, on the other, have played central roles. In estimating their relative importance it is now commonly agreed that speech has priority. My own reconstruction of the Greek experience has been guided by a further assumption: the significance of speech which is placed in storage for reuse has priority over its employment in day-to-day communication. The control of culture has lies in information that is accumulated and recalled, and language used for this purpose exhibits certain important differences from what is casually spoken in interpersonal relations ...[31]

I draw two conclusions from this quotation. First, the removal of culture from the life world of each individual to that of the information society strikes me as logical to Havelock's case. The storage capacity of modern society through computers is after all immense, and it reflects the direction

certainly of the modern office where word processing and the use of macro and micro computers has become commonplace. This is the 'information science' society.

Second, the context of the above quotation was a reference to McLuhan's *Gutenberg Galaxy* whose basic theme has essentially been reversed by Havelock. The 'sensorium' of the individual outside the person has been turned inward. The soul of the individual, in storage, truly becomes technocratic. This surely must confirm McLuhan's worst fears. The image of the poet, and of culture, is rendered profoundly uncreative. Creativity is given only to the scientist whose domain extends into the moral realm. The sense of techne as art both in the creative imagination of the poet and of the toolmaker is surrendered by Havelock. Memory is set over vision.

> But the poetic management of speech is prompted in the first instance not by exotic inspiration or by individual genius but by the functional need of human beings to cope with the stable preservation of a social organism. Poetry viewed in the overall context of the history of human culture is a mechanism for oral storage.[32]

The transmutation of liberal democracy by technology into information storage "expels the eccentric act and the imaginative question."[33] It is hard not to conclude that at the core of Havelock's thought is the privileging of dead power.

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Notes

1. The exchange between Marshall McLuhan and Eric Havelock was taped under the title of "Harold Innis: The Philosophical Historian". It may be found in the Sigmund Samuel Library of the University of Toronto.
2. H. Innis, "A Plea for Time" in *The Bias of Communication*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951.
3. See N. Frye, *The Critical Path*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1971. See also D. Cook, *Northrop Frye: A Vision of the New World*, Montreal and New York: New World Perspectives and Saint Martin's Press, 1985.
4. E. Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963. Havelock notes at the end of this work that it leads to a demand for a preface to the pre-Socratics, p. 305.
5. E. Havelock, *Prometheus*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968. The book was originally titled *The Crucifixion of Intellectual Man* published in 1951. The reader might keep both titles in mind for they bear clear evidence that Havelock saw a distinct connection between classical texts and his own times.
6. Havelock's most sustained presentation of this view is his. *The Greek Concept of Justice*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.

7. The first two chapters of *Prometheus* set out each myth. Havelock will on occasion substitute the Hesiod myth of the golden age for the Christian myth of "the bitter fruit of the tree of knowledge", p. 2.
8. *Ibid.*
9. See in particular chapters XI and XII of Havelock's *The Liberal Temper of Greek Politics*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1957 for the attack on Aristotle, and the *Preface to Plato*.
10. *Prometheus*, p. 14.
11. *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p. 225.
12. *The Liberal Temper of Greek Politics*, prefatory.
13. Cf: Havelock's remarks at the Innis College debate.
14. See *The Greek Concept of Justice* for Havelock's extended commentary on the poems.
15. M. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, Toronto: Signet Books, 1964, p. viii.
16. "The plot of each epic can be seen as indirectly didactic, insofar as it proceeds in a way which has the effect of illustrating and implementing dike as a regulative principle legally in the *Iliad* and morally in the *Odyssey* ..." *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p. 13.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
18. "Justice, whatever it is, can be seen as something exchanged between two parties, or added to both, on the course of a settlement, or alternatively, as symbolizing the process of exchange itself. It is certainly not a principle which when applied excludes its opposite." *Ibid.*, pp. 132-133. This is an especially revealing quotation for it establishes clearly the relation justice has to economic activity over and above a determination of 'right and wrong'.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
20. See the conclusion to *Prometheus* and below.
21. See in particular chapter 9 "The Moralities of the Odyssey," *The Greek Concept of Justice*.
22. See chapter 4 "The Society Reported by Homer." *Ibid.*
23. See *Preface to Plato*. Havelock's support of the poet Homer as the preserver and recaller of morals and justice leads him quite easily to the rejection of Plato on the ground of Plato's attack on Homer. Poetry passes from 'preserved communication' into 'opinion' at the hands of Plato for Havelock with the consequent destruction of the community.
24. "To this fundamental tract of the Homeric mind Plato and also the pre-Platonic philosophers address themselves, demanding that a discourse of 'becoming,' that is of endless doings and of events, be replaced by a discourse of 'being,' that is of statements which are in modern jargon 'analytic,' are free from time-conditioning." *Ibid.*, p. 182.
25. *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p. 240.
26. *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics*, p. 5.
27. "The contract theory thus stated had in various versions a long history after Democritus' day. It may be doubted whether it was ever stated so succinctly or with such satisfaction to the competing claims of authority and liberty." *Ibid.*, p. 150.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 132.
29. F.M. Cornford, "The Invention of Space," in *Essays in Honour of Gilbert Murray*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1936.
30. *Prometheus*, p. 93.
31. *The Greek Concept of Justice*, p. 335.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

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SHE CANNOT DENY ANYTHING HUMAN: ATWOOD AND TECHNOLOGY

Eli Mandel

In 1980, Margaret Atwood delivered an address, "An End to Audience?" in the *Dorothy J. Killam Lecture Series* at Dalhousie University in which she had this to say about the role of the writer:

> Writing, no matter what its subject, is an act of faith; the primary faith being that someone out there will read the results. I believe it's also an act of hope, the hope that things can be better than they are. If the writer is very lucky and manages to live long enough, I think it can also be an act of charity. It takes a lot to see what is there, both without flinching or turning away and without bitterness. The world exists; the writer testifies. She cannot deny anything human.[1]
>
> *Second Words*, p. 349

I cite these words because I want to establish at once that despite desperate rumour otherwise, Margaret Atwood is not a shaman, a witch, a magician, a dermophobe, an agrophobe, a proto-Marxist — or whatever else it is she has been called. She thinks of herself (rightly I would say) in a clear-headed, tough-minded way as a novelist/poet/writer, trying "to see what is there". One who writes *fiction*. And though she does have a rather moralistic sense of her role, she would no doubt at once deny that — saying "no morality, only seeing".

The argument of this paper, which proceeds through summary accounts of recent critical theory concerned with her work, is that Atwood's poetry concerns perception — is technically perceptual and reflexive — but in special ways that I think creates difficulties. It is virtually impossible to talk of her work without moralizing it, without seeing it in allegorical and moral

terms. Her conceptual framework is existential psychology, derived, I think, from the work of Thomas Szasz and R.D. Laing; her mode ironic, affirmation by denial; her concern the invisible, the mythic, the edge of fantasy, a structure of images of all that *isn't* there. The consequence is that for the reader misreading is virtually inevitable and this accounts both for the fascination of her work and the wide difference of opinion about the nature of her achievement.

I mean also to say that there are special difficulties in addressing problems like that posed by the discourse on technology with respect to a novelist like Atwood, or any novelist or poet, for that matter. I certainly want to put limits on what can sensibly or comfortably be said about Atwood and technology despite the fact that the rich texture of imagery in her comments hints at quite extraordinary possibilities, about vision, transformation, metamorphosis, about compassion and knowledge. There is in her work an intriguing contrast between plainness and complex wisdom that hints at but does not finally reveal what could be called a final position, an ultimate statement. Her art, in the end, consists of not saying, of holding back. Reticence. As she says in "*Mushrooms*:"

> Here is the handful
> of shadow I have brought back to you:
> this decay, this hope, this mouth-
> ful of dirt, this poetry.
>
> *True Stories*, p. 93

In the collection of critical essays which she and Lorraine Weir edited, Sherrill Grace provides, in her article, "Articulating the 'Space Between': Atwood's Untold Stories and Fresh Beginnings," an intellectual context from two points of view for viewing Atwood's work: 1) Atwood's *system*, that is, the structuralist way of referring to a set of codes that structure a writer's work (text), linguistically or imagistically; and 2) comparatively, considering the work of writers contemporary with her. This has to do with the Canadian tradition specifically, most particularly with writers like Dennis Lee and David Godfrey.[2]

Addressing the first set of terms, Atwood's system, Grace emphasizes what she calls the synchronic aspects of Atwood's, its coherence. Her "system" does not change or develop over her career.[3] Grace distinguishes four basic elements of structure in her work: duality, nature, self, and language. It is perhaps not at all surprising that these are at once recognizable as elements of contemporary critical theory, or that very different views of their importance and values have been held from Barthes and Foucault to Derrida.

Grace addresses herself to three questions about these structural elements

of Atwood's work: 1) her use of cultural codes (the means deployed to develop the recurrent dualities of her work — culture/nature; male/female; straight line/curved space; head/body; reason/instinct; victor/victim); 2) the system of values or ethical position that directs her art; and 3) that illuminates how and why she articulates the "space between" the area where the dualities are resolved, if indeed they even are or can be. The intent of this questioning or analysis becomes clear in Grace's distinction between a static system and dynamic process, the crucial point in her analysis of Atwood's dualities.

> Atwood's system, in this sense, is not a static but a dynamic process in which the works constitute a coherent argument, a dialectic (which is closer to Marx than Hegel because it eschews transcendence), while each individual text functions dynamically, moving through a series of poetic or narrative strategies. ... Furthermore, Atwood identifies human failure as acquiescence in those Western dichotomics which postulate the inescapable, static division of the world into hostile opposites. ...
>
> Grace, *Atwood, Language, Text and System*, p. 5.

The dialectical aspects of Atwood's cultural position can be taken first, in materialistic terms (a causal connection between a culture and the economic foundation of the society in which the culture is found — to use the terms Rick Salutin uses in his essay on Atwood in the *Malahat Review*[4]) and second, in psychological or linguistic terms — in the relation between culture and the artist, presumably through form and language. One notes that this last matter creates a terrible paradox or contradiction, not ever, I think, satisfactorily resolved. I deal with this point later.

In brief, Sherrill Grace's analysis serves to focus the major questions about Atwood's cultural vision, the nature of the dualities she poses and the degree to which those are either broken down or resolved. For the purpose of this discussion of technology, of course, the important duality would be taken to be world and self, manifesting itself in nature as opposed to culture, the opposition head/body, or male/female. It should be obvious that to raise a question as to the resolution of oppositions is not to question Atwood's *attitude*. There is no question as to which side she is on, or that she would seek to transcend or resolve oppositions. Her success is another question entirely.

To say that the means of resolution of the dichotomies is language also seems to me to serve no purpose at all, at least so long as the examples given are essentially hortatory:

> When will you learn

the flame and the wood/flesh
it burns are whole and the same.[5]

This example, after all, is part of a larger poem with its own resolution and paradox. Grace, we note, does not quote any of the rest of the poem. I cite the last half:

You attempt merely power
you accomplish merely suffering

How long do you expect me to wait
while you cauterize your
senses, one
after another
turning yourself to an
impervious glass tower?

How long will you demand I love you?

I'm through, I won't make
any more flowers for you

I judge you as the trees do
by dying

The other of Grace's examples seem to me to imply the same moralistic rather than linguistic effect, the same devout hope rather than linguistic resolution. If the space between dualities is somehow *in* language, the instances describe but do not *effect* it: "A Place: fragments" (*The Circle Game*), "A Book of Ancestors" (*You Are Happy*), *Two Headed Poems*, *Surfacing*.

The nature/culture distinction developed in *Survival* and *Surfacing*, for example, may provide Atwood's most elaborate account of the significance of technology in contemporary society in nationalist, feminist, and ecological terms. It also connects with Grace's second set of terms for viewing Atwood, the comparative, or the connection between Atwood's writing and her contemporaries. There is no question that in the seventies Canadian writers, notably but not solely Atwood, Lee, and Godfrey, mounted a sustained critique of North American liberalism conceived, in George Grant's language, as technology. The connection of technology and fate in Grant's analysis permitted a kind of neo-primitivism to arise as a means to redemption, somewhere out of civilization in the wilderness. But as a *resolution* to oppositions, this approach is no more certain than elsewhere in contemporary work. Atwood's hedging about native Indian cosmology or speech patterns is no more positive than her so-called dynamic dualism or

violent duality (to use Sherrill Grace's term). Primitivism might provide the "necessary model for a more integrated holistic view of life" but as Marie-Francoise Guedon remarks of *Surfacing* "Neither the heroine nor author makes any attempt to recreate or display an Indian perception of the world nor do the rare Indian characters. The setting is thoroughly modern and Euro-Canadian." ("*Surfacing*: Amerindian Themes and Shamanism", *Atwood: Language, Text and System*, p. 91). So much too for shamanism. "In *Surfacing* ... the essence of the shamanic world is absent."

My position is that Atwood's dualism of mind/body or technique/instinct remains unresolved, either in primitivistic perceptions or in linguistic revisions or phenomenology. I use two examples, one from *The Animals in That Country*, the other from *Power Politics*. I use these because one provides a very strong version of the duality implied in the treatment of technology as a mind/body division, the second an equally powerful example of the male/female dichotomy in terms that connect with cultural imperialism, technique, pop culture, and the culture/nature dichotomy. Both provide fine examples of Atwood's poetic technique and themes consistently developed throughout her work.[6] "Speeches for Dr. Frankenstein" offers one of the examples. Gothic, scientific, rationalized, it gives us the torn body, the decimated being of man perceived dualistically, rationally, and as Ellen Moers tells us in a brilliant analysis ("The Female Gothic", *Literary Women* [New York: 1976]) reduplicated monstrously:

> I was insane with skill:
> I made you perfect.
>
> I should have chosen instead
> to curl you small as a seed,
>
> trusted beginnings. Now I wince
> before this plateful of results:
>
> Core and rind, the flesh between
> already turning rotten.
>
> I stand in the presence
> of the destroyed god:
>
> a rubble of tendons,
> knuckles and raw sinews.
>
> Knowing the work is mine
> how can I love you?
>
> (*Selected Poems*, 66)

Dr. Frankenstein addresses his creation here in unmistakable language.

This *is* what a botched creation is, the means of a death/birth confusion that is the real meaning of technology. *Not* by any means, the articulation of the spaces between. Of course, Atwood doesn't approve of Frankenstein. That surely is the meaning of the poem. But disapproval is not a resolution.

So too in that epitome of the technological isolation of man and woman — *Power Politics*, the poetry speaks in the unmistakable language of dualism as in "They Eat Out":

> I raise the magic fork
> over the plate of beef fried rice
> and plunge it into your heart.
>
> There is a faint pop, a sizzle
> and through your own split head
> you rise up glowing;
>
> the ceiling opens
> a voice sings Love is a Many
> Splendoured Thing
>
> You hang suspended over the city
> in blue tights and red cape,
> Your eyes flashing in unison.
>
> ... ...
>
> As for me, I continue eating;
> I liked you better the way you were
> but you were always ambitious.
>
> (*Selected Poems*, pp. 144-145)

Now, what has been said to this point is by no means an analysis of Atwood's language, only a version of characteristic tone and imagery. Elsewhere, notably in the hallucinatory passages of the climactic section of *Surfacing* and increasingly throughout the later poems — in *True Stories* and in *Two-Headed Poems*, the subject/object duality we notice begins to disappear into a kind of processual, phenomenological speech that takes us into experience in special ways. This effect has been commented on but so far as the purposes of this paper are concerned to very little effect;[7] two notable exceptions, of course, are the stylistic analysis of Atwood's prose by Robert Cluett and comments by his student, Jayne Patterson.[8]

Both show, through stylistic analysis, how the language and style of Atwood's novels portray the process of objectification — that is, of dehumanizing — and how subsequent humanization occurs to the narrators. In short, each provides a graphic account of the fusing links of language

and technology in society. Cluett's marvellous introductory phrases to his article provide a beautiful impressionistic version of the analytical discussion that follows and because it is one of the best accounts of Atwood's speech and performance I know I take the liberty of quoting it in full:

> As anyone knows who has been to one of her readings, the peculiar lingering flavour of Margaret Atwood's poetry read aloud derives only partly from the text and its brutally skewed ikons. What truly stays with one is the remarkable bleached voice from which all devices of oral colouring have been ruthlessly laundered: the reading is given with no variation in either pitch or volume and with as little provision of stress as the English language will allow; the ikons hang starkly in the air, suspended almost as though self-willed, with no specifically human intervention.
>
> (*Atwood, Language, Text and System*, p. 67)

The self-willed ikons of Atwood's prose, like those of her poetry, show us the images of the dehumanized world her language largely portrays. And if, as Cluett and Patterson suggest, her novels (and I suspect her poetry) in the end move elsewhere (say to the "spaces between" where dualities are resolved), the main effect is, as Cluett says, of the world we, sadly, inhabit.

I close with a final point. It has to do with the difference between technology conceived as material rationalization or as a definition of the world as object — an objective view of nature, versus technology defined or understood as information processing or a definition of the world as language, technology understood as neurological operations. A distinction of this sort or one very like it lies somewhere behind what we have come to speak of as the difference between a modernist culture and a postmodern culture. In Canadian writing it is, I suspect, the difference between the terms in which Atwood understands or conceives of technology and those in which writers like Robert Kroetsch, B.P. Nichol, and Christopher Dewdney understand technology. It is the difference between *True Stories* and Kroetsch's *Field Notes*, Nichol's *Martyrology*, and Dewdney's *Alter Sublime* or more especially his recently published *Predators of the Adoration*.[9]

The difference more specifically reflects a change in contemporary poetics and culture from a psychology of depths or surfaces to a poetics of the field of linguistic texture and its parallel in neurological patterns. The design of Dewdney's work, remarks Stan Dragland in his perceptive after word to *Predators of the Adoration*, "... is 'to reduce a certain/inevitability into dance. ...'"[10] What lies behind this new neurology of speech and poetry is the dismantling of what has been called "the metaphysics of presence" and accordingly the replacing of duality of mind/object with process which "punctures ... the apparently solid compartments of the physical world and

the mind."[11] It is in the "spaces between" that the poetry of process exists but (and this is the argument of this paper) we find that not in Atwood's reticences but in Kroetsch's multiple narrative voices and linguistic play or in Dewdney's dialectical puns, syntactical feedbacks and parenthetical deconstruction of continuities. One example from Dewdney will have to do, a "breathtaking leap" that opens the poem to a new space on the other side of the words:

The Parenthetical
HER SWEET UNDERWATER PUDDINGS

Like sticking your arm through the dry plaster wall of your bedroom and having it emerge out the other side. The next room is dark and filled with warm water. Your arm is immersed to the elbow and slippery creatures brush your skin. This is the dike of your mind. You are a Dutch boy and the only person *this* ocean belongs to is *you.* And you can't stand there forever.

Like sticking your arm through the dry plaster wall of your bedroom and having it emerge out the other side. The next room is dark and filled with warm water. Your arm is immersed to the elbow and slippery creatures brush your skin. (like sticking the wall through a dry plaster bedroom of your skin) (your arse is endured to the elbow by slippery animals that review your sins) (you are constantly filled with the creatures and your reasoning for them) (this then is the wretched repose of our elders in latin). This is the dike of your mind. You are a Dutch boy and the only person *this* ocean is real to is *you.* And you can't stand there forever.

Like (alike) sticking (it out) your arm (or) through (glass) the dry (words) plaster wall of (remote-control) your (nerve-studio) bedroom and (merely watching) having (undergone before) it emerge out (the other side of) the other (way) side. The next (scene) room (hitherto unsuspected) is dark and filled (constantly)

with warm (fluids) water. Your (muscular contraction) arm is (buoying) immersed (solid) to the elbow and (furthermore) slippery (reels) creatures brush (matrimony) your skin. This (then) is the (reasoning) like of (gold) your mind. You are (wretched) a Dutch boy (pure) and the only (delay) person *this* ocean (wonder) belongs to is you. And you (cannot) can't stand (it) there forever.

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Notes

1. Margaret Atwood, *Second Words* (Anansi: Toronto, 1982). All references are to Atwood's *Selected Poems* (Oxford University Press: Toronto, 1976) with the exception of *True Stories* (Oxford University Press: Toronto, 1981)
2. Sherrill Grace, "Articulating the 'Space Between': Atwood's Untold Stories and Fresh Beginnings" in *Margaret Atwood: Language, Text and System* eds. Sherrill E. Grace and Lorraine Weir (University of British Columbia: 1983), p. 4.
3. We notice the connection between Grace's critical methodology and her conclusions.
4. Rick Salutin, "A Note on the Marxism of Atwood's *Survival*," *Malahat Review* 41 (1977).
5. Grace, p. 8.
6. If there is anything to Grace's view of Atwood's synchronic system, then examples from Atwood's early work should be as potent as from her later. We need not look for corrections of early mistaken emphasis through any development or maturing. See Grace, p. 4.
7. See Mandel, "Atwood's Poetic Politics," Grace and Weir, *Atwood: Language, Text and System*. Frank Davey, *Surviving the Paraphrase* (Turnstone: 1983).
8. Robert Cluett, "Surface Structure: The Syntactic Profile of *Surfacing*," *Margaret Atwood: Language, Text and System*, eds. Sherrill E. Grace and Lorraine Weir (University of British Columbia, 1983); and M. Jayne Patterson, "The Taming of Externals", *Studies in Canadian Literature*, (Vol. VII, November, 1982).
9. Christopher Dewdney, *Predators of the Adoration, Selected Poems, 1972-82* (McLelland and Stewart: 1983). For my own discussion of Dewdney's poetry elsewhere see "The New Phrenologists: Christopher Dewdney", *The Literary Half-Yearly* (New Delhi, Nov. 1983).
10. Dragland, "Afterword", *Predators of the Adoration*, p. 195.
11. Dragland, 198.
12. Dewdney, *Predators of the Adoration*, pp. 95-96.

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COUNTERPOINT: GLENN GOULD & MARSHALL McLUHAN

Paul Théberge

I

> It appears that for the memorializers and public mourners it is necessary to reduce him to the level of a mere top-ranking piano virtuoso. It is as if Gould the passionate moralist and Gould the innovative sound sculptor had never been ...[1]

Glenn Gould, from 1955 until his death in 1982, was one of Canada's most internationally celebrated pianists. He was also well known for his controversial ideas concerning the recording medium and his uninhibited use of tape editing in making musical recordings. But now Gould has become the victim of another sort of editing — the screening out of that which is most disturbing in his thought. In the second edition of his book, *Glenn Gould, Music & Mind*, Geoffrey Payzant lists some of the attempts that were made to commemorate Gould. These include the circulation of a petition to name a concert hall after him and the move to establish an annual piano competition in his memory. All this for a musician who, at the age of thirty-two, voluntarily left the concert hall stating that it would cease to exist as a cultural institution in the twenty-first century; a person who spoke out against the spirit of competition and cited its destructive effects on music making and on the development of Western society as a whole.

Payzant has indulged in a certain amount of editing in his own right. Throughout his detailed study there is not a single reference to the work of

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Marshall McLuhan. Yet Gould, in his own writing and in interviews, made numerous references to McLuhan, stated that he had a great admiration for him and that they had once been, in fact, neighbors. It would appear that Payzant, for whatever reason, has systematically edited out Gould's references to, or associations with, McLuhan and his ideas.[2] This is a serious omission.

In this essay I will explore some of the areas in which Gould's ideas concerning the recording medium intersect with McLuhan's more generalized theories of media and technology. Some of McLuhan's theories, for example his distinction between "hot" and "cool" media, are vague if not cryptic and tend to confuse the effects of media themselves with specific media practices. An examination of the various uses to which Gould put the technology of sound reproduction can help illuminate McLuhan's ideas by grounding them in the life and work of this unusually creative individual. What is central to this discussion then is not only the fact that many of Gould's ideas bear a striking resemblance to those of Marshall McLuhan, but that Gould developed his theories while engaged in an intense reevaluation of an artistic practice. The relationship between technology and the artistic imagination is a recurring theme in McLuhan's work and it is this relationship that I wish to explore. In doing so, I also hope to reveal some of the dangers inherent in the single-minded pursuit of the creative potential embodied in technology if that pursuit is not complemented by an adequate social and political conception of the role of technology in society.

II

> I've never conceded any real contradiction between the assumption that one can have a rather solitary existence and the fact that one can supportively have radio in the background at all times.[3]

Glenn Gould was a quintessential "McLuhanesque" figure, living as though technology was an "extension" of himself. In the latter part of his life, when solitude became more and more the necessary condition under which his creative efforts were realized, Gould used technology both as a way of maintaining contact with, and a way of protecting himself from, the outside world. He seldom saw his closest friends but constantly talked with them over the telephone. There were those whom he felt close to although he had never met them in person: "Do you know the writer Jonathan Cott? A very interesting man, and a friend of mine. We've actually never met; our relationship is ... terribly telephonic."[4] For Gould the recording studio was not only the site from which he communicated with his listeners but it also

offered "the privacy, the solitude ... in which it was possible to make music in a more direct, more personal manner than the concert hall permit."[5]

McLuhan viewed technology not simply as a "medium," but as an "environment." Gould is said to have carried a radio with him at all times; he made it his constant environment:

> Radio, in any case, is a medium I've been very close to ever since I was a child, that I listen to virtually nonstop: I mean, it's wallpaper for me — I sleep with the radio on, in fact now I'm incapable of sleeping *without* the radio on.[6]

Gould claimed that at night the hourly news sometimes provided the material for his dreams.

Gould was also able to make use of his radio environment, to put it to work for him. His constant audio input, sometimes provided by more than one audio source, supplied Gould with a means of dividing his areas of concentration. "Quite mysteriously, I discovered that I could better learn Schoenberg's difficult piano score, Opus 23, if I listened to them both at once, the FM to hear music and the AM to hear the news."[7] On another occasion Gould described how he began to master a particularly difficult passage in a Beethoven sonata by placing a radio and a television next to his piano and turning them up "full blast." "The fact that you couldn't hear yourself, that there wasn't audible evidence of your failure was already a step in the right direction."[8]

Gould's ability to divide his various levels of consciousness through the manipulation of his audio environment resembles the type of simultaneous awareness that McLuhan spoke of in relation to the "field" experience of the "oral-aural" person. In the first example cited above, Gould achieved a sense of heightened receptivity while submerged in a multi-channel environment; in the second, he used sound to block the "audile-tactile" relationship which forms the very basis of playing the piano or any other musical instrument. Gould's notorious irrepressible habit of singing while playing the piano, which is clearly audible in many of his recordings, is perhaps another indication that, more than most musicians, Gould was indeed McLuhan's "oral-aural" man — incapable of remaining silent, totally involved in an activity that required "the participation of the whole body and the whole mind."[9]

III

In an unguarded moment some months ago, I predicted that the

> public concert as we know it today would no longer exist a century hence, that its functions would have been entirely taken over by electronic media. It had not occurred to me that this statement represented a particularly radical pronouncement. Indeed, I regarded it almost as self-evident truth ...[10]

Gould's pronouncement was regarded as radical by the musical establishment and, now that a respectable length of time has passed since his death, the opposition to his ideas has once again surfaced. A recent record review has pointed up "the ruinous effect that the uncritical acceptance of Gould's extreme ideas has had" and flatly states that "his assertion that the concert hall was an anachronistic arena ... was incorrect."[11] To argue that the institution of the concert hall still exists however is not enough to prove that Gould's ideas were false. Gould regarded the concert hall as not simply a social institution but as the symbol of an economic and moral system.

For Gould, the concert hall was a "symbol of musical mercantilism." This was perhaps an unfortunate choice of terms for he used "mercantilism" only in the broadest sense of the word and not in its more historically specific usage. More precisely, Gould was speaking of the rise of the concert hall in relation to capitalist modes of production and consumption, and the specialization of the roles of the composer, the performer and the audience.

McLuhan would likely have agreed with this analysis but for entirely different reasons. For McLuhan, the concert hall and the industrial factory represent a cultural and economic order based on print technology:

> ... the first printing of musical scores in the sixteenth century ... became the basis of the great musical developments of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The same kind of fragmentation and specialism in the arts and sciences made possible mammoth results in industry ... and in massive cooperative enterprises such as ... the symphony orchestra.[12]

Today, the creation of demand has become as important to the capitalist economy as the production of consumer goods. "Top 40" radio programming and, more recently, music video are hybrid entertainment/advertising formats which provide essential promotional support (and royalties) to the music industry, as well as creating a self-perpetuating pattern of consumption.[13]

In an economic system that seeks to produce not only the objects but also the conditions of consumption, it is the recording and broadcast industries that should be regarded as the most dynamic symbols of that system.

Viewed in this way, Gould's prediction concerning the disappearance of the concert hall has, to a large degree, already come true.

Gould felt that the concert hall performer occupies a privileged position, operating as he does from a "power-base," savoring an intensely individual form of "ego-gratification."[14] But as Edward Said points out, it is also a position implying a certain vulnerability: "In the concert hall, the emphasis had been on the reception by an audience of a live performer, a commodity directly purchased, consumed, and exhausted during two hours of concert time."[15] Gould insisted that concert audiences possess a desire for communion with the performer mixed with a good measure of what he called "blood-lust" — the desire to see the performing acrobat fall from his wire. Gould's personal conflict as regards the concert hall was essentially a moral one. It was his hope that the intervention of technology would enable the performer "to operate at increasing distances from, to be increasingly out of touch with, his animal response to confrontation."[16]

The recording studio may indeed protect the performer from the more direct influence of his ticket-purchasing public, but it places him in a new relationship to that public and to the system of late capitalism as a whole. In a sense, Gould's attitude was perhaps focused too closely on the production environment and not on the market system. His moral stand against the concert hall and his belief in the technological possibility of liberating himself from the system it symbolized was, in some ways, a case of self-deception. Like McLuhan, Gould "had no systematic, or even eclectic, theory of the relationship between economy and technology."[17] But to take him to task on this point is perhaps unfair for unlike McLuhan, Gould had not set out to construct an overall theory about the effects of technology. Gould was more interested in the aesthetic dimension, the contrast between the experience of the concert hall and that of listening to a recording.

IV

> No musician of our time had given so much thought to the prospects of recording or had better exemplified, through his major career decisions, the practical and philosophical consequences of technology.[18]

Glenn Gould made this statement about the conductor, Leopold Stokowski, but it could also be applied to Gould himself. In 1964, carrying out a promise he had made much earlier, Gould played his last public concert and retired to the recording studio to explore what he considered to be the "limitless possibilities" of the recording medium. The following year Gould

created a radio program for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation entitled, "The Prospects of Recording." An adapted version, which was published in essay form in *High Fidelity* magazine in 1966, provides a detailed account of the effects, and the possibilities, of recording technology on music. It is perhaps, more than any of Gould's other writings, his "manifesto" on the subject of sound recording.

In "The Prospects of Recording," short-comings of the concert hall experience are juxtaposed with the possibilities of the recording medium under three headings: "A Change of Acoustic," "An Untapped Repertoire" and "The Splendid Splice."

A Change of Acoustic

Gould stated that recordings offer the listener an experience of music that is characterized by an "analytic clarity, immediacy, and indeed almost tactile proximity."[19] The latter characteristic is reminiscent of McLuhan who privileged audio technology (along with television) for its role in "the recovery of tactile experience ... a striving toward the union of the audile and tactile."[20] Indeed, Gould's recordings, which utilize close miking techniques, are distinguished by their uncanny ability to convey a sense of the tactile experience of music.

Before the advent of recording, "concertgoers preferred that their occasional experience of music be fitted with an acoustic splendor, cavernously reverberant if possible."[21] Gould stated that the concert hall experience tended to support a kind of "reverence" for music. As our environment of recorded sound has become more pervasive, and our experience of music more "casual," the pursuit of the "cathedral-like" sound in recording has, consequently, become inappropriate. The home listening environment calls for an acoustic experience which is both "intimate" and "impartial."

Elsewhere, Gould spoke of the advantages that the characteristic of "analytic clarity" has for both the performer and the listener. The concert hall environment requires that the performer project the music outward so that it can be heard by 2,000-3,000 people. This often requires the performer to force the tone from his instrument, substituting power for subtlety of execution. An overly reverberant hall may also require the performer to choose slower tempos so as to retain some degree of clarity in the musical texture. To do so however means that the performer may have to sacrifice his notion of the "ideal" interpretation of the work. The concert listener on the other hand is seldom able to avail himself of the best possible experience of the music as his listening perspective may be compromised by the size and acoustics of the hall itself, and his location in it.

The "analytic clarity" which the recording studio environment can pro-

vide allows the performer a greater freedom and subtlety of approach to the interpretation of music. Likewise, the listener is offered a sense of "immediacy," a closeness to the source of the sounding music which represents a complete break with his former experience in the concert hall, an experience which was fundamentally one of distance.

Gould's own predilection for the contrapuntal intricacies of Baroque music, particularly that of Bach, and the complex music of twentieth-century composers such as Hindemith and Schoenberg was well suited to the qualities of the recording studio. He often spoke of the microphone's ability to "dissect" the music, to reveal the inner workings of musical structure. Of Schoenberg's musical theories he stated that they attribute "significance to minute musical connections and they deal with relationships that are on the whole sub-surface and can be projected with an appropriate definition only through the intercession of electronic media."[22]

An Untapped Repertoire

Recording has also helped to create a greater emphasis on music that has its historical origins outside the concert hall tradition. McLuhan claimed that "the tape recorder in combination with the LP revolutionized the repertory of classical music ... it brought in the entire musical culture of many centuries and countries."[23] But the new listening environment created by the phonograph was also an important factor in the development of new repertoire. Gould believed that since World War II, the great revival of the music of the Baroque and pre-Baroque periods, musical forms that relate to a tradition of "hausmusik," was, in part, a result of recording industry initiatives designed to meet the requirements of a home listening environment.

In the recording studio, the performer is met with a new challenge:

> he will necessarily encounter a wider range of repertoire than could possibly be his lot in the concert hall. The current archival approach of many recording companies demands a complete survey of the works of a given composer, and performers are expected to undertake productions of enormous scope ...[24]

This "archival responsibility" frees the performer from what Gould elsewhere described as the "conservative" discipline of the concert hall, a discipline that requires a relatively small repertoire of music to be kept in top form, always ready to be performed. Ultimately, the concert discipline causes many performers to distort their interpretations of a work in order to defeat the deadening effects of overexposure.

The recording medium allows the performer to approach each work in a completely fresh way:

> it enables him "to establish a contact with a work which is very much like that of the composer's own relation to it. It permits him to encounter a particular piece of music and to analyse and dissect it in a most thorough way, to make it a vital part of his life for a relatively brief period, and then to pass on to some other challenge ...[25]

Furthermore, Gould asserted that the recording medium has changed the manner in which some performers interpret music, particularly contemporary music. The performer can present the music to his audience "from a strongly biased conceptual viewpoint, which the private and concentrated circumstances of their listening make feasible."[26]

The Splendid Splice

It was not until after the Second World War, when the tape recorder was introduced into the field of music recording, that the possibility of splicing together several "takes" of a musical performance became possible. Prior to this time a musical performance of a work, or a section of a work, would be committed directly to disc. The process was closer to a live performance (at least with respect to any sense of continuity in time) than that of the flexible, modular approach afforded by the new tape medium. McLuhan regarded the early phonograph as a simple "machine" which functioned according to a linear process. It was the tape recorder that brought sound recording into the electronic age. The new medium destroyed linear time; continuity was established after the fact by splicing together segments of prerecorded tape.

The most obvious advantage of this new capability was the reproduction of a seemingly flawless performance. Gould was hardly in great need of this simple rectifying aspect of the medium but had no inhibitions regarding its use either. He firmly disagreed with critics and purists that insisted that splicing was "a dishonest and dehumanizing technique." For Gould, the splice freed the performer to take risks, to perhaps adopt extreme tempos or other interpretive strategies that might be dangerous, even reckless, in live performance. The "ideal" performance could then be assembled in the editing room.

More important than this, Gould often used the editing process as a separate, parallel means of arriving at the specific interpretation of the work as a whole. He described an occasion when, after taping several

distinctly different interpretations of a Bach fugue, he elected to splice together sections of two different takes in order to arrive at a more varied performance, one that represented his "best thoughts on this fugue." Gould realized that "By taking advantage of the post-taping afterthought ... one can very often transcend the limitations that performance imposes upon the imagination."[27] Whether one arrived at a specific interpretation pre-taping or post-taping was irrelevant. All that was necessary was that the performer realize that the recording was not just a mechanical reproduction of a performance but rather, the performance and the recording were integral parts of a single creative process.

V

> The basic fact to keep in mind about the movie camera and the projector is their resemblance to the process of human cognition ... The camera records and analyses the daylight world with more than human intensity ...[28]

This dictum, made by McLuhan during the 1950's, can be applied to the recording medium by simply substituting the words "microphone," "tape recorder" and "sound world" in the place of "movie camera," "projector" and "daylight world." Gould's use of the microphone as an analytical tool was clearly in keeping with McLuhan's dictum but its relation to "the process of human cognition" is perhaps less obvious and requires further elaboration.

In an early essay entitled, "Joyce, Aquinas, and the Poetic Process," McLuhan reveals that his model of human cognition was that of the "labyrinth figure" as exemplified in the "articles" of St. Thomas Aquinas and in the work of James Joyce. The Thomistic "article" is in three parts: beginning with the "objections," proceeding through the "respondeo," and ending with the "answers to objections." McLuhan described this form as an "'S' labyrinth" and suggested that "this figure is really traced and retraced by the mind many times in the course of a single article."[29] The labyrinth also appears in the work of James Joyce, "who knew that the creative process itself was a retracing of the stages of apprehension."[30]

If music is a form of human cognition, then most contrapuntally structured music, and particularly the fugue, can perhaps be regarded as analogous to McLuhan's labyrinth figure. The fugal subject-countersubject form of organization, the texture in which simultaneous voices make use of devices such as imitation, reverse imitation and inversion, all bear resemblance to McLuhan's description of the multiple perspectives embodied in the Thomistic "article." Gould's recordings reveal the fugal labyrinth

through his own unique style of playing the piano and through his use of the microphone as an aid in "dissection." Furthermore, his creative use of the editing process, the "post-taping afterthought," might be compared to what McLuhan described as the poetic process itself: "one of discovering by retracing."[31]

Gould's radio documentaries, which he referred to as "contrapuntal radio," moved even further in the direction of the labyrinth. In these works he tried "to have situations arise cogently from within the framework of the program in which two or three voices could be overlapped, in which they would be heard talking — simultaneously, but from different points of view — about the same subject."[32] *The Idea of North, The Latecomers*, and his other documentaries of the late 60's and early 70's, with their simultaneous juxtapositions of music, sound effects, and multiple voices can perhaps best be described as "cubist" soundscapes. Throughout his writings, McLuhan privileged the "cubist perspective" as his prime metaphor for the modern electronic experience and for the process of human cognition in general.

VI

> As the performer's once sacrosanct privileges are merged with the responsibilities of the tape editor and the composer, the Van Meegeren syndrome can no longer be cited as an indictment but becomes rather an entirely appropriate description of the aesthetic condition of our time. The role of the forger, of the unknown maker of unauthenticated goods, is emblematic of electronic culture.[33]

Gould stated that Hans Van Meegeren, a forger of Vermeer paintings, was one of his "private heroes." In Van Meegeren he saw the crisis of "personal-responsibility-for authorship" which is inherent in electronic media production. Gould's account of the forger's activities is, perhaps, an attempt at a kind of McLuhanesque "probe" concerning the effects of media.

Apparently, Van Meegeren sold his forgeries (all duly authenticated by critics and historians) to the Germans during the Second World War. After the war Dutch authorities charged him with collaboration and the selling of national treasures. As part of his defense he confessed that the paintings had not been Vermeers at all, and the enraged authenticators of his work then pressed the government to charge him with forgery.

The story of the forger led Gould to question the manner in which the value and status of a work of art is determined. Gould claimed that the interdependence of formerly separate and specialized roles, which is a result of the process of studio recording, calls into question the authorship of the

recorded musical performance. Those of a more traditional cast of mind distrust the techniques of the recording studio and prefer recordings of "live" performances. For Gould, this is a manifestation of the "Van Meegeren syndrome," a form of "rear-guard holding action," that seeks to authenticate the performer's interpretation and relegate the recording engineer to the position of mere documentor of the historical event. In contrast, Gould felt that the recording studio allowed him a certain "anonymity" while working and he welcomed the intercession of both the microphone and the recording engineer. The recorded performance of the musical work is, in a sense, a collaborative forgery. Ultimately, Gould's line of reasoning led him to question whether the concept of the work of "art" itself is still valid in the electronic age.

McLuhan was also suspicious of the "world and bureaucracy of 'art appreciation.'"[34] For McLuhan, specialization was the result of print technology, as was the "consumer-oriented culture that is concerned about authors and labels of authenticity."[35] The new electronic media demand "a high degree of producer-orientation," and this brings about "an altogether new relation of the medium to its users."[36] This new relation is one of "participation." The role of the artist, and the experimental work of art, is to offer training in perception that will allow us to cope with our media environments. But even this role is in part made obsolete by technology:

> Today technologies and their consequent environments succeed each other so rapidly that one environment makes us aware of the next. Technologies begin to perform the function of art in making us aware of the psychic and social consequences of technology.[37]

The notions of "participation" and "environment" are important concepts in McLuhan's discourse on the effects of electronic technology. For Gould also, the aesthetic condition engendered by the technology of sound reproduction heralds the arrival of the listener as "participant" in the transformation of art into "environment."

VII

> The listener is able to indulge preferences and, through the electronic modifications with which he endows the listening experience, impose his own personality upon the work. As he does so, he transforms that work, and his relation to it, from an artistic to an environmental experience.[38]

Whereas the concert hall presents the listener with an experience over

which s/he has no control, the modern hi-fi system allows the listener to subtlely modify the dynamic, timbral and spatial balance of a musical recording. Gould felt that "Dial twiddling is in its limited way an interpretive act."

Since "The Prospects of Recording" appeared in print there has been at least one musical recording which was designed specifically for the home listener/interpreter: the Nonesuch recording of *HPSCHD*, by John Cage and Lejaren Hiller. Parts of the sound material of this computer-assisted composition were recorded in one channel only (left or right) and the other parts in both channels. By using the balance control on his stereo the listener can vary the density and spatial orientation of the sounds. Included in the album is a computer print-out which is "one of 10,000 different numbered solutions of the program KNOBS. It enables the listener who follows its instructions to become a performer of this recording."[39] This constitutes one example of what McLuhan might have envisioned when he stated that the consumer is "invited by new art forms to become participant in the art process itself."[40]

Such listener involvement is indeed "limited" and Gould predicted that new devices would soon become available that would greatly alter the nature of home listening. One such device would enable the listener to edit together sections of recordings of the same work made by different artists in such a way as to "permit him to create his own ideal performance." Here Gould revealed his willingness to share with the listener the option of the "post-taping afterthought," even though it enables him/her to violate the integrity of Gould's own "ideal" interpretation.

Gould's perception of what is technically possible is not balanced by a corresponding perception of the constraining and de-skilling force of technology in consumer society. Just as electronic and computer developments in the regulation of the combustion engine have virtually rendered the amateur mechanic obsolete, so has the invention of audio cassettes and compact discs made it less likely that the home listener will realize his full potential as "participant." Cassette tape cannot be spliced, thus limiting the kind of manipulations envisioned by Gould. Its very real potential as an inexpensive, universally available medium for individually produced and distributed sound recordings of all kinds has been obscured by an industry dominated outcry against so-called "piracy." In the case of the audio cassette then, both the technology and the discourse surrounding it tend to constrain the possibilities for creative "participation." More recently, compact discs have begun to replace conventional phonograph records. The kind of experimental techniques employed by a variety of innovators over the past sixty years, from Bauhaus artist to rap deejay — techniques that rely on the direct manipulation of the record surface or the speed of the turntable —

are unlikely to arise out of a technology such as the compact disc where hands-on contact with the product is limited.

The recording medium does offer the listener a prerogative not previously available in the concert hall — that of choosing a listening program according to individual tastes. The recording industry has responded by making available to the listener a vast collection of the musical traditions of the world. Gould believed that we are on the way to a "stylistic mix" similar in effect to that engendered by art reproductions and described by André Malraux in, *Voices of Silence*. Malraux's expression "museum without walls" was also a favorite with McLuhan who went on to say that the phonograph had broken down the old class distinctions of music: "Everybody lost his inhibitions about 'highbrow,' and the serious people lost their qualms about popular music and culture."[41] But this has little to do with McLuhan's claim for the "in depth" experience of "process" over "content." It has more to do with the decontextualized nature of media experience in which listeners, safe in the privacy of their homes, do not have to physically confront the social and cultural differences of a symphony hall or rock concert audience.

Gould continued his argument in favor of the stylistic mix by describing Muzak as "an encyclopedia of experience, an exhaustive compilation of the clichés of post-Renaissance music."[42] Gould claimed that Muzak educates the listener more effectively than any music appreciation course precisely because of its character as an "environment." Furthermore:

> The cliché residue of all the idioms employed in background becomes an intuitive part of our musical vocabulary. Consequently, in order to gain our attention any *musical* experience must be of a quite exceptional nature"[43] (Gould's emphasis)

Here Gould's argument is essentially the same as McLuhan's: "The Medium is the Message." A concern with "content" merely obscures the influence media has over us as "environment." However, Gould is inconsistent when he implies that there is a difference between a *musical* experience and the experience of background sound.

Given this inconsistency, one must ask whether there is a point when the *musical* experience will cease to gain our attention at all, whether an intuitive musical vocabulary made up of a residue of clichés is not a vocabulary drained of all meaning, a symbolic system that has lost all significance. As Adorno once suggested, music that has become merely "style" cannot point towards any social or aesthetic meaning. It can only point to itself as a commodity: "today every monster close-up of a star is an advertisement for her name, and every hit song a plug for its tune."[44] Music

video, which is currently the culture industry's most intense form of self-promoting commodity, stands at the nexus of musical and visual cliché.

Even if Gould's argument concerning the musical cliché is a valid one, the phenomenon of background sound is not simply a musical affair. Sounds, especially loud sounds, tend to dominate the space in which they occur and have often been used as symbols of power. Canadian composer R. Murray Schafer tells us that "the hunter's horn lays claim to the forest ... the church bell to the parish."[45] Elsewhere, in describing the great machine noises that accompanied the industrial revolution, Schafer notes that "Wherever noise is granted immunity from human intervention, there will be found a seat of power."[46] Muzak then, does not represent a form of musical expression so much as an expression of power, of corporate ownership of space. McLuhan recognized this fact when he stated that "Owners are aware of the media as power, and they know that this power has little to do with 'content' ..."[47]

In this respect, the familiar urban sound of the "ghetto blaster" is perhaps a form of aural graffiti which defies the corporation's sole claim over the sonic environment. It stakes out a personal, self-indulgent space for its owner. But the music emitted by the ghetto blaster is more often than not the product of the culture industry itself and it betrays the impotence of the owner's gesture. Lacking a voice of his own, he ends up reinforcing the corporate sphere of power over himself and the environment.

For the more discrete, there is the Sony "Walkman." With the "Walkman" the listener is invited to indulge in a private acoustic space completely detached from the immediate surroundings. Ownership of the acoustic space is still an important factor as Schafer points out: "messages received on earphones are always private property."[48] Paradoxically, while the "Walkman" offers a sense of personal detachment, it also supplies an umbilical cord connecting the individual directly to the culture industry.

The "Walkman" is an example of what McLuhan meant when he said that technology is "an extension of our own bodies and senses." Until we learn to recognize this we will continue "Leasing our eyes and ears and nerves to commercial interests." Gould's observation concerning the "cliché residue" which makes up the bulk of Muzak programs is perhaps an indication that we have already handed over "the common speech to a private corporation."[49]

VIII

> There is a relationship of the sound to the various envelopes of space you're placing it in that adds immeasurably.[50]

If it can be said that sounds tend to dominate a given space, then it must also be said that our perception of sound is influenced by the acoustic space in which the sound occurs. Phonograph recordings often attempt to create an impression of the acoustical environment in which the recording was originally made. However, a pair of stereo speakers can only create an *illusion* of three dimensional space. In this respect, Gould's use of the recording medium outlined earlier was anti-illusionistic. He rejected any attempt to recreate the concert hall sound in favour of a close, analytical perspective on the sound of the musical instrument itself.

During the early 70's Gould began to experiment with a new technique of recording music which gives some indication of how far his thoughts concerning the medium had evolved since the publication of "The Prospects of Recording." Briefly, the technique consists of making a recording with eight microphones (each recorded on a separate track of a multi-track tape recorder). The mikes are grouped in pairs and are positioned at varying distances from the piano such that each pair presents the listener with a slightly different perspective on the instrument. Later, the eight-track tape is mixed down to normal stereo but, in the process, Gould is able to "choreograph" the various perspectives according to what he feels are the demands of the musical score.[51]

Gould only used the technique to record certain late Romantic repertoire, such as works by Scriabin and Sibelius, works which contain highly coloristic effects. Gould described his technique of "multiple perspectives" in cinematic terms: zooms, long shots, tight shots, dissolves, jump cuts, etc. I would suggest that a more appropriate term for this technique might be "mobile perspective." For in the final, choreographed mix, one is not struck so much by the multiplicity of perspectives as by the impression of "mobility" from one perspective to the next.

The technique was completely in keeping with Gould's predilection for the analytical capabilities of the recording medium. He did not attempt to recreate the acoustics of the original recording environment (although the technique does rely on those acoustics to a large degree). Instead he created a spatial interpretation of the score which, in its every nuance, complements the interpretation that he had created at the piano itself. The multiple perspectives merge into a single spatial continuum in which the listener acquires a fluidly mobile perspective on the musical object.

The spatial overlay perhaps constitutes another example of McLuhan's "labyrinth" structure as the model of human cognition. As with the "post-taping afterthought," Gould used the technique of multiple perspectives as a means of "retracing" the poetic process of musical interpretation. In his radio documentary, *The Latecomers*, Gould occasionally moved voices

across the stereo field as a means of emphasizing certain thematic relationships between the characters. Thus, it would appear that Gould, in both his musical recordings and his radio documentaries, regarded the spatial aspects of recorded sound as a cognitive "labyrinth" of perception.

Only in pop music recordings are the spatial aspects of sound manipulated to such a degree. For example, each instrument in a pop music recording is usually recorded using only extremely close miking techniques. Each instrument is recorded on a separate track and differing amounts of artificial reverberation is added to each track during the mixdown to stereo. The bass drum sound will usually have little or no reverberation added to it while the snare drum may be made to sound as if it had been played in a cavernous acoustical space.

Pop music recording techniques have become relatively standardized and seldom have any integral relationship with the music being recorded. Whereas Gould had attempted to develop a technique that would serve the purposes of musical expression, pop recording practices transform the music in order to meet the demands of a technological process. The multiple acoustic spaces of the pop music recording do not merge, they remain on essentially separate acoustical planes. The resulting image is one of an extremely fragmented space.

The recording techniques explored by Glenn Gould and the recording practices of popular music both create what McLuhan described as a "cubist" perspective: "the acceptance of multiple facets and planes in a single experience."[52] The paradox embodied in pop music recording is that while the artificially enhanced beat of the music exhorts the listener to move, to dance, there exists virtually no acoustical space in which the listener can achieve any sense of mobility; s/he is, as it were, caught between the "multiple facets and planes."

IX

> I referred earlier to the notion of isolation as a liturgical Canadian theme, which in a sense makes Gould's preoccupation with it a validation of his citizenship. He was, in fact, quite at home in the country that Canadian hoboes familiarly refer to as Big Lonely ...[53]

If there is some notion of isolation which is indeed a "Canadian theme," then Glenn Gould, through his life and work, has enriched its tradition. It was through his self-imposed isolation that Gould was able to pursue his most creative impulses with such intensity. According to Gould himself, almost all his major radio documentaries dealt with the themes of isolation

and solitude in some way, several taking place in remote, uniquely Canadian settings.

Similarly, if there is a distinctly "Canadian discourse"[54] on technology, then Glenn Gould, through his numerous writings and his innovative approach to the recording medium, deserves his place, along with McLuhan and others, on that side of the discourse which privileges the creative moment implicit in new technologies. Gould is a prime example of McLuhan's artist "who grasps the implications of his actions and of new knowledge in his own time. He is the man of integral awareness."[55] Gould's thought touched upon some of the most important themes of avant-garde art and music since the Second World War: the use of technology as an integral part of the creative process; the breakdown of the specialized roles of the composer, performer and audience; the notion of anonymous creative work and the destruction of the work of art; the realization of the musical potential embodied in the spoken word; and the exploration of the spatial aspects of sound.

But, as pointed out earlier, Gould also shared some of the failings of McLuhan's side of the discourse. For while isolation and the use of technology may contain potential for integral creative awareness, it would almost seem that the same combination does not contain an equal potential for an integrated political awareness.

The themes of isolation and technology are intimately linked for Canadians precisely because it was, in part, an attempt to overcome the problem of geographical isolation that made Canada so dependent on communications technologies. However, the contradiction embodied in mass media technologies — those based on a system of centralized production and individualized consumption — is that they simultaneously connect and isolate us. If Gould's ideas have been perceived as controversial it is because, by placing himself at the centre of this contradiction, he has revealed our own ambivalent relationship to media and technology.

In this sense, Glenn Gould was much more than "a mere top-ranking piano virtuoso."

Montréal

Notes

1. Geoffrey Payzant, *Glenn Gould, Music & Mind*, 2nd ed., Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1984, p. 146.

2. Gould appears to have been aware of the degree to which some of his ideas resembled those of McLuhan and, at times, would mention his name simply as a way of dismissing him as a possible influence, or so it would seem:

"I think that much of the new music has a lot to do with (and I don't mean to sound like that chap, Marshall something-or-other) the spoken word."
— (Curtis Davis, reprinted in *Variations*, p. 280).
The same passage appears in Payzant's book as follows:
"I think that much of the new music has a lot to do with the spoken word ..." (p. 130).

3. Jonathan Cott, *Conversations with Glenn Gould*, Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1984, p. 103.
4. Tim Page, "Interview with Glenn Gould," *Piano Quarterly*, 29 (Fall 1981), p. 20.
5. Payzant, *Music & Mind*, p. 36.
6. Cott, *Conversations*, p. 103.
7. Richard Kostelanetz, "Glenn Gould: Bach in the Electronic Age", reprinted in *Glenn Gould Variations*, ed. John McGreevy, Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1983, p. 127.
8. Cott, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
9. Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962, p. 111.
10. Glenn Gould, "The Prospects of Recording", *High Fidelity*, 16 (April 1966), p. 47.
11. Thomas Hathaway, "Glenn Gould: A Legacy of Leavings", *High Fidelity*, (April 1985), p. 71.
12. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, New York: New American Library, Mentor Books, 1964, p. 246.
13. For a thorough, historical examination of the relationship between music and capitalist modes of production and consumption see: Jacques Attali, *Bruits, essai sur l'économie politique de la musique*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1977.
14. Glenn Gould, "Glenn Gould interviews Glenn Gould about Glenn Gould", *High Fidelity*, 24 (Feb. 1974), p. 74.
15. Edward Said, "The Music Itself: Glenn Gould's Contrapuntal Vision", reprinted in *Variations*, p. 52.
16. Glenn Gould, "Music and Technology," reprinted in *The Glenn Gould Reader*, ed. Tim Page, Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys Limited, 1964, p. 355.
17. Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind*, Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1984, p. 79.
18. Glenn Gould, "Stokowski in Six Scenes", reprinted in *Variations*, p. 160.
19. Glenn Gould, "The Prospects of Recording", *High Fidelity*, 16 (April 1966), p. 48.
20. Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, New York: New American Library, Mentor Books, 1964, p. 247.
21. Gould, "Prospects", p. 48.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
23. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 248.
24. Gould, "Prospects", p. 50.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
28. Marshall McLuhan, "Sight, Sound, and the Fury", from *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*, ed. B. Rosenberg & D. Manning White, Toronto: Collier-Macmillan Canada, 1957, p. 493.

29. Marshall McLuhan, "Joyce, Aquinas, and the Poetic Process", *Renascence*, IV 1 Autumn (1951), p. 3.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
32. Payzant, *Music & Mind*, p. 131.
33. Gould, "Prospects", p. 56.
34. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 71.
35. McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, p. 161.
36. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 174-175.
37. *Ibid.*, introduction to the second edition, p. ix.
38. Gould, "The Prospects of Recording", p. 59.
39. Album liner notes, John Cage & Lejaren Hiller *HPSCHD*, Nonesuch H-71224.
40. McLuhan, *Gutenberg Galaxy*, p. 328.
41. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 247.
42. Gould, "Prospects", p. 61.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
44. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", in *Mass Communication and Society*, p. 381.
45. R. Murray Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1977, p. 39.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
47. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 60.
48. Schafer, *The Tuning of the World*, p. 118.
49. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 73.
50. Jim Aitkin, "Interview with Glenn Gould", *Contemporary Keyboard*, 6, no. 8 (August 1980), p. 36.
51. The most detailed account of the "multiple perspective" technique appears in Jonathan Cott, *Conversations with Glenn Gould*. A shorter description appears in Jim Aitkin's interview for *Contemporary Keyboard* and in Curtis Davis' article in *Variations*.

    A sequence in which Gould is shown directing a mixing of a "multiple perspective" recording (music by Scriabin) appears in "Sound or Unsound" #8 of the *Music Man* series, Yehudi Menuhin, C.B.C. & NFB, 1979.
52. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 247.
53. William Littler, "The Quest for Solitude", reprinted in *Variations*, p. 222.
54. Kroker, introduction to *Technology and the Canadian Mind*, pp. 7-19.
55. McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, p. 71.

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THE POST-INNISIAN SIGNIFICANCE OF INNIS

Andrew Wernick

> To be Canadian, not British or American or French, is not necessarily to be parochial. We must rely on our own efforts and remember that cultural strength comes from Europe.
>
> H.A.L. Innis, *The Strategy for Culture*

1. Invitation to a Re-reading

Recent efforts to re-examine the work of Harold Innis[1] are to be welcomed not just as belated recognition for a forgotten major figure but for the clarification in our own thinking that a reflection on his mutant synthesis might serve to bring about. At a time of dizzying metatheoretical reflexivity, this at least will serve as my excuse for suggesting that the contemporary significance of Innis is to be found above all through an engagement with his thought at a second-order level: in terms, that is, of its meaning and character as a paradigmatic event within the evolving Western episteme.

In English-Canada, it should be said at once, a meditation along these lines is prompted by local as well as universalistic considerations. The Innisian *oeuvre*, which links such otherwise disparate figures as Urwick, Cochrane and Havelock on the one side to Clark, Watkins, McLuhan and Grant on the other, occupies a pivotal position within what there has been, this century, of an indigenous intellectual tradition. Attention to its conceptual formation, then, can be expected to shed light on key distinguishing features of that tradition as a whole.

But a reading of Innis against the wider background of what contemporary thought more generally experiences as mounting epistemic difficulties cannot fail to be struck by the sense in which Innis himself, increasingly preoccupied with cultural breakdown, also announces the arrival of just such

difficulties; indeed, with a force and clarity that give even his limitations a certain illustrative value. Both in his ambition to grasp the culture of a technologically transformed civilisation from the perspective of a rationality being displaced by that very process, and in the progression of his thought from an objectivising political economy to the reflexive investigation of communicative bias, Innis perfectly encapsulates, in fact, the whole problematic climax of 'late Enlightenment'[2] reason: still clinging to practical human interests as it passed, ever more disabused of illusion, from a search for the determinants of consciousness to an encounter with language/communication, and thence to the edge of the (post-)modern vortex.

Of course, as a Canadian representative of the Chicago School, Innis expressed this adventure in the tones and idioms of the New World. That, indeed, is precisely what makes him so interesting as a variant/analyst of incipient logocentric dissolution. His North American emphasis on the material aspect of technology and its environing power gave him a perspective on the crisis of modernity that was at once neither culturalist nor Marxist. More importantly, it corresponds to a real gap in those parallel discourses from Europe that tend to monopolise such debate. As one substantive mark of this difference, whereas German critique has problematised the fate of Enlightenment in terms of distorted communication, and new French theory has pondered the epistemic problems posed by the aporias of language per se, Innis was troubled about the impact on reason of language's changing technological form. Despite McLuhan, the full import of this thematic, at every level, for the theorised (self)-understanding of late capitalist society has scarcely begun to be taken in; in which regard, a European encounter with 'Inniscence'[3] might even facilitate a larger paradigmatic correction.

But before we can begin to assess the appropriative value of Innis's reflections, either in themselves or as a mirror for the crisis he sought to depass, we must first disengage the matrix of categories within whose terms these reflections were actually conducted. That matrix, however, is neither transparently available in the text nor easy to assimilate in terms of regnant codes. And so, right at the outset, we are confronted with a second-order problem: the puzzle (or so it might reasonably be called) of Innis's paradigmatic identity.

2. The Hidden Paradigm

In a particularly acerbic address to an assembly of the United Church in 1947 Innis noted the constant pressure he was under as an economist to veil his public speech. "If in the course of an article", he told his audience, "I

make a reference to a large government department or a large business organisation, I will receive in an incredibly short time ... a personal letter ... I plan to leave in my estate a valuable collection of autographs of prominent men in this country. For these reasons I am largely compelled to avoid making speeches in public and to resort to the careful preparation of material to be made available in print. In most cases this involves writing in such guarded fashion that no one can understand what is written or using quotations from the writings of authors who stand in great repute."[4]

A non-conformist in the prophetic tradition of speaking truth to power, Innis can hardly be accused of kowtowing to elites.[5] Yet the pressure for self-censorship, especially during the early Cold War, was real enough and helps explain the undoubted indirectness of his thought. Certainly, its critical and often power-disturbing thrust is rarely stated, remaining mostly buried beneath a welter of descriptive detail and breaking surface only in the occasional stunning or gnomic aphorism. The stylistic result was a deceptively compressed discourse in which flatly panoramic accounts of Canadian economic history and global developments in communications media double connotatively as contemporary critique: cautionary tales about the upheavals attending major technological change, which point to the present need for restored sensitivity to the dimension of time. Innis, like other foes of empire and dominant culture, hid out in History and needs to be read in an allegorical light.

However, it is not only the ideological dimension of Innis's thought which is thus occluded in his text. Considering that he wrote as a social scientist, and at that as a critic of the mainstream, he also had remarkably little to say about methodology, or indeed about theoretical considerations of any kind. On even such basic questions as the epistemological status of an historical approach to social science, the effectivity of economic factors, or indeed the precise meaning of key terms like "monopoly of knowledge", he is virtually mute. Moreover, when he did address methodological issues, as for example in "The Penetrative Powers of the Price System",[6] his approach was oblique and proceeded by referring broadly defined perspectives, along with their attendant "bias", to the political, cultural and technological contexts in which they occurred. In the relentlessly indicative flow of his discourse, there is no space for a metalanguage and his pen scarcely lifts from the narrative surface of his page.

Here, not corporate and state pressure but the far subtler impress of a regionally dominant epistemic formation bore down on Innis's thought. His descriptivism, penchant for induction and refusal to theorise about theory bear all the traces, in short, of empiricism: a British-derived complex that has shaped Anglo-Canadian scholarship since colonial days and whose operant norms Innis himself was professionally bound to respect.[7]

However, if Innis submitted to the empiricist regimen, he also had his wild side and in significant ways obeyed more the letter than the spirit of its law. In the first place, the empiricist authority he liked to cite was Hume,[8] a decidedly ambiguous figure in this regard. In Britain itself, Humeian skepticism, riding the coat-tails of a victorious bourgeois reaction to scholasticism and Roman Law, has reinforced a conservative reflex against all 'grandiose' theorising and the extremism to which it allegedly leads. In Europe, however, the reception of Hume engendered what Kant called a 'Copernican revolution in philosophy'[9] which subjectivised the problem of knowledge, dissolved the pretensions of perceptualism, factuality and science, and ushered in precisely the kind of totalistic schematising against which pre-Kantian empiricism had reared its ultra-skeptical head.

Innis himself, openly in favour of speculative generalisation, scornful of quantitative technique and ever mindful of the gap between reality and its biased reconstruction as a concept, was implicitly oriented more towards these continental vicissitudes than towards the self-insulating ideology that Hume's thought turned into in Britain. It is certainly suggestive, in this respect, that among the very few philosophical writings to which he made specific reference was an essay by the young Veblen on Kant's *Critique of Judgment*;[10] and that *The Owl of Minerva*, composed near the end of his life, retraced the story of communications as an extended comment on the famous metaphor of Hegel. More generally, Leslie Armour[11] has drawn attention to the classic neo-Kantian question posed in the preface to *The Bias of Communication* — why do we attend to the things to which we attend? — and suggested that Innis's whole project, concerned as it was with the economic, political, geographic and technological determinants of cultural bias, can be read as a developing attempt to provide a satisfactory response.

The same ambiguity can be detected in Innis's approach to historiography, indeed in his very choice of history as the medium in which to develop his thought. In the humanities, from an empiricist perspective, history in an important sense occupies pride of place: a privileged zone for the application of evidential reasoning to human affairs and an endless occasion for emphasising, against all the temptations of Theory, the absolute contingency of human affairs. The social sciences themselves, in Britain, have always been suspect from this point of view; hence their relatively lagged development, particularly sociology which until recently was not even recognised by Oxford and Cambridge as an official degree subject. At the same time, historiography can never be more than an empiricism at one remove, for its facticity rests on a hermeneutics of documentation and its inevitable selectivity always implies the need for a point of view. In conventional British thinking these problems have typically been silenced by

referring them to the netherworlds of relativism and common sense. But they are harder to avoid when historical study is driven by the need to understand some pressing current issue, and precisely in reaction to some mystifyingly abstract outgrowth of social science.

This was indeed the situation at Toronto during Innis's formative years when the search for a homespun theory of Canada's peculiarly unbalanced and debt-ridden process of economic development led to open criticism of the received marginalist orthodoxy and a revival of the pre-Marshallian macro/historical approach. Besides the methodological perturbations this provoked, the resurgence of classical economy, particularly as derived from Adam Smith, also stimulated interest in that tradition's late 19th century derivatives ('evolutionist', 'institutional', 'national' economy, etc.); which in turn opened up the possibility of a wider transgression.

At the limit, and goaded by a philosophical conscience, the study of history can subsume the issue of its own subjectivity within the study of history itself. Buoyed up by idealism's Copernican turn, a full blown historicism of this kind became especially prominent in nineteenth-century Germany, laying the groundwork for a general critique of nomothetic positivism and establishing a counter-matrix within which at least the human sciences might develop along lines sensitive to the historical, intentional and interpretive character of their object. Economics, grappling with the problems posed by Germany's delayed and turbulent industrialisation, was among the disciplines so affected; hence the emergence in that domain of several historicist/interpretive tendencies, ranging from Marxism on the radical side to the *katheder-sozialistische* cross-overs of Smith and organicism which more appealed to the economic historians of early twentieth-century Canada.

And here precisely came a point of rupture. For when the Toronto school of political economy, imbued with a historicising spirit, became conjuncturally open to the ideas of Schmoller, List, Sombart, Weber and so on, it simultaneously opened itself up to the influence of the alien, i.e. non-empiricist, universe of discourse to which they belonged. With Innis himself, steadfastly ideographic, totalising, and historically self-aware, this disruptive borrowing effected something of a real break. The major mediating influence (from Innis's days at Chicago) was Veblen: the senior North American representative of the German economic school, and a neo-Kantian, whom Innis went so far as to eulogise (in 1929) as the Adam Smith of capitalism's mature industrial phase.[12]

If, then, Innis gives the impression of having pressed an empirically based approach to economic history beyond its familiar and even permissible bounds, this is for good reason. For the influence of Veblen and, more diffusely, of late 19th century culture-critique, made him into a major

(perhaps in English Canada the major) conduit for the admission via economic history of Germanic epistemic themes into derivatively British intellectual forms. Lewis Mumford coined the phrase cultural pseudomorph to describe such phenomena as the 'horseless carriage' wherein the early automobile was misleadingly assimilated to the cultural terms of a technology it had surpassed. Similarly one might say that Innis was an epistemic pseudomorph: a Germanic thinker in English-Canadian disguise.

3. The Greek Connection

Now the Germanic inflection of Innis's approach to socio-historical analysis was neither an arbitrary borrowing nor, yet, the simple outcome of a disinterested desire to understand Canada and the world in better terms than prevailing categories allowed. As a methodological bias it also expressed a value-choice which fundamentally called into question mechanical and technicist forms of thought and in turn formed the basis of a substantive civilisational critique. Thus when Innis, echoing Marx on fetishism and Weber on rationalisation, denounced statistics as "the snake" that had "entered the paradise of academic interests in political economy"[13] he was bemoaning the Fall at the level of the referent as well as at the level of the representamen.

So intimate a link between social and epistemological attitude could hardly have been avoided, of course, for an anti-positivist position of the kind he adopted stresses the interpenetration of subject and object and argues the impossibility of value-neutrality even in principle. While Innis himself spoke little of such matters, scattered references to Nietzsche, Burkhardt, Weber and Spengler[14] make clear that he well understood, and was indeed prepared to buy into, the wider *kritische* programme which his historicist critique of quantitative economics implied. What attracted him, evidently, to these "authors of great repute" was not just the frankness with which their methodological postulates were associated with ideological ones but the actual content of the latter.

Put baldly, the ideological element linking Innis's methodological presuppositions to his substantive critique, and linking both to this neo-romantic current of German thought, was modern Hellenism: that complex (taken to be prototypically Greek) of revived cultural ideals, indeed of culture as the ideal, that was counterposed to the puritanism and levelling instrumentalism of the machine age, and promoted as the basis for a corrective civilisational renewal. Once more, but this time on the ideological plane, Innis is liable to be misunderstood; and once more problems created by the elliptical character of his writing are compounded by those of interpretive resistance to its intent.

Despite his scholarly eminence, Innis was always a lonely and embattled figure, none more so, in fact, than when playing just that role of academic standard-bearer that his Hellenism enjoined. "I am under no illusions in appearing before this gathering", he told Conservative Party workers at a summer school in 1933. "I do not expect to exert any influence ... and I do not expect that many of you will understand any economic exposition advanced in this paper."[15] Introducing a talk fifteen years later on the social impact of technological change he was moved to ask "why Western civilisation has reached the point that a conference composed largely of university administrators should unconsciously assume division in points of view in the field of learning ... and forget the problem of unity ... or, to put it in a different way, why all of us here seem to be what is wrong with Western civilisation."[16] Within the university itself he certainly had allies, but after his death the Hellenist impulse withered with its technocratic transformation, while in the community at large it had never gained much of a foothold, even as a pole of opposition.

Today, in the ultra-commercial and ultra-administered spaces of post-industrial capitalism, an emphasis on such classical values as self-realising leisure (*schole*), education for practical wisdom (*paideia*) and excellence as the criterion of virtue (*arete*) has no resonance at all. Indeed, it runs positively against the grain, particularly when the aristocratic pathos of these values is pointedly unconcealed. Innis's stance is particularly troublesome for those who would approach him from the direction of his materialist political economy and thence appropriate him for the Left. A sheep and goats approach — retaining the economically based historiography but casting aside the objectionable Greek elements — has been the most obvious appropriative temptation. But a premature refusal to take seriously the "elitist"[17] cultural perspective that surfaces so explicitly in his later writings precludes attention, at the same time, to the perspective underlying his earlier ones and invites a simplifying misrecognition: Innis as a quasi-Marxist under the skin.

On the one hand, certainly, Innis's views on such matters as economic dependency, staples production and the Depression mark him out as broadly in tune with the programme of moderate Thirties socialism. Beyond defending a measure of public ownership and planning, moreover, he clearly had a visceral dislike for capitalism as such, objecting on every level to its ever-expanding commerce, and viewing its liberal legitimation (in terms of consumer sovereignty and free speech) as a hypocritical mask for the rise of new monopolies to power. More analytically, Innis's account of Canada's distorted socio-economic development, though idiosyncratically formulated, was similar to the Lenin/Trotsky thesis about combined and uneven development, and in its own right came to influence subsequent

Third Worldist analyses of capitalist imperialism. Closer to home, that same model showed how Canada itself had moved from "colony to nation to colony"[18] and expressed a state-oriented concern for economic independence which foreshadowed the left-nationalism that has dominated oppositional thinking in English-Canada ever since.

But despite these points of contact, the fit is still imperfect. Innis may have used terms like monopoly, force and imperialism, but he had no category for economic class, ignored the problem of distributive justice, and invoked no version of the collective subject, proletarian or otherwise, with which to identify the ethical or strategic fortunes of progressive praxis. Towards Marxism itself, moreover, and despite a parallel emphasis on economic determinations and historical dialectics, Innis maintained a position of studied ambivalence. "Much of this" he observes in a 1948 survey paper "will smack of Marxian interpretation, but I have tried to use the Marxian interpretation to interpret Marx. There will be no systematic pushing of the Marxian conclusion to its ultimate limit, and in pushing it to its limit, showing its limitations."[19] Elsewhere, he includes among these limitations Marxism's blindness to the supplemental logic of its own credal form. "The class struggle itself has been made a monopoly of language" he notes, and "when the Communist manifesto proclaimed 'Workers of the world unite' in those words it forged new chains."[20]

Looked at more carefully, indeed, when Innis defends government ownership and argues for more attention to long-range development it is less socialism *per se* that is being advocated than enhanced self-understanding and a corrective balance. Thus, on the railways issue, he defended the privately owned character of the CPR no less than the publicly owned character of the CN, so that the power of the one would balance that of the other. Similarly, his support for planning was checked by his distaste for bureaucracy, and was related to the need to counter-balance the market's chronic confinement of attention to the short-range. Nor was this mere reformist temporising, for exactly the same regulative principles for institutional development reveal themselves in Innis's more outspoken writings on culture and communications as well.

For all the critical harangues, stability is his over-riding concern, and the socio-economic crisis of Canada no less than the civilisational crisis of the West is defined ultimately in terms of its determinate absence. "I have attempted to show elsewhere" he notes at the beginning of *A Plea For Time*, that in Western civilisation a stable society is dependent on an appreciation of a proper balance between the concepts of space and time."[21] Everywhere, then, the same formula about bias, counter-bias, and dialectical balance, and everywhere the same emphasis on historical vision and reflexivity as the pre-requisites for axial re-adjustment and civilisational health.

The actual provenance of these all-embracing programmatic principles becomes clear when we recall the two sayings that were inscribed at the entrance to the temple of Appollo at Delphi: "Know yourself" and "Nothing in excess".

His attachment to the world of values that fell with Periclean Athens becomes quite explicit in his later work — "My bias is with the oral tradition, particularly as reflected in Greek civilisation"[22] — but even here the emphasis on media can distract attention from the pervasive effects of this attachment on the whole framework of categories he deployed. At that larger level, his ambiguous suggestion that radio as an oral medium might restore a sense of continuity to a chronically space-biased society was all of a piece with his attitude to economic planning and, on the methodological plane, with his insistence on comparative techno-economic history as the basis for a wise and serviceable social science.

Contextually, the centrality of Hellenic ideals to the formation of Innis's thought linked him to a wider revival of Hellenism within the early twentieth-century academy. At Toronto, echoes of this movement not only inspired direct attempts to restore the place of Classics within the curriculum, but stimulated a minor scholarly renaissance that saw the emergence of a powerful group of inter-disciplinarians — from Havelock and Cochrane in the twenties to Carpenter and McLuhan in the fifties — focussed like Innis himself on the critical examination of modernity through the looking-glass of Greece. The efflorescent quality of this development was facilitated by a favourable institutional conjuncture: as a young-old university, well-endowed and relatively autonomous because of its national role, the University of Toronto was lucky enough to come to intellectual maturity at a time of great ferment, before the modern divisions within the human sciences had had a chance to congeal, and just before its post-war expansion shattered the potential for further organic development altogether.

Less flatteringly, the strength of Hellenism in inter-war Toronto also reflected the relative susceptibility of Anglo-Canadian thought to metropolitan influences from without. There were, in fact, two external sources that bore the Hellenic impulse to him. Besides the impact of its Germanic incarnation (both directly and via Chicago), revived Greek values also entered into his milieu by way of a British source: English Literature, a discipline self-consciously imbued during its early days with the spirit not just of Anglophilia, but of Matthew Arnold and Victorian educational reform.

Ideologically, these two tendencies evidently complemented and reinforced one another. Whether assimilated via English criticism or political economy their appeal for academic humanists was the same: a romantic

privileging of culture (in the qualitative sense of the term) and linkage of culture's missionary role to the charter functions of higher education.

That Innis himself should have so strongly identified with these principles is easily explained. As a native of a small town being rapidly drawn into the whirlpool of industrialisation, his formative experience was more than ordinarily imprinted by the 'great transformation' whose delayed and seemingly imposed character in Canada made the culture/civilisation problematic already plausible as the basis for historical critique. As for the institutional side of Innis's value-commitment — and here he drew from Arnold as much as from Burkhardt and Nietzsche — it is sufficient to recall that he had been raised to follow his father into the Baptist ministry; and when he chose instead to embrace the University, like so many other ideologues of the secular clerisy before and singe, he transferred to it and to its role in the cultivation of reflective social intelligence all the pent-up sense of faith and mission originally intended for investment in the Church.

But however similar German and English strains of Hellenism were in these respects, their asymmetries should also be noted, both in terms of the epistemic and disiplinary fields with which they were associated and in relation to the categorical formation of Innis himself. Disentangling this knot of differences brings to light, in fact, two further respects in which Innis's heterodoxy makes him liable to be misunderstood.

The empiricist cast of British thought has inhibited Hellenist outbreaks more completely in the social sciences than in the realm of literary theory and aesthetics; and even here, with New Criticism, a (formalist) idealism about art has been tempered by an atomised individualism of the work. In an academic milieu that formed largely as a colonial offshoot of Britain, Innis's peculiarity was that he pursued Hellenistic themes in disciplines like economics where they were normally most repressed. At the same time, as a nationalist (a stance with affinities for democratic not to say populist values) his peculiarity was also to have explored such themes at all. Overall, this double transgression has precluded Innis's easy assimilation into any of the dominant intellectual camps; whence, in Canada, both his marginalisation and his continuing significance as an impossible hybrid who has at least made thinkable a de-dogmatising re-arrangement of the local intellectual field.

Innis's blend of economic historiography and classically-inspired culture-critique would seem less strange, of course, in a German context. In conjoining just such elements, indeed, his project bears a striking resemblance to the more familiar critical social science venture launched during his lifetime at Frankfurt. But here, too, and beyond its empiricised diction, Innis's paradigmatic operation has elements of originality which both set it apart

and from which the traditions that descend from Critical Theory themselves might have something to learn. Substantively, this second dimension of his heterodoxy is expressed in the relative centrality his thought accords to the moment of technology; and genealogically, once more, it registers the formative effects of his early encounter with Veblen.

4. The Technological Mediation

The Frankfurt thinkers, following a groove already established by Lukacs,[23] tended to etherealise technology by absorbing its consideration within a critique of bureaucratic instrumentalism on the one hand, and of capitalist production relations on the other. While Innis was similarly suspicious of industrial capitalism's religion of progress and technique, the substitution in his socio-economic categories of Veblen for Marx (with all the theoretical simplifications this also entailed) to a large degree shielded him from the corresponding anti-technicist metaphysics to which such an ellipsis left Critical Theory itself always vulnerable.

This is not to say that Innis swallowed Veblen whole. He certainly rejected the latter's ethicised productivism[24] stressing (no less than Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse) the more leisurely ideals for praxis memorialised by the Greeks. As a Canadian, besides, he was bound to be less enthusiastic about the progressive potential of industry, having experienced its costs and benefits at the margin not the centre of modern empire. But his filiation with Veblen did alert him to differences between industry as such and capitalism; which more generally encouraged him to conceptualise the technological aspect of production as a mediation in its own right, with its own historically diverse forms of being and its own, sometimes contradictory, social effects.

Of all the Frankfurt thinkers, Innis's thought was perhaps closest in this respect to that of Benjamin.[25] Benjamin's interest in technology, too, addressed specifically its impact on communication; and while Benjamin was concerned mainly about the rise of the simulacrum, and Innis mainly about the rise of industrialised writing, both sensed in the advent of new media a fact of ruptural significance, both for the bourgeois cultural tradition and for critiques which appealed to its rationalist/artisanal aesthetic. That said, however, Innis's interest in communication was tied to a quite different socio-economic problematic, with respect to which (in a sense to be explained) the technological theme loomed larger overall.

Veblen's reflections on the travails of modern capitalism,[26] had essentially revolved around five points: (1) that business and industry, as modal practices as well as institutional sites, are the twin pillars of capitalist civilisation; (2) that the gathering Twentieth Century storm (he died in

1929) is to be accounted for in terms of their inherent conflict, exacerbated by the disequilibrium resulting from the structural dominance of the former; (3) that in production the unbridled market creates speculative disturbances, precludes planning and leads to irresponsible (because absentee) patterns of ownership; while (4) in the private sphere the market's fusion with status competition substitutes consumerism for the 'instinct of workmanship', and thereby undermines industrialism's motivational base. From which he concluded (5) that the historical options for transcending the crisis were Bolshevism, whose levelling spirit would be disastrous for entrepeneurship, or a technocratic takeover by an industrial alliance of workers, managers, planners and engineers.

Innis's relation to Veblen, in these terms, can be simply put: he accepted points 1, 3 and 4 but not points 2 and 5. Thus he similarly stressed inter-institutional (rather than class) contradictions, was similarly pre-occupied with the impact of commercial and industrial practices on collective psychology and 'habit' and likewise deplored the disastrous effects of the market in monopolising attention for short-range needs. But, in tune with his greater Hellenism, Innis rejected Veblens's advocacy of a liberated industrialism, seeing it and the 'price-system' as not just inter-linked but parallel forces, with instabilities in society and culture arising from the conjoint impact of ('space-binding') biases common to both. Less sanguine, therefore, that counter-tendencies lay historically to hand, he scanned the horizons for evidence that such forces might yet emerge, pinning his evaporating hopes on a revivified oral tradition or on modal changes to sensibility that might occur as the unintended result of present or future technological change.

The particularities of Innis's thematisation are embedded in his actual work, a far-ranging set of enquiries into first the political economy of Canada[27] and then the global history of communication.[28] But here, in this very bifurcation, we are faced with yet another interpretive difficulty. What, we must ask, is the relation between the two halves of his project? And what light does that relation throw on the way his thematisation of technology coheres overall?

The political economy phase of Innis's enquiry was guided by the insight that Canada's episodic and unbalanced development derived from its marginal relation to industrialising centres (first England and then the United States) for whom Canada had served as the provider of a succession of staple inputs. What caught his attention was both the relative economic turbulence which this arrangement produced, and the association of different staple industries with different transportation systems, each more capital intensive than the last, and each having a profound effect on the character of social life as a whole.

Synchronically, each successive configuration of staple and transport entailed its own relation between people and land, with attendant implications for habitation patterns, commerce and the distribution of power. "Lumber tended to emphasise the efficiency of downstream traffic on the large rivers, whereas fur tended to emphasise the efficiency of upstream traffic in smaller rivers".[29] "We can trace in direct descent from the introduction of steam on the St. Lawrence waterways, the Act of Union, the completion of the St. Lawrence canals, the Grand Trunk ... Confederation, the Inter-colonial, the National Policy, the CPR ... and the drift to protection."[30]

Diachronically, the capital intensiveness of staples-related transportation systems (besides upping the ante on technical or economic obsolescence) implied the need for centralised finance and growing involvement by the state. With canals came Responsible Government; with railways, Confederation. However (pace Veblen) the corresponding need for long-range planning to deal with growing government debt and the social costs of moving from one staple/transport system to another was continually thwarted by the short-sightedness of private capital which was in any case hostile towards any such 'socialist' trend.

Taking these two dimensions together, Innis traced the whole discontinuous history of staples and transport systems that had marked Canada's stormy passage from paleo- to neo-technics. For all its economic complexion and local reference, then, his account even at this stage addressed a very general issue: the impact of techno-economic development on human ecology in relation to space and time, and the prospects through public policy for achieving between these dimensions some kind of adaptive balance.

At that thematic level, the communications phase of Innis's enquiry, while certainly switching terrain, was exactly continuous with the first. Each medium, like each staple, had its own bias, its own "influence on the dissemination of knowledge over space and time."[31] And for each period he "attempted to trace the implications of the media of communication for the character of knowledge and to suggest that a monopoly or oligopoly of knowledge is built up to the point that equilibrium is disturbed."[32]

But what these formulations also reveal is that between his concept of staples/transport and knowledge/communications there are relations of analogy as well. In effect, the framework he developed for analysing the former became a model for analysing the latter. Thus, the history of communication, as of the Canadian economy, is presented as a succession of technologies for transporting things (physically, prior to the telegraph), together with a matching series of things being moved. In the case of communication, these latter are also seen as binaries, bringing together a

form of inscription with a form of medium, each of which both embody technique and have their own sensuous impact. At every level, in fact, Innis's concern was with the mediating impact of what one might call distributional technology; with respect to which, in turning to the study of communication, his attention simply shifted from the (market-driven) conveyance of commodities to the (culturally and politically driven) conveyance of signs.

The empirical pivot on which Innis's enquiry changed direction was the lumber industry, a Canadian staple which had slumped with the coming of steamships but gained a new lease on life with the burgeoning demand for pulp and paper. Here, then, was a primary commodity forwardly linked not to food, clothing, or capital goods, but to information and culture. Moreover, the linked product in greatest demand was newsprint, and the rise of a mass press itself betokened industrial producers' growing need to advertise. Thus, this staple also subserved the spreading promotionalism that Veblen (qua 'conspicuous consumption') had seen as capitalism's coming cultural dominant. Attentive to this dual significance, Innis turned from pulp and paper to the publishing industry itself, and thence, on the one hand, to the more general analysis of industrialised communication and, on the other, to the place of publishing within the history of communication as such.[33]

In terms of his wider thematic, these new areas of study also brought to the surface two issues previously implied but not directly posed. The first concerned the causal relation between distributional technology and cultural bias, both in general and with reference to what he called with increasing gloom "the crisis of Western civilisation". The second concerned the socio-historical grounding of his own bias, particularly the Greek-derived problematic of cultural health to which it made appeal. In so far as this latter was itself conceived as a corrective, the questions were evidently linked, and he found a clue to both in his notion that communicative technologies could be distinguished on the basis of their relative capacity to communicate through space or across time.

His starting-point was Havelock's reworking of Plato's ideas[34] concerning the threat posed to Greek culture by the rise of writing. "The impact of writing and printing" he noted "... increases the difficulties of understanding a civilisation based on the oral tradition."[35] But if the vitality of Greek culture rested on its oral character, its finest flowering came as the outcome of an encounter with the Phoenician alphabet, wherein, for an instant, the biases of the oral mode were in balance with those of the written. This example for him was paradigmatic:

> The character of the medium of communication tends to create a bias in civilisation favourable to an over-emphasis on the time

> concept or on the space concept and only at rare intervals are the biases offset by the influence of another medium and stability achieved.[36]

In institutional terms, he suggested, an emphasis on space-binding communication facilitated centralised political control, time-binding communication favored the maintenance of religion and cultural tradition, and the most successful civilisations (Byzantium as the classic case[37]) were those in which the two counter-balancing tendencies were able to co-exist. In this respect, the Greek example was paradigmatic for him in a second respect: the tension between the oral tradition and writing was taken to be a tension between two different modes of cultural storage, memory versus inscription, and as such to incarnate the distinction between time- and space-biased media themselves.

Innis's perception that "inventions in commercialism"[38] had dangerously disturbed the modern cultural balance immediately followed from this. With the industrial revolution and its extension to communications, the speeded-up market had accelerated writing to the point that centralist political tendencies had no cultural check and collective memory had virtually dissolved. In an age of war, depression and tyranny (to which we must now add: environmental ruin) the resulting prevalence of present-mindedness was not just a matter for regret, but cause and symptom of a profound contradiction: the sensitivity to long-run consequences that industrialism made urgent was at the same time precluded by the forms of communication that industrialism installed. "Each civilisation" he observes "has its own method of suicide."[39]

While he held out little prospect of solution, two possible counter-tendencies presented themselves: new media and a revitalised oral tradition. Concerning the first, Innis noted the ambivalent significance of "a competitive type of communication based on the ear, in the radio and in the linking of sound to the cinema and to television."[40] On the one hand, with its emphasis on "the necessity of a concern for continuity" radio might offset the visual bias of paper and print; but it was also inherently centralising, and in commercial form exacerbated the effects of the press in accentuating "the importance of the superficial and the ephemeral."[41] As for oral culture, besides championing the losing cause of academia, its last institutional bastion, Innis proffered his own work; not, that is, just for its contents but for its form: writing, certainly, but writing crossed with speech.

5. Counter-bias and the future of reason

On both counts, Innis's programmatic opens up issues that go to the heart of technological modernity and the problems of its critique. But his darken-

ing mood suggests also that his thought got into an impasse; as a result of which (or so the optimist might argue) he was led to over-read the impasse that he took Western civilisation itself to be in. Without pre-judging that question, the paradigmatic operation I have been describing certainly produced its own gaps and reductions; and these will have to be not just milked for their symptomatic value but positively corrected if the Innisian project is to be revived in the context of contemporary debate. In that spirit I would conclude by highlighting, in particular, three respects in which Innis's analysis both opened up strategic issues and at the same time was inherently restricted by its tacit categorical scheme.

Consider, first, Innis's focus on distributional technology and his use, in that context, of staples/transportation as a model for understanding the technological dimension of communication. On the positive side, one may say that this very stress on how goods and information are distributed, while in some respects pre-marxist, offers a useful corrective to Marxism's own fixation on the moment of production. It is a corrective, moreover, which complements the increased attention to consumption and exchange that advanced capitalism's vastly expanded selling apparatus has also quite properly evinced. However, while Innis evidently recognised the strategic importance that the non-production side of the capitalist economy had come to assume, his reluctance to theorise this point left the interplay between distribution, circulation and exchange unexamined and, more importantly, left the limitations of the distributional model itself as an analogue for communication wholly in the shade.

In view of his ambiguous remarks about radio, it is particularly worth emphasizing in this regard the weakness of his transportation analogy when applied to electronic media: first, because communication by wire and broadcast is instantaneous and freed from reliance on physical transport; and secondly because radio, records, t.v. etc. require reception equipment — a new (and for Innis wholly unnoticed) intervention of technology in the communication process which likewise has its own specific mediating cultural effects. Among these effects, Innis never analysed for example the privatising dimension of the new media, their destruction, relative to the older print media, of a horizontally interacting public. More generally, while he tacitly incorporated instantaneity (but not recording) in his thesis concerning modern space-bias, the second new feature involved a further aspect of communication, reception, which his focus on distribution and his analogy of communication with transport never really allowed him to see.

Secondly, there is the question of Innis's treatment of technological bias itself, and specifically his central insight concerning the difference between time and space-binding media. This was perhaps Innis's strongest point, and continues to provide a powerful heuristic not only for the comparative study of civilisations but also for the critical investigation of our own. Above

all, it placed the traditionalist lament about the destruction of continuity (in his terms, time-binding communication) on a material foundation and moved such critique beyond nostalgia both by a stress on time/space balance and by focussing not just on industrialism's incapacity to recall the past but on its even more disturbing inability to communicate with the future.

However, Innis's axial distinction between time- and space-binding communication was elliptically mapped onto the opposition between speech and writing, partly as a result of his identification with the tensions of Greek culture and partly as a further consequence of his transport model, in terms of which speech/writing were rendered in effect as polar forms of conveyance. Again, as a result, we have an over-condensed system of binaries, and again conceptual problems arise when we try to apply his ideas to the new technological constellation represented by electronic media. Modern communicative forms are in a pure sense neither speech nor writing, constituting in effect the emergence of a hybrid third. Problematising this latter in terms of Innis's own dichotomy between speech and writing reveals, in addition, a further lacuna: Innis's treatment of new media failed to differentiate between broadcasting and recording, a weakness shared in equal measure by Benjamin who confounded them both with the again quite different phenomenon of mechanical reproduction.

The conceptual problem here is not just that Innis's typology is too restrictive, but that in his haste to grasp the relation between media forms and time/space bias he conflated distinctions between forms of (linguistic) expression with those between forms of storage and collective memory. The example of graffiti, however, shows that inscription is by no means identical with external storage, just as every teacher knows that oral communication does not necessarily presuppose memory. The actual relation between medium and storage depends, one might say, on which medium is dominant: but then what are we to make of a culture — our own — where a multiplicity of media forms co-exist? In the *Phaedrus*, Plato had worried about the effects of writing on speech, and Rousseau later characterised the former as a 'dangerous supplement' (like masturbation: a figure that Derrida made great play of in *Of Grammatology*).[42] From that perspective, the decisive question concerning radio, film records and t.v. is not whether their expressive and storage implications are most analogous to those of speech or writing but how the latter, as such, have been affected in their functioning by the arrival of new media.

Baudrillard's observations concerning recording and the stock-piling of time[43] are seminal in this regard, although his focus is more on the deadness of the time stored than on the implications of prodigiously enhanced storage capacity for collective memory as such. Still, Innis's argument could well be elaborated on this ground: in effect, the more technologically

advanced (with simulacra and their electro-magnetic recording) cultural storage has become, the more collective memory, whose contents increase exponentially, resembles a Tower of Babel in reverse. This amnesia through confusion has been further exacerbated by the effects on commercialised culture of fashion; itself linked to an accelerating process of competitive exchange which (as Innis himself noted in his study of publishing) extends to the immaterial commodities of communication just as much as to other goods.

Overall, then, while Innis posed a fundamental issue by spelling out the material under-pinnings of industrial capitalism's 'space-bias', his media grammar was defective. McLuhan's own modification of Innis begins, indeed, precisely with this point, although he only compounded the problem by mapping Innis's distinctions between time/space and speech/writing onto yet a third distinction based on sense: "After many historical demonstrations of the space-binding power of the eye and the time-binding power of the ear" he notes "Innis refrains from applying these structural principles to the action of radio. Suddenly he shifts the ear world of radio into the visual orbit, attributing to radio all the centralising powers of the eye and of visual culture."[44]

From this angle, Innis's own suggestion that radio, as the return of the oral/aural, had been associated with a growing "concern with the problems of time"[45] was not just unsatisfactory but paved the way, on his own terrain, for the abandonment of its critical underpinnings altogether. By downplaying the mediation of commerce and excluding the problem of memory, McLuhan was led to discern in the impact of the electronic media, *tout court*, tendencies towards synesthesia and re-tribalisation which he welcomed as betokening the return of more integral cognitive modes.[46] Correspondingly more convinced than Innis that technological modernity was itself producing a paradigm shift, McLuhan saw in the new media's oral reversal of print not the final victory of spatialisation, but the adaptive correlate, if only we would recognise it, of our now wholly outered technology: the collective brain that is outside and over us, and whose sleep-walking servo-mechanism we have, in shocked response, unfortunately become.

Underlying McLuhan's revision of Innis, evidently, is not just a different evaluation of radio, film t.v. etc. but a different, that is sensuous and primitivist, conception of the oral. And this brings us to the final point: Innis's espousal of the oral mode itself as a counter-bias against advanced industrialism's all-pervasive time-denying trend. At the analytic level, I have already suggested that the strengths and weaknesses of Innis's conceptualisation of oral culture hinge on his model of time/space bias on the one hand and his grammar of media on the other. But Innis, committed to reflexivity, also aimed to ground his own position and, finally, to practice the

counter-bias that he preached. What remains to be considered, then, is the adequacy of the two respects in which his attachment to the oral was manifest in his own praxis.

The first was in his partisanship for the academy, which combined externally championing the university's autonomy and charter ideals with a coruscating critique of its seemingly inexorable drift along the road of industrialisation and commercialism.[47] That this drift could lead to massive institutional upheavals as well as to the industrial terminus he feared was beyond his historical horizon, and signals on one level his individualistic reluctance to seek out, still less endorse, the transformist potential of mass discontent. On another level, it also suggests an unreflected fetishisation of oral culture's institutionalised forms. There are, however, both extra and infra-institutional networks and traditions of face-to-face talk that have always been crucial to the development of intellectual culture, and which have presumably become strategic in the face of the institutional trends Innis himself presents. Here, as elsewhere, while Innis's critique is persuasive in its general outline, the dichotomies (in this case, individual/institution) in which it was couched need to be deconstructed so as to yield a real politics.

The second way in which Innis practically expressed his oral bias was in his own mode of communicating, and more particularly in the paradoxes of his style. In that context not the least paradox is that his chosen medium was print. Professional pressures aside, it is hard to see how else in a space-biased techno-economic environment he could have effectively reached an audience, but such exigencies clearly presented a practical dilemma.[48] One resolution would have been to acknowledge that post-print media have so impoverished face-to-face talk that writing itself, despite the publishing industry, has in any case become the most durable mode of communication. To have taken this tack, however, would have forced him to de-couple the issue of cultural continuity from that of media form, and thus jettison his model.

Instead, Innis tried to replicate in his own authorial practice the same tense solution arrived at (in their heyday) by the Greeks: the cultivation of a form of writing in which the medium's innate tendencies to linearity and centralism were held in check by the time-biased vitality of speech. His preference for the essay form, penchant for aphorism and story and joking references to his own suppressed proclivity for sermonising (his texts were as frequently Winnie the Pooh as the Bible), all testify to this effort, which in turn meshed with both his anti-formulaic emphasis on particularity and his empiricist reluctance to theorise. But however methodologically consistent his stylistic solution, when judged in terms of his larger objectives, also contained problems.

First, while his stories, appositions, and aphorisms were designed at once to awaken and lodge themselves in the collective memory, the conceptual operation he was performing as an analyst of civilisation could not so easily be sustained. Indeed, the very qualities by which he strove to make his work orally memorable placed obstacles in the way of its subsequent appropriation as a theoretical construct. Given its elliptical expression, in fact, to pick up on his project now requires a prior interpretive effort which the condition of modern readership, precisely because of the time problem, renders very difficult.

But this difficulty in turn betokens another. As McLuhan and Theall[49] have suggested, Innis's refusal to be closed, logical and Cartesian represented a decisive shift from the intellectual modes of print sensibility; one which, while self-defined as conservative (back to the Greeks), no doubt also corresponded to that wider cultural trend towards discontinuous holism which these commentators generally associated with technological modernity and the rise of electronic media themselves. At the same time, however, Innis wrote as a social scientist, an attachment that for all its historicist and anti-specialist bent signified a continuing commitment to the intellectual values of the Enlightenment itself. Neither poet nor mystic his analyses always addressed practical issues; and in every case, whether the issue was railway finance, the future of federal cultural policy or the merits of part-time education, he strove to present a coherent socio-historical argument, universalisable in its principles and able to ground a reasonable social response.

There was, then, a conflict between the stylistic effects of his oral bias and the analytic requirements of his commitment to reconstructive rationality. That the claims of the latter never won out can be explained in terms of his commitment to the former. In part, though, this also reflects his pessimistic assessment that the conditions for substantive rationality were unlikely to be restored.[50] Ideologically, as a result, his thought oscillated between a praxis-based search for strategy and a prophetic embrace of fate, an ambiguity that was textually expressed, above all, by a pervasive irony.

As agreeable a literary effect as this may have sometimes produced, by not safeguarding his perspective in replicable categories Innis risked surrendering his thought to mythicisation; which is precisely what happened at the hands of McLuhan, through whom a simplified (and pro-modernist) version of his media themes passed later on, for example, into France.[51] The corresponding risk of schematism and space-bias needs also to be avoided. But, analytically, if we are to develop a form of historically operative reflexive wisdom along the lines Innis desired, we must engage both sides of an investigative dialectic of which Innis himself could only see one. Certainly we need a broad-scale socio-historical approach, but on the other

hand we also need metatheoretical reflection both to clarify grounds and to situate the concepts employed. In turn, at the price of accessibility (but not necessarily of duration) this would imply a form of writing which, though still narrative, was conceptually fuller than Innis's and more self-consciously inter-textual.

To continue Innis's project, then, we have to do precisely what Innis himself was not prepared to entertain: systematise his categories and reflect on their inter-connected logic. We will, at the same time, want to relax their reductions and compare his thematisation of culture, economy and technology with others so as to generate a more multi-dimensional and, at once, consistent account. After such an oecumenical appropriation no doubt Innis's own contribution will still seem immense. But in the end his greatest value may lie in what his unresolved contradictions themselves most strikingly reveal: that in the face of a changed communications environment the challenge facing contemporary social theory is how to develop new styles of conceptual expression which take those changes into account without succumbing to 'post-modern' ideologies which celebrate the culture of late capitalism as the (playful) return of chaos and myth.

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Notes

1. The list is long and lengthening. Here, I would especially mention: R. Neill, *A New Theory of Value: the Canadian Economics of Harold Innis* (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1972); D. Drache, 'Rediscovering Canadian Political Economy', *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Aug. 1976; *Journal of Canadian Studies* and *Queen's Quarterly*, Winter 1977, special issues; W. Melody, L. Salter, P. Heyer (eds), *Culture, Communication, and Dependency: the Tradition of H.A. Innis* (New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Company, 1981); and A. Kroker, *Innis/McLuhan/Grant: Technology and the Canadian Mind* (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1984).
2. See S. Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (Octagon Press, 1976).
3. A term coined by Marshall McLuhan.
4. H. Innis, *Essays in Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 387.
5. See for example 'The Military Implications of the American Constitution' read at the Salmagundi Club on Dec. 6th, 1951, reprinted with 'The Strategy of Culture: with Special Reference to Canadian Literature — a Footnote to the Massey Report' (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1952).
6. *Essays in Canadian Economic History*, pp. 252-262.
7. For a discussion of British, French and German 'national' epistemes see L. Goldmann, *Immanuel Kant* (London: New Left Books, 1971) Ch. 1, and A. Wernick, 'Structuralism and the Dislocation of the French Rationalist Project' in J. Fekete (ed), *The Structural Allegory: Reconstructive Encounters with the New French Thought* (Minneapolis: Minnesota U. Press, 1984).
8. In the index to *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1964), there are six references to Hume, two each to Locke and Hobbes, and none to Bacon.
9. *Q. v.* Kant's Preface to *Critique of Pure Practical Reason.*

10. Mentioned in Innis's 1929 essay on Veblen. See *Essays*, p. 18.

11. In remarks at a symposium on Innis organised by the Association for Canadian Studies, U. of Montreal, June 6th 1985.

12. "He has been the first to attempt a general stock-taking of general tendencies in a dynamic society saddled with machine industry, just as Adam Smith was the first to present a general stock-taking before machine industry came in." *Essays*, p. 25.

13. *Essays*, p. 252.

14. See especially 'A Plea for Time', in *The Bias of Communication*, 'The Strategy of Culture' and the notes collected under the title *The Idea File of Harold Adams Innis*, W. Christian (ed) (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1980).

15. *Essays*, p. 190.

16. *The Bias of Communication*, p. 191.

17. See for example P. Heyer, 'Innis and the History of Communication: Antecedents, Parallels, and Unsuspected Biases' in Melody *et al.* (eds) Culture, Communication and Dependency, p. 253.

18. *Essays*, p. 405.

19. *The Bias of Communication*, p. 190.

20. *The Idea File*, p. 45.

21. *The Bias of Communication*, p. 64.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

23. See particularly his essay on 'Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat' in *History and Class Consciousness*.

24. For which see especially T. Veblen, *The Instinct of Workmanship* (New York: Viking, 1914).

25. The key text in this regard is 'The Work of Art in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction'.

26. See especially: *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Viking, 1899), *The Theory of Business Enterprise* (New York: Viking, 1904), *The Vested Interests and The State of the Industrial Arts* (New York: Viking, 1919), *The Engineers and the Price System* (New York: Viking, 1921) and *Absentee Ownership* (New York: Viking, 1924).

27. Q. v. *A History of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1971); *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History*, revised ed., (Toronto: U. of Toronto Press, 1956); *The Cod Fisheries: a History of an International Economy* (New Haven, Mass., and London: Yale U. Press and Oxford U. Press, 1940); and the essays on staples and transport in *Essays in Canadian Economic History*.

28. Key texts here are the essays in *The Bias of Communication* and *Empire and Communications* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), and the posthumously edited *Idea File*. The essays of the late Thirties, following Althusser, we can call 'the works of the break'.

29. *Problems of Staples Production in Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1933), p. 19.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

31. *The Bias of Communication*, p. 33.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

33. For a summary of Innis's work on pulp-and-paper see his article in *The Encyclopedia of Canada*, W.S. Stewart (ed), (Toronto: University Associates of Canada Limited, 1935-49), pp. 176-185 and the useful footnote (5) in I. Spry's 'Overhead Costs, Rigidities of Productive Capacity, and the Price-system' in Melody *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 165. Innis's work on publishing is similarly dispersed, but see especially Innis's essays on 'The English Publishing Trade in the Eighteenth Century' and

'Technology and Public Opinion in the United States' in *The Bias of Communication*, 'The Strategy of Culture', and *The Idea File, passim.*

34. E. Havelock, *The Crucifixion of Intellectual Man.*
35. *The Bias of Communication*, p. 41.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
37. *Empire and Communications*, p. 139.
38. *The Bias of Communication*, p. 86.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
42. J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976). Part two elaborates his antiphonocentric critiques of Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*; for a discussion of writing's supplemental relation to speech see pp. 141-157.
43. An idea extensively developed in J. Beaudrillard, *L'Échange Symbolique et la Mort.*
44. From McLuhan's Introduction to the 1964 edition of *The Bias of Communication*, p. xii.
45. *The Bias of Communication*, p. 87.
46. The best critique of McLuhan's reconciliationism is to be found in part three of J. Fekete's *The Critical Twilight* (London: Routledge, and Kegan Paul, 1977).
47. See for example *The Bias of Communication*, pp. 90-91 and 195.
48. That Innis himself was aware of the problem is clear from his prefatory remarks to *Empire and Communications*: "The twentieth century has been conspicuous for extended publications on civilisation which in themselves reflect a type of civilisation. It is suggested that all written works, including this one, have dangerous implications to the vitality of an oral tradition and to the health of a civilisation ..."
49. For McLuhan's comments, see again his Introduction to *The Bias of Communication*. For Theall's view, see D. Theall 'Explorations in Communications Since Innis', in Melody *et al.* (eds), *op. cit.*, especially pp. 225-227.
50. "Printers' ink threatens to submerge even the literary arts in Canada and it may seem futile to raise the question of cultural possibilities ... But we can at least point to the conditions which seem fatal to cultural interests." 'The Strategy of Culture', p. 1.
51. Among current French cultural theorists, one notes for example the influence of McLuhan on Baudrillard and, in with respect to the problematisation of modern music, J. Attali's *Bruits: Essaie sur l'Economie Politique de la Musique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1977).

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MARCEL RIOUX CRITIQUING QUEBEC'S DISCOURSE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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I
Social Theory and Social Criticism: Two Traditions

Social theory constitutes a form of specialized discourse seemingly far removed from the mediascape of radio talk shows, the question-begging interviews of television, the banalities of newspaper columns, the ripostes of parliamentary image-making, or the half-articulate confrontations of tavern political debate.[1] Yet all of these more accessible activities presuppose theoretical imagination, however unconsciously; social theory is in turn grounded in everyday life and experiences of particular communities and groups, however undeveloped may be their capacity for self-reflection. Normally, these two realms remain largely isolated from one another, aside from the slow process whereby officially approved interpretations trickle down through educational systems and the mass media or the outlaw ideologies of social movements erupt into institutional life from below or on the margins of society. In modern societies in particular, elaborated social theory has had a strategic, if largely invisible place: only there does the cultivation of the analysis and evaluation of social reality assume an institutionalized and rigorous form; only there does the construction of "careful and critical discourse" receive its due.[2]

The maturity of a group or collectivity is expressed in its traditions of social theory, whether at the academic or more popular, social movement level. However absolute the forms of deprivation within a given community, these latent needs cannot be translated into effective collective action or will-formation until they receive adequate symbolic formulation, thus

rationally re-describing brute experience in terms of narrative accounts of social determination and visions of potential transcendance. By European standards — and even those of the United States, the development of social theory in Canada has been a slow, halting process closely related to the costs of growing up under the shadow of first the British and then the American empires. As the British sociologist Tom Bottomore "sympathetically" noted in the late 1960's, though the social critic in Canada had a certain advantage over his or her American counterpart because of the existence of two vital social movements (the social democracy of the New Democratic Party and Quebec nationalism), these had been offset by the disadvantages of the "lack of a critical tradition, the absence of any outstanding earlier schools of social thought"; furthermore, there were no established intellectual centres and the "journals of opinion are few, and they are, with some exceptions, insipid and dull."[3] Of the two linguistic streams into which social and political discussion was divided, however, "the French is more lively in its social criticism and thus comes nearer to creating an original school of social thought. This is explicable by the more rapid and exciting changes which have been taking place in French-Canadian society; and to a lesser extent, perhaps, by the influence of French intellectuals, themselves more deeply committed to distinctive ideologies than are intellectuals in Britain or the United States."[4]

In the nearly two decades since Bottomore wrote, the partial recovery of the past of Canadian and Quebec social theory, along with the maturation of the university system and the emergence of new currents of social movement, have largely falsified his somewhat premature diagnosis. English language social theory and criticism has flourished in a manner which has narrowed the distance between these two traditions, even if this has rarely been accompanied by collaboration or mutual exploration. Yet a number of brief discussions have attempted to compare these two traditions. What is more striking about such efforts, however, is their incapacity to move beyond a superficial understanding of how and why the francophone tradition *is* different. If we take, for example, the fairly well studied case of the discipline of sociology, it becomes apparent that the "otherness" of the francophone tradition cannot be easily penetrated by the categories of the mainstream anglophone sociologist. As a consequence, assessments remain at a very general and formal level, limited by the need to analyze francophone work in terms of many of the very assumptions and concepts which the latter challenges. As the anglophone sociologist Harry Hiller has put it, summarizing this comparative literature: "The strong need for a sense of history and collective self-understanding within Quebec provide a specific *raison d'être* for francophone sociology that differentiated it sharply from ... anglophone sociology."[5] But what then are the implications and

consequences of this historical difference? Hiller's otherwise illuminating response reflects the chronic difficulty of moving beyond vague generalities, noting that "concern for the perpetuation of Québec society continued to encourage a more macro-sociological perspective in francophone sociology which resulted in less emphasis being placed on the individual. Such an approach was also much more historical and interdisciplinary and at considerable odds in basic perspective with the dominant American model of presentist, quantitative, and micro-sociology."[6]

Though not strictly speaking false, this type of formulation does not get us very far in understanding what the defining traits of Quebec sociology really are. For example, what is more strategic than the concern with macrosociology *per se* is that Quebec is considered as a dependent "nation" and a potential nation-state. Further, the more important issue is not that it places less emphasis on the individual, so much as concerned with the collective circumstances which inhibit or encourage particular forms of individual development. And it is more historical not simply because of some nostalgic concern about the past, but as part of a desire — both defensive and reformist — to shape the process of future developments. All of these crucial qualifications are glossed over by forms of comparison which focus on explanatory variables or the cliches of micro- vs macro-analysis. In contrast to most anglophone sociology, the point of departure of most francophone research is an anti-positivist, anti-naturalistic epistemology of the human sciences which in turn legitimates a normatively, i.e. value-oriented form of social research which gives priority to the goals of individual and collective emancipation from the constraints of existing social relations. Furthermore, in the context of a dependent society this also inevitably gives the sociology of knowledge, ideology, culture and science a strategic place.

The Case of Rioux

Rather than pursue such general comparisons, the task of the present essay is to use the case of Quebec sociologist, ethnographer and social critic Marcel Rioux as a means for a more in-depth exploration of some of the differentiating characteristics of francophone social research, especially in relation to the theme of the Quebec discourse on science, technology and modernization. To be sure, his work cannot be identified with sociological or anthropological research in Quebec as a whole. On his left flank, for example, is a tradition of more recent work of more specifically neo-Marxist inspiration which tends to consider his version of "critical sociology" idealistic, having lost its grounding in class analysis by overemphasizing culture and national specificity. On his mainstream right, on the other hand, is

much work which resembles social science done in the rest of Canada, even if most of it is more or less identified with and directed toward the policy goals of the national project envisioned by the Parti Québécois. But Rioux's work and example has been indirectly influential for the past three decades and is broadly representative of the spirit dominating Quebec sociology.[7] It must be stressed as well that there is no comparable figure in the senior generation of anglophone social scientists, either with respect to the content of his work *or* his public presence as one of the leading intellectuals supporting the independence movement from the mid-1960's onward.

Even if one is primarily concerned with social theory rather than biography, the two cannot be fully separated in coming to terms with Rioux's work. Many of its characteristics — especially its diversity of forms, relatively unsystematic character, and continuously shifting if unified concerns — can only be meaningfully interpreted and assessed in relation to his career trajectory and shifting relationship to academic and political life in Quebec.[8]

Born in 1919 in a village near Trois-Pistoles in the Gaspé peninsula, Rioux's early career follows the typical pattern of upward mobility found in the intellectual generation which founded the Quiet Revolution. His rural background, however, gave him a much more intimate relationship with traditional Quebec than most of the offspring of the urban middle and working classes. Equally significant was his early break with aspects of these conservative traditions — almost alone in his intellectual generation he considered himself both an atheist and socialist — coupled with a powerful attachment to the communities and popular culture in which these traditions were embedded. This break was always muted, however, by a temperamentally based avoidance of unnecessary conflict. As he puts it, "I do not have the temperament of my ideology nor the ideology of my temperament."[9] One of the consequences has been a creative tension between political engagement and intellectual distance which has saved him from the dogmatism of some of his younger allies and preserved his links with the international social theoretical community.

The maturation of Rioux's work and self-understanding has largely paralleled and grown out of the simultaneous maturation of Quebec. One of the dominant motifs of his biography is thus incessant change, a series of discontinuities linked to geographic displacements and points of transition in Quebec politics. The first two discontinuities date back to the thirties with an early separation from his family to go away to school and his rejection of the Church. A third phase was marked by his spiritual exile within Quebec as a radical intellectual within a backward society — the Duplessis era. It was during this period, which coincided initially with his university studies from 1939 through 1948 — interrupted by work in

Ottawa for the government during the war — that he established a very successful career as an ethnographer of rural Quebec. After a brief stint studying philosophy with the Dominicans in Ottawa, and then commerce in Montréal, he finished up an undergraduate degree in philosophy. But the crucial influence during this period of the second World War was contact in Ottawa with the well-known anthropologist Marius Barbeau. After the war Rioux then spent two years in Paris, assimilating the French traditions of sociology and anthropology directly and developing a number of important contacts, including a friendship with Pierre Trudeau which lasted through the mid-1960's. Indeed, it was Trudeau who early chided Rioux for his lack of political engagement, inscribing in Rioux's copy of the *Asbestos Strike* a plea that his friend might finally be transformed into a political animal.[10] And despite his political differences, Rioux did increasingly collaborate with *Cité Libre* toward the end of the 1950's. A fourth break came, however, at the beginning of the 1960's with the election of the Liberals in Quebec and his own appointment to a position in sociology at the Université de Montréal (after years of clerical opposition). This stage eventually culminated in his move toward an independentist position following a brief flirtation with the NDP and a labour-based socialist movement. A fifth break came with his attempt to come to terms with Marx and the Marxist tradition, a confrontation which took the form of a deepening critique of historical materialism and the outline of his own critical sociology in the late 1970's.

It would be beyond the scope of this article to trace the various stages of Rioux's intellectual career and provide a critical review of the writings of each period.[11] But it is important to stress that one of the distinctive characteristics of his corpus — and one which differentiates him from the more specialized and strictly professional orientation of his anglophone contemporaries — is the range of types of publication, an expression of both his wide-ranging interests, as well as his political engagements and participation in a smaller, less highly differentiated academic milieu. In Quebec the university is much less isolated from public life and the media; the roles of scholar and social critic are thus much easier to develop in tandem. This diversity is evident in the at least five different genre of publications which have characterized Rioux's intellectual itinerary:

- the ethnographic studies which reflected his early anthropological training, work in the National Museum of Canada in Ottawa from 1947 to 1958 and numerous lengthy field trips in rural Quebec;[12]
- the political essays of popular and journalistic character which, beginning in the early 1950's, signalled his gradual politicization and engagement in Quebec politics which continues to the present;[13]
- the historical-cultural syntheses of the development of Quebec society

which have provided widely-read and influential interpretations of Quebec dependence and contributed directly to the legitimation of the independence movement;[14]

- consultative work on various public commissions and committees, but most importantly his chairmanship of a provincial report on the teaching of the arts and a later unofficial tribunal protesting against cultural policy under the Bourassa regime;[15]
- and finally, the essays on social and cultural theory proper which emerged in the later part of the 1970's in response to his own reception and critique of neo-Marxist theory and the elaboration of his own conception of critical sociology and its relation to the transformation of Quebec.[16]

The task of the present discussion will be to draw selectively on Rioux's diverse writings to outline his unique contribution to the Canadian discourse on science and technology. It should be noted at the outset, however, that the themes of science and technology have not been a central, specialist concern of Rioux (unlike some of his former students or others influenced by him). Rather his primary concern has been the development of a critical sociology within which the questions of cultural creation and rupture play central role. But within this framework, there is a very definite conception of the way in which science and technology should be controlled for human purposes in relation to specific collective projects.

In order to draw out the implications of his analysis, the following discussion will first attempt to isolate the negative thrust of his argument, i.e. to situate it in relation to the "modernization" debate within Quebec politics and social theory. Here it will be necessary to see how his emerging conception of critical sociology leads him to a critique of the liberal and social democratic models of economic and cultural development which culminates in an increasingly critical relation to Marx and the Marxist tradition. Second, it will be necessary to sketch some of the elements of his alternative analysis of the relationship between science, technology and cultural development in postindustrial societies, especially Quebec. In this connection the concepts of "emancipatory practices" and "autogestion" (self-management) will be considered in relation to overcoming the "deterritorialization" of technology and culture.

II. The Critique of the Quebec Discourse on Science and Technology

The Modernization Debate

The discourse within modern Quebec on science and technology forms initially around the problematic of culture and its relation to modernization and thus must be situated in the context of the history of ideologies in

Quebec.[17] The most obvious way is to refer to Rioux's own typology, a schema which has, with various qualifications and refinements, guided subsequent left-nationalist scholarship. The first stage of "conservation" manifested an antagonistic, if not always outright reactionary, response of a traditional religiously dominated culture menaced by destruction.[18] Though largely an elite phenomenon, this rejection of modernity through the 19th- and far into the 20th-century did, however, express a popular desire to preserve the ethos of francophone culture. The related scientific and technical backwardness crippled the church-controlled francophone higher educational system through the 1950's. In any case the dominant defensive reaction did create a touchstone for all future intellectual developments and sets Quebec aside from the rest of Canada. Most importantly, the previous dominance of the ideology of conservation created a discursive context in which science and technology could never be separated from their cultural implications or the politics of state intervention. However much later generations might revolt against the mentality of a 19th century clergy intent upon protecting its parish from the moral corruptions of urbanization, proletarianization and Anglo-American civilization, they could not fully rid themselves of a critical attitude toward some of the exaggerated claims of liberalism, secularization and individualism.

Given this past, francophone Quebec's ambivalent attitude toward science and technology is expressed in contradictory ways. The dominant effect has been a dependent mentality reflected in a lack of self-confidence before the accomplishments of science in Europe and the United States. As well there are often signs of anxiety in attempting to imitate such models under conditions where this is linked to abandonment of the cultural specificity of Quebec. But there remains a pervasive aspiration for 'world class' technical achievements, especially where they do not involve direct subservience to outsiders. Perhaps the most vital symbol of such possibilities — and one which remains a central component of the restoration of the political fortunes of Robert Bourassa — has been the James Bay hydroelectric project.

This ambivalence of the progressive, modernizing groups toward classic laissez-faire liberalism *à l'americaine* is evident in the intellectual generation which created the second stage of ideological development referred to as the Quiet Revolution. Rooted in the 1930's, the ideology of contestation and *rattrapage* ("catching up") finally gained power with the victory of the Liberals in the 1960 provincial election. But from the outset internal differences emerged around how to respond to the contradictory relationship between modernization and cultural development. On the one hand, modernization could be achieved by simply opening up Quebec to the

outside world, allowing the free penetration of international and pan-Canadian market forces in economic and cultural life. Yet this necessarily risked the gradual erosion of Quebec language and culture and the restricted mobility of those whose mother tongue was French. On the other hand, the obvious alternative was that modernization could be guided by a strong, centralized provincial state oriented toward bringing about modernization on Quebec's terms, i.e. without paying the price of assimilation. Yet this latter strategy inevitably culminated in a confrontation with the system of Canadian federalism and brought to the fore internal splits within the Liberal Party which continue between the federal and Quebec parties to this day. But the most frustrated moved in another direction — toward the various groups which eventually formed the Parti Québécois.

The third phase of ideological development — that of participation and development — emerged in the 1960's with the deepening split within the generation which had created the Quiet Revolution. Most decisively, the wing which opted for some version of social democratic nationalism captured the most dynamic members of the younger generation coming of age in the late 60's and early 1970's, and culminating in the victory of the PQ in 1976. In the process the liberal strategy of *rattrapage* was attacked for both initiating a process of dependent development vis-à-vis external powers *and* failing to address the problems of participation required for a politics of redistribution and decentralization. Above all, it was argued, the goal of modernization could neither be fully realized under the conditions of confederation nor without the ultimate loss of Quebec's national identity.

It is in this latter context that Rioux and others (e.g. Fernand Dumont) addressed the problematic of science and technology. Three basic assumptions have tended to guide research and policy formulation despite differences of detail and emphasis: first, that the evident inferiority of francophone Quebec in science and technology were closely related to Quebec's dependent relationship within Canadian federation; second, that this situation could only be overcome by a national science and technology policy — *un virage technologique* — constructed by a politically autonomous Quebec state;[19] and third, that such a policy of research and development should be coordinated with forms of participation and self-management necessary to ensure that the resulting economic development be compatible with social and cultural needs. Obviously, advocacy of this line of argument ran headlong against some of the most fundamental assumptions and strategies which have long dominated Canadian economic and science policy. Moreover, the third argument eventually became the source of significant divisions within the nationalist left and the PQ itself.[20]

The Critique of Liberalism and Social Democracy

The onset of the 1960's marked a crucial turning point in Rioux's career and intellectual development. The two decisive events were the victory of the Liberal Party in Quebec and his own appointment to the department of sociology at the Université de Montréal. The first signalled the end of his tactical alliance with the reformist *Cité libre* group; it also marked the first step of cooling personal relations with Trudeau, culminating in his public declaration of support for the Quebec independance movement in 1964. At first Rioux had tried to develop his socialist political sympathies in relation to the CCF and later the NDP. But by 1963 the Quebec wing of the NDP split over questions of both economic policy and the status of Quebec, at which point he lost faith in the pan-Canadian socialist movement and left the party with a dissident francophone group. His university appointment, on the other hand, provided an institutional setting for defending and developing his political stance through the elaboration of a theoretical foundation for responding to and passing beyond the two most important challenges on the political horizon: the federalist liberalism which soon came to power under Trudeau and the form of social democracy advocated by the NDP.[21]

Despite a strong sympathy for the social policies of the NDP and its interventionist stance with respect to the economy, Rioux was convinced — on the basis of the experience of the early sixties — that the NDP could not come to terms with the special status of Quebec. Accordingly, from the perspective of the emerging nationalist forces in Quebec, the federalism of the NDP, and its conception of a centrally coordinated strategy of industrial development, was indistinguishable from that of the Liberal Party. This fact ensured the demise of the NDP as a political force within Quebec and called into question the underlying theoretical assumptions of its analysis of advanced capitalism. In effect the fundamental differences between the forces represented by what eventually coalesced in the PQ and the federalist position of the three national parties revolved around two fundamental issues: first, the priority of the values to be protected and encouraged by the state and, second, the analytical assumptions regarding the conditions under which such values might be preserved or enhanced. As a consequence value-judgments and empirical questions were mingled in a manner typical of charged ideological confrontations. The essential normative principle of the federalist position was the primacy of Canadian unity and the analytical assumption that the language and culture of Quebec, as well as its economic development, could be best preserved within Canadian confederation. Opponents of this position, on the other hand, rejected both the primacy of Canadian unity (or at least in the given form in the case of those who

advocated a dual nation concept) *and* the assumption that it was possible to separate cultural policy from economic and political autonomy. Hence it was argued that whatever residual value that a relation with Canada might have could be preserved on the basis of "sovereignty-association"; moreover, only on the basis of political and economic autonomy could Quebec potentially create a qualitatively different kind of society — a theme of central importance for Rioux and those on the left wing of the nationalist movement.

From the early 1960's onward Rioux's intellectual and research projects were unified by the desire to develop the social scientific and theoretical foundations of the left-nationalism of the independence movement. Indeed, it could be argued that the specificity of francophone social theory and research in Quebec derives most fundamentally from a preference for theoretical paradigms which support or illuminate the proposition that the cultural cannot be separated from the economic and political arrangements of society in the manner suggested by federalist policies. This schism thus quickly led the discussion of these issues in a very different direction than either Trudeau's liberalism or the social democracy of the NDP: a return to Marx. And it is worth recalling the Rioux is credited with teaching the first course on Marx in Quebec in 1961.

One of the primary sources of the influence of neo-Marxist discussions in Quebec from the early 1960's onward — aside from similar developments in France — was that this tradition provided an analytical framework which stressed the inter-penetration of the cultural, economic and political, despite considerable disagreement about the exact nature of those relations. This, coupled with the desire to construct a more egalitarian and just society, is the basis of Rioux's long flirtation with the Marxist tradition and his willingness — when pressed — to profess a form of "cultural Marxism." But as we shall see in a moment, this relationship to the Marxist tradition became an increasingly ambivalent one which eventually pushed Rioux's thinking in directions that often ran against the mainstream of Marxist thinking.

The central theoretical basis of Rioux's position, and which underlies his re-interpretations of Quebec development in the *Question of Quebec* and *Les Québécois*, is the concept of "dependency." Though this concept might be said to have its broader origins in the Marxian understanding of power relations and their economic bases, the theory of cultural dependency was developed in relation to total societies or regions rather than class relations and economic structure exclusively. Not surprisingly, the most influential early formulations of this approach, such as those of Franz Fanon, had their origins in Third World, post-colonial societies confronted with a collective project of national reconstruction. The task which Rioux and others were confronted with, however, was that of adapting such concepts to a relatively

advanced "society" such as Quebec which was at the same time also juridically and economically a region within a liberal democratic federal state. Accordingly, the "national liberation" rhetoric of the 1960's gave way in the following decade to a more sober assessment of the nature of and prospects for overcoming the economic and cultural dependency of Quebec.

For Rioux this entailed weaving together in a somewhat eclectic fashion a number of sociological arguments which attempted to legitimate the national aspirations of francophone Quebec. At this point — from the mid-sixties through the early seventies — there was little evidence of concern with how the resulting position was incompatible with some of the basic assumptions of Marxist theory. Rather, he took as his point of departure the various dissident forces emerging in Quebec, attempting to give them a theoretical interpretation. Four major themes unified his various analyses. First, the thesis of an "ethnic-class" argued that under particular historical circumstances, such s that of francophone Quebec, a history of domination and exploitation could allow an ethnic minority to act much like a class — a point following from dependency theory.[22] Second, in his typology of the succession of ideologies already referred to, he suggested that the movement from ideologies of conservation through contestation and *rattrapage*, and finally the transcendence embodied in the emerging principles of participation and development pointed to the unique dynamic potential of Quebec which set it apart from the rest of North America. Indeed, he even went so far as to invoke the thesis of the relative advantage of backwardness. In the transition from an industrial to a postindustrial society, Quebec potentially had certain advantages deriving from not having been fully transformed by the industrial revolution. On the one hand, backwardness and a history of conquest created forms of conflict which could precipitate political change; and on the other, the preservation of certain types of pre-industrial values and modes of cooperation created the basis for quicker adaptation to the requirements of the emerging post-industrial society. A third theme was the valorization of youth in this process of transition and the way in which the youth of Quebec were especially dynamic.[23] A fourth theme which emerged — and one which will be treated in more detail in the final section — is that of cultural development and the primacy of cultural "ruptures" at points of fundamental social transition. For Rioux, the challenge of transforming Quebec was more than a question of appropriating the forces of production, of handing over the organization of technology and economic activity from one elite to another. By itself that could not insure the survival of Quebec culture, let alone bring forth a new form of society because the crisis of advanced industrial societies is not simply economic, but more fundamentally cultural: "The conquests of technique of which we are justifiably proud

could have been realized only at the price of a systematic dissociation between the spontaneous and symbolic knowledge which gives meaning to the world for man."[24]

Confrontation With the Marxist Tradition

By the early 1970's the movement of Rioux's own thinking coupled with the maturation of neo-Marxist discussions within Quebec, created a situation in which the tensions within his own position required a re-examination of his relation to Marx. Initially, his criticisms of "Marxism" could be written off as failings of his latter day interpreters rather than those of Marx himself. But the experience of Quebec, along with his awareness of internal critiques of Marx associated with the notion of "critical theory", led Rioux toward a more systematic reconsideration of the relation between his own "critical sociology" and the Marxist tradition in a volume titled *Essai de sociologie critique*.[25] This text was also of strategic importance given that an extensive and increasingly sophisticated literature had emerged in Quebec attacking precisely the form of left-nationalism represented by Rioux, even if he was rarely referred to by name. From a more traditional neo-Marxist position nationalism could at best be a strategic device employed by the working class in its international struggle. From this perspective, nationalism inevitably entailed a compromise with the indigenous "national" bourgeoisie and undermined the efforts of a specifically working class based process of mobilization.[26]

In the present context it is possible only to allude to the arguments of the resulting dense but rich theoretical exploration found in Rioux's *Essai de sociologie critique*. The point of departure is a qualified identification with the form of a critical theory of society defended in the epistemological writings of the Western German theorist Jürgen Habermas. In thus taking a position against a scientistic interpretation of Marxism — especially the form of structuralism represented by Louis Althusser — Rioux was confronted with elaborating the implications of the concept of praxis. This required a critical sociology which would go beyond the contemplative stance of critical theory and hence could deal with the cultural and social psychological bases of those "emancipatory practices" which alone could both anticipate and carry through fundamental social change in the context of advanced societies. At the same time, in criticizing the theory of postindustrial society represented by the conservative American sociologist Daniel Bell, Rioux also sought to come to terms with the implications of the emergence of a new form of capitalist society, especially in relation to the case of Quebec. In order to convey a full sense of the implications of this type

of discussion, it is necessary to turn to what is in effect the positive thrust of Rioux's critical sociology as an alternative to either liberalism or social democracy, on the one hand, or neo-Marxism on the other.

III. *Autogestion* and Emancipatory Practices

The Tasks of a Critical Sociology

The intentions and objectives of Rioux's critical sociology cannot be adequately grasped or assessed unless it is realized that its primary objective is not "explanatory", i.e. concerned primarily with extending the analysis of the various determinants of given and past forms of society. Following the epistemology of Habermas, he argues that three knowledge interests guide social research: the empirical-analytical explanation of the causes of social phenomena, the hermeneutic interpretation of the meanings which define different cultures and modes of existence, and the critical-emancipatory concern with overcoming the given forms of domination. Not that Rioux is indifferent to either historical determinations or cultural interpretation, but these shape the background rather than the foreground of his most recent work. His concern is rather with "praxis," with those forms of action, thought and expression which alone create the possibility of qualitative change within the existing form of society. In this respect his work can be situated in the trajectory of contemporary European critical theory and related Anglo-American developments; but his location in Quebec and close relationship to a dynamic social movement has given his version of critical sociology a unique form.[27]

Postindustrial Society and De-Territorialized Technology

At least three basic types of postindustrial society theory can be identified and need to be differentiated. The most simplistic and well-known variety, propagated by the prophets of automation, technological progress and the information revolution, suggests an optimistic scenario of continuous, unproblematic advance. The futurology of people like Herman Kahn and for the most part Alvin Toffler could be located here. A second, much more pessimistic version has been elaborated by Daniel Bell who stresses the cultural contradictions stemming from the absence of a unifying moral and cultural tradition to contain the disjunction between technological rationalization and unbridled pursuit of individual gratification. A third variety can be identified in the work of people such as Alain Touraine, Rioux and others who bypass this optimistic-pessimistic polarization. The emergence of a period of transition is seen as an opportunity, but its outcome will depend upon an unpredictable conjuncture of forces and the capacity of societies to

mobilize new forms of consciousness. But at a minimum this context calls into question the crucial assumption upon which the Marxist theory of revolution was based, i.e. the world-historical mission of the proletariat as the class to abolish all classes. At the same time, however, it also creates new possibilities for change, new sites for action which may have already emerged but have not necessarily found a theoretical interpretation. As against the first two types of postindustrial society theory, moreover, the continuity with the past forms of capitalism is not forgotten.

For Rioux this continuity is best understood through the concept of alienation. The distinctive feature of capitalism, he argues, is not domination and exploitation per se because they have always existed. Nor is this alienation to be identified exclusively with private property or the system of economic relations in the narrow sense. Indeed it is over the question of how to interpret alienation that neo-Marxism and critical theory part ways. The former is based on the political economy culminating in *Capital* and stresses the theory of surplus value and the resulting exploitation of alienated labour. Critical theory, on the other hand, views alienation as *prior to* private property in the sense that it arises with a new type of society which renders the economic process (and hence technological development) autonomous.[28] In the early phase of capitalist development, of course, this autonomy was organized by the expansion of the market system. In the more recent form of advanced capitalism, however, the state has modified and restricted to some extent the market system, but primarily in the interest of ensuring the autonomous expansion of technology constrained by unregulated capitalist development. The concept of alienation found in critical theory, in other words, becomes the basis for a critique of technology, as well as some of the novel features of postindustrial societies.

What is in question here, of course, is a variant of the thesis of instrumental rationalization found in the work of Herbert Marcuse, a link which Rioux acknowledges. From this perspective technology cannot be considered "neutral" even if science can make a better claim in this regard: "As long as scientific research is almost purely speculative, a matter of theory, it can easily pretent to neutrality and objectivity; but the moment it is applied, it becomes part of the apportioning of power and the exercise of social control."[29] Technology cannot be considered in isolation, in itself, because it always appears in the context of a particular economic and political system: "clearly one cannot have capitalist economics without capitalist technique, and vice-versa."[30] This type of analysis thus becomes the foundation of a critique of postindustrial societies in several ways. First, it provides the basis for recognizing that the "imperatives" of technology are closely linked to the needs and interests of the economic process which controls their development and application. Second, it facilitates under-

standing how cultural domination has become the highest stage of imperialism by creating a symbolic canopy for bringing all societies under the yoke of these presumed technological imperatives. Third, it helps explain why alienation persists despite the obvious gains stemming from increased affluence, the welfare state and labour legislation. Even if direct exploitation has been dramatically reduced, the standard of living improved and the welfare state has softened the impact of capitalist industrialization — facts which have undermined classic Marxist politics in advanced societies, this has not altered the basic condition of capitalist alienation in Rioux's sense. The various components of society are still coerced to adapt to the assumed imperatives of technological and economic development, irrespective of the ultimate consequences for human needs and desires or the technological alternatives and social forms which might be constructed.

This strategy of analysis also allows linking the theory of alienation with that of dependency and nationalism. Accordingly, Rioux stresses how the autonomization of technology and the economic culminates in a "de-territorialization" of technology and culture.[31] In the name of the universality of technology and the logic of comparative advantage, economic development proceeds in a manner that systematically deprives communities, regions and nations of the political means and cultural autonomy necessary to control their own fate. The most obvious form of this process is the dependent economic development of Canada and Quebec and the resulting impoverishment of research and development capacities. A more subtle version of this can be found in the expansion of the new information technology and the dominance of American cultural industries which promote "universal" knowledge and entertainment values at the expense of the logical, the particular, the traditional: activities rooted in popular culture and everyday life which cannot be directly harnessed to the process of accumulation.

The Problem of Transition

But what is to be done? From Rioux's perspective the point of departure is to recognize that the classic Marxist problematic of "transition" should not be defined simply in terms of changing the mode of production, of instituting one set of property relations for another. Within the classic Marxist schema the concepts of transition and possible consciousness referred to a strategy for the seizure of political power which would in turn lead to the formation of a new mode of production. In this essentially Leninist framework, the task of theory was to guide a party avant-garde which possessed the maximum possible consciousness, hence adequate to the task of guiding the work of history. Furthermore, this conception is built on the assumption of the neutrality of technology which, it is assumed, can be directly borrowed and re-organized through the apparatus of the new

dictatorship of the proletariat. The consequences of this position, the resulting bureaucratic collectivism, are all too familiar. Though Western neo-Marxists are sensitive to the problems of bureaucratization, they have not succeeded in providing any theoretical response to bypassing these problems, aside from less than fully credible assurances that they could be overcome through a more democratic working class party organization.

Rioux's response to the problematic of transition is fundamentally different: "Historically, Marx's critical perspective was aimed first at the appropriation of nature and the development of productive forces. We are increasingly aware today that the other aspect — man's appropriation of his own nature — must be promoted."[32] Given that the goal in this context must be that of a self-managing society (*une sociéte autogestionnaire*) if socialism is to have any justifiable meaning, this cannot be achieved by simply gaining political power and imposing change from above. To the extent that any qualitative transformation is possible and shifts in political power be translated into meaningful reforms, they must be embedded in pre-existing changes, in "emancipatory practices" which pave the way for new forms of social relations and ways of organizing production and distribution. To facilitate this process suggests for Rioux the importance of a research strategy oriented toward identifying and assessing such practices — the forms of innovative praxis which are harbingers of fundamental "ruptures" in advanced capitalist societies. And of course the independence movement in Quebec is one of the most important expressions of such rupture and has its analogue in the academic milieu in the journal *Possibles* founded by Rioux and others in 1976.[33]

IV. Utopia Against All Odds?

Perhaps the most striking and distinctive feature of Rioux's intellectual project in relation to the discourse on science and technology in English Canada is his refusal to cower before the imperatives of "reality", of the given, however much he may be aware of the existing sources of power and domination.[34] Accordingly, while implicitly accepting the general argument of the critique of technology and American empire developed by George Grant, for example, for Rioux this does not culminate in the whimper of a "lament for a nation" but the passionate rage of daring to continue dreaming of one. However one may assess such utopian defiance, it must be conceded that it represents one of the few dynamic forces in contemporary Canadian politics, has shaped a distinctive tradition of social theory and research, and has inspired — and will continue to inspire — many of the most talented and creative members of Quebec society, many of whom are of non-francophone origin.

But how should we go about assessing and criticizing a form of inquiry

like Rioux's critical sociology? Criticism from the perspective of the world view of an empiricist or positivist conception of sociology as a science would be beside the point and bypass his problematic altogether. The simplest response — from an external perspective — would to simply charge his social theory with romanticism, idealism, utopianism. On this point liberals, social democrats, neo-Marxists and Red Tory's might agree, even if they would formulate their response somewhat differently and with more or less sympathy. From within the perspective of critical theory itself, on the other hand, the problematic developed by Rioux could be readily accepted as the basis for rational discussion, but criticism would be directed at inconsistencies and gaps in argumentation, point to confirming or disconfirming empirical evidence, etc. Let us consider first what this latter kind of sympathetic critical analysis might take up and then conclude with the question of a general characterization of Rioux's critical social theory in relation to its utopianism and place within the Canadian tradition.

More or less consciously, Rioux is confronted with at least three fundamental ambiguities in relating his critical sociology to the Quebec independence movement: first, the difficulty of assessing or deciphering his relation to the PQ given the absence of any explicit theory of the state, parties and class; second, whether and under what conditions Quebec, as a peripheral community, could ever be a 'weak link' in the North American context; and third, the principles of mediation between the imperatives of economic modernization and those of self-management. Such issues may appear to be merely 'academic' in the mid-1980's; but social theories cannot be in any simple way falsified by short-run turns of historical events and there may be more to be learned from side-tracked social movements than meets the skeptical eye.

As Rioux has often noted, his greatest reserve with respect to the PQ is not so much its support of the indigenous Quebec bourgeoisie as its failure to take into account that the more fundamental sources of Quebec dependence — both economic and cultural — stem from south of the border.[35] For the most part English Canada is simply the middleman for this process; and dealing with IBM directly would do little to change this political economic fact. Indeed, greater political autonomy could even result in greater vulnerability and result in even more accommodating stances with respect to foreign capital. His relative silence on many other issues beyond that of the dependency thesis, on the other hand, has peculiar implications. His silence with respect to a theory of the state, class, and party — at least beyond the strained argument of the ethnic-class hypothesis — reveals a massive gap at the centre of his effort to justify and facilitate the realization of Quebec autonomy. By not addressing the question of whether there is any alternative to traditional political economy and its theory of the state, class, and

parties, he cannot respond to the charge that the failure of the PQ reconfirms a structuralist Marxist position. But clearly Rioux's critical sociology implies such an alternative theory and remains incomplete without it.

With respect to the second question, Rioux has long entertained a version of Trotsky's thesis that relative backwardness created the potential for skipping stages of development and hence outpacing initially more advanced societies. More specifically, he has tentatively defended the thesis that under the appropriate circumstances more fundamental change might occur first in the periphery as opposed to the centre. In the early 1970's he vigorously defended this possibility in relation to Quebec in an interview with a very skeptical Herbert Marcuse and as late as the early 1980's repeated it in debate with an equally skeptical Immanuel Wallerstein; but more recently he has written of Quebec rapidly running out of time.[36] But curiously this question has not been addressed in the theoretical depth that it deserves; nor has it been adequately posed in relation to the question of changes in the rest of Canada, though this theme is touched upon in *Two Nations*. At least two major issues are at stake here. First, could this thesis be reformulated envisioning something less than a revolutionary model echoing the imagery of anti-colonial movements? And second, what are the implications of the fact that Quebec shares its peripheral situation with English Canada? On what grounds can it automatically be assumed that Quebec's double dependence — on both the United States and Canada — constitutes an advantage? Double dependence also creates a double vulnerability. Can this difficulty be traced back to Marx's theory of alienation and its problematic assumption that absolute deprivation provides the subjective basis of dialectical transcendence? Whereas Rioux's theory of emancipatory practices and emphasis on desire as opposed to need questions an immiseration thesis of revolutionary change, his theory of dependency ultimately remains bound to it.

The third question goes to the heart of internal tension within Rioux's critical sociology and its relation to the PQ, a tension shared with the *autogestion* and anarchist traditions generally. In Quebec promises of economic modernization and greater affluence have been among the most important planks of the independence movement. And yet it is also no accident that this was one of the most difficult claims to make credible to the referendum voters of 1980. Neither sovereignty nor greater self-management could be linked with immediate or short-run gains in overall efficiency, competitiveness, profitability, research and development, and wages. The contribution of prospective independence to this fear, even in the form of sovereignty-association, is evident enough: real threats of economic blackmail by English Canada and foreign capital, the flight of technical personnel and head offices, problems of transition, etc. The

technocratic wing of the PQ, to be sure, had plausible responses to all of these transitional problems, but was reluctant to openly admit short-term sacrifices were required for long-term material gains. As is obvious, however, this was scarcely a proposition which could gain majority support in electoral politics.

The underlying dilemma is that participatory national planning of the type envisioned by the PQ requires a form of democratic public which does not yet exist — anywhere. Even more intractable are the issues posed by the enhancement of self-management of the type advocated by the *autogestion* wing of the PQ. In fact, to some extent it even works at cross-purposes with the form of modernization which might follow from a successful national *virage technologique*. Even if one follows Rioux in rejecting the claim of Max Weber and others regarding the absolute constraints of instrumental rationality, it is rather a more difficult task to construct the political processes and cultural pre-requisites which could practically facilitate the reconciliation of instrumental and substantial rationalization, of technology and human purposes. Certainly, the concept of emancipatory practices and the research task of studying them ethnographically is an important step forward; yet this needs to be complemented by a more rigorous conceptualization of how these practices can be coupled with modernization in the context of international economic interdependence. Closely related to this is the failure to connect the principle of a self-managing society with a theory of the state. One of the paradoxical effects of self-management is the fragmenting of interests of the various groups given autonomy; this was the case, for example, of the 'self-managing' public unions confronting the PQ government. Does the state represent the only mediating principle for reconciling particular interests with those of society as a whole? And if so, can this result in anything more than the reproduction of the given form of society?[37]

Finally, locating Rioux within the spectrum of ideological and social theoretical labels is ostensibly an easy task at first glance — terms like 'utopian', 'romantic', and 'anarchist' quickly come to mind. But these terms are deceptive to the extent that their European origins distract us from the specific manifestations in the New World and their relation to the Canadian and Quebec imaginations. Above all it is important to stress the way in which Rioux's critical social theory — itself an expression of the movement it would legitimate — runs against the literary and cultural traditions which have dominated both English Canada and Quebec. Gaile McGregor has brilliantly characterized the latter in her *Wacousta Syndrome* by contrasting the 'western frontier' of the American imagination and the 'northern frontier' of the Canadian:

> A western frontier, depending on one's perspective, is *the limit of knowledge* or the *limit of control* ... that may not only be transcended but actually redefined — moved, advanced, or even eradicated — by human effort ... A northern frontier, in contrast, denotes the *limits of endurance*. It is, in brief, an intangible but ineradicable line between the 'self' and the 'other', between what is and is not humanly possible.[38]

Rioux's unique anarchism like his cultural Marxism is rooted in a rebellion against that sense of powerlessness rooted in living on the 'northern' frontier and the impossibility of embracing the technocratic optimism of either 'conquering' the west or 'smashing' the bourgeois state. The existential dimensions of Rioux's anarchist tendencies are more apparent perhaps in his personal life than his writings, but can be traced back to his immersion in the literature of French existentialism in the 1950's. And it reappears again in his most recent study, *Le Besoin et le désire*, which explicitly begins with the injunction that existential questions must be raised in social science; hence he rejects compartmentalizing humans as creatures of need at one point and desire another and concludes that 'autogestion is before everything else and above all a cultural revolution.'[39] And it is precisely such forms of cultural rupture which he claims to have found in Quebec and which alone can create the foundations for the technological and economic choices necessary for a qualitatively different kind of society. If the 'northern' frontier is not assimilated into the 'western' à la Bourassa, what *is* the alternative? More than any other social theorist in Canada, Marcel Rioux has dared to explore the logic of possibilities, to decode theoretically the potential of emancipatory practices which reveal emergent forms of resistance within the Canadian tradition.

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Notes

1. This is a revised version of a paper presented at the "Canadian Theory Workshop", Peter Robinson College, Trent University, Peterborough, Ont. (June 1983). I would like to thank Danny Drache and Greg Nielsen for helpful comments on the original draft.

2. The theme of the rational and scientific side of what is often referred to as ideology as been developed most persuasively by the late American sociologist Alvin Gouldner in his *Dialectic of Ideology and Technology* (New York: Seabury, 1976). Though all social theory certainly has ideological dimensions, it is constructed in the context of commitments to a scientific research programme; its potential transformation into an action-oriented party platform or movement involves the construction of a mobilizing ideology in the more restrictive and often pejorative

sense. For that reason it is misleading to confuse a normatively grounded social theory with ideology in the narrow sense.

3. Tom Bottomore, *Critics of Society*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), pp. 121-2.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
5. Harry H. Hiller, *Society and Change*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), p. 28.
6. *Ibid.*
7. As he expressed his relation to younger generations recently: "The thing which helps me to live is perhaps the fact that I am very ill at ease with people of my age ... My friends at the present time are all between 35 and 45 years old"; cited in Jules Duchastel, *Marcel Rioux: entre l'utopie et la raison*, (Montréal: Nouvelle Optique, 1981), p. 184.
8. The following biographical discussion is drawn primarily from Duchastel, *Marcel Rioux*.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 196-7.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 83; the original reads as follows: "A mon ami Marcel Rioux, anthropophage distingué, et camarade sans pareil, dans l'espoir que cette lecture le métamorphosera enfin en ZOONPOLITIA (N.D.R. en homme Politique). Pierre E.T., juin 1956".
11. Cf. however the forthcoming work by Raymond Morrow and Greg Nielsen, *Marcel Rioux*.
12. Two major monographs resulted from this research: *Description de la culture de l'Ile Verte* (Musée National du Canada, Ottawa, 1954) and *Belle-Anse* (Musée National du Canada, 1957); of the many papers published in this context, the following two might be singled out because of their ready accessibility: Marcel Rioux and Yves Martin, eds. *French-Canadian Society* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964): "Remarks on the Socio-Cultural Development of French Canada", pp. 162-78 and "Kinship Recognition and Urbanization in French Canada", pp. 372-85.
13. These include newspaper articles, book introductions, lectures and contributions to various journals — *Cité libre* in the 1950's, several leftist and cultural reviews in the 1960's and most recently the nationalist *autogestion* journal of which he was a co-founder in 1976 (*Possibles*); also included here would be the tract lambasting the federal liberal position on the constitution: *Pour prendre publiquement congé de quelques salauds* (Montréal: l'Hexagone, 1981).
14. *Quebec in Question*, trans. J. Boake [Toronto: Lorimer, 1978 (originally published in French in 1969)] and *Les Québécois* (Paris: Seuil, 1974).
15. M. Rioux, Chairman, *Rapport de la Commission d'enquête des arts au Québec*, 3 vol. (Québec: Editeur officiel du Québec, 1969) and "Le Rapport du Tribunal de la Culture" in *Liberté*, no. 101, 1975, pp. 4-85.
16. Above all, see *Essaie de sociologie critique* (Montréal: Hurtubise HMH, 1978) and the volume written in collaboration with Susan Crean, *Deux pays pour vivre* (Montréal; Editions Albert Saint-Martin, 1980), now available in an updated and revised version (for an anglophone audience) by Crean, *Two Nations* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1983).
17. For a good treatment of the modernization theme, cf. Kenneth McRoberts and Dale Postgate, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis*, rev. ed. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980).
18. Cf. Rioux, "Sur l'evolution des idéologies au Québec," *Revue de l'institut de sociologie*, vol. 1, 1968, pp. 95-124, reprinted in translation in J. Paul Grayson, ed. *Class, State, Ideology and Change* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), pp. 205-20.
19. On the theme of dependency, cf. Marcel Fournier and Louis Maheu, "Nationalismes et nationalisation du champ scientifique québécois," *Sociologie et Sociétés*, vol. 7, nos. 2, 1975, pp. 119-31; on the history of science and technology in Quebec more generally, cf. Francine Descarries-Bélanger, Marcel Fournier and Louis Maheu, "Le frère Marie-Victorin et les 'petites sciences'", *Recherches Sociographiques*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1979, pp. 7-39 and Raymond Duchesne, *La Science et le pouvoir au Québec 1920-1965* (Québec: Editeur officiel du Québec, 1978).

20. On the post-1960 expansion of technocratic elites and their confrontation with demands for participation and self-management, cf. Jean-Jacques Simard, *La longue marche des technocrates* (Montréal: Editions Albert Saint-Martin, 1979) and Gilbert Renaud, *A l'ombre du rationalisme* (Montréal: Editions Albert Saint-Martin, 1984).

21. For the most influential formulations of liberalism and social democracy in this period, cf. respectively Pierre E. Trudeau, *Federalism and the French Canadians* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1977) and Michael Oliver, ed. *Social Purpose for Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961).

22. Cf. Jacques Dofny and Marcel Rioux, "Les classes sociales au Canada français," *Revue française de sociologie*, vol. 3, 1962, pp. 290-300 (reprinted in translation in Rioux and Martin, eds. *French-Canadian Society*, pp. 307-18).

23. Rioux, *Jeunesse et société contemporaine.* Leçon inaugurale (1965), Université de Montréal (Montréal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1965).

24. *Rapport de la Commission d'enquête des arts au Québec*, vol. 1, p. 36. This thesis regarding the erosion of the primary culture of everyday life by the secondary culture of technical rationality was first introduced, as Rioux acknowledges, by Fernand Dumont in his *Le Lieu de l'homme* (Montréal; Hurtubise HMH, 1969). It should also be noted that in the most recent work of West German social theorist Jürgen Habermas this general theme has been explored in a much more intensive way under the rubric of the "colonization of the life world"; cf. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2: *Lifeworld and System: A Critique of Functionalist Reason*, trans. T. McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, forthcoming).

25. Initially he had formulated his position in terms of confronting Weber and Marx, hence an "aseptic" and a "critical" sociology; cf. "Remarques sur la sociologie critique et la sociologie aseptique", *Sociologie et Sociétés*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1968, pp. 53-67.

26. On the theme of neo-Marxism vs. nationalism generally, cf. Nicole Laurin-Frenette, *Production de l'Etat et formes de la nation* (Montréal: Nouvelle Optique, 1978), Jacques Mascotto and Pierre-Yves Soucy, *Démocratie et nation* (Montréal: Editions Albert Saint-Martin, 1980) and Raymond Morrow, "*Deux pays pour vivre*: Critical Sociology and the New Canadian Political Economy," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, vol. 6, no. 1-2, 1982, pp. 61-105.

27. Rioux's own formulation captures the distinctiveness of his position: "To the extent that critical theory was elaborated by nineteenth-century philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Feuerbach, and Marx, by philosophers of the Frankfurt School like Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and Habermas, and in France by Sartre, Lefebvre, Goldmann, and Castoriadis, its influence has been significant. That is to say, some have held the belief that either the socio-historical factor could theorized from beginning to end (Hegel and Marx) or, like Kant, that it could not become a scientific subject — the noumenon versus the phenomenon. In either case, those who opted for one or other position, took little trouble to look into the social practices to discover what people were becoming. On the one hand, reason could foretell future events; on the other hand, social history was a practical field, a field of free-will. In either case such research seemed superfluous." ("Remarks on Emancipatory Practices and Industrial Societies in Crisis," *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1984, p. 18.)

28. *Essai de sociologie critique*, p. 101.

29. *Two Nations*, pp. 104-5.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 107.

31. Cf. Rioux, "La culture 'déterritorialisée'", *Le Devoir*, 12 March 1982, p. 17 and *Two Nations*, p. 148. The term is borrowed from the French social theorist Pierre Rosanvallon.

32. "Remarks on Emancipatory Practices and Industrial Societies in Crisis," p. 4. Cf. also "Les possibles dans une période de transition," *Possibles*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1976, pp. 3-8.

33. *Possibles* attempts to serve as a kind of mediating link between the academic milieu and the

actual agents of change and praxis. Accordingly, the contents range from documents, to reflections from within various groups, through analyses of social experiments and events. Poetry and drawings also have a place in this enterprise. Furthermore, a collaborative research programme has been developed under this auspices, cf. Jean-Pierre Dupuis, *et al. Les Pratiques émancipatoires en milieu populaire* (Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1982).

34. Contrast Rioux with the reflections on technology of Harold Innis, Marshall McLuhan and George Grant as provocatively formulated by Arthur Kroker in his *Technology and the Canadian Mind* (Montréal: New World Perspectives, 1984). Because of the constructive political thrust of the theory of *autogestion*, Rioux may remain enmeshed in the polarization between "technological humanism" and "technological dependency" but does succeed in pointing toward the transcendent principle of liberation.

35. Rioux, "Une porte de plus en plus étroite," *Possibles*, vol. 8, no. 1, 1983, pp. 19-22.

36. Rioux, "Politique et culture," *Conjuncture politique au Québec*, no. 2, Fall 1982, pp. 91-95.

37. For a suggestive formulation of these issues, cf. Renaud, *A l'ombre du rationalisme*.

38. G. McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 59.

39. M. Rioux, *Le Besoin et le désir* (Montreal: L'Hexagone, 1984), p. 118.

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WILLIAM LEISS ON TECHNOLOGY: A FOUCAULDIAN AND HABERMASIAN READING*

Marike Finlay

Wesen ist das erste innere Princip alles dessen was zur Möglichkeit eines Dinges gehört. (Kant)

In a recent lecture, "The Information Society: A New Name for Some Old Tricks" William Leiss reminds us that the recent promotional hype about the communications revolution cannot be understood in isolation from the larger historical debate concerning technology and society.[1] Tracing the often occulted genealogy of the declaration that we are now in an information society, Leiss shows how it has its origins not merely in discourses of the "gurus" of the post-industrial society, namely Galbraith, Bell, Porat and Machlup, but also how the way in which technology is related to society extends back as far as Bacon's scientific project for the "Domination of Nature." The first lesson that may be derived from Leiss' writings, then, is that new fads of technology and new debates concerning these fads cannot be comprehended except within a larger field of discourse on society and technology in general. It is Leiss's own attempt to situate current issues and concerns of technology within this larger discursive field that interests me here.

Now, being a rebellious child of the classical episteme which organized texts around the supremacy of the author-subject I can think of only one justification for talking about the writings of William Leiss: to see if his texts constitute a field of discourse where some of the manifest themes, clichés, rhetorical techniques, presuppositions, and epistemological

**Ed.* This is the first part of a two-part article. The second section will appear in a subsequent issue.

assumptions that underpin and condition current talk about technology are unveiled, historically contextualized and perhaps even surpassed.[2] My reasons for selecting such a task are the following: until such clichés or redundancies are brought to the surface we will not understand why contemporary discourses on technology and society raise the points they do, why certain issues are formulated in certain ways and not others. Furthermore, as long as we must follow the same presuppositions and themes dictated by past discourses on technology and society, it will be difficult to say anything new about this subject, or to posit and practice alternative technologies and alternative relationships between technology and society.[3]

We have all happened upon various clichés such as: "Technology is neutral; it all depends on how you use it;" "Technology is inherently good (or evil);" "Technology is progress and progress is inevitable;" "The chief social function of technology is to create new possibilities for human activity;" and "Technology controls nature for increased freedom for mankind." These timeless redundancies are responsible for the ways in which many government policy-makers, academics, and the mass media understand and suggest solutions for the problematic relationship between technology and society. Where technology is conceived as "inevitable," debate never questions whether we as a society want to have new communications technology at all. It concentrates, instead, on programming society to adapt to the technology. Where technology is understood as inherently good, evil or neutral, the social institutions which are responsible for developing and interpreting technology for society tend to abstract technology from its concrete realizations and to talk about or legislate it as some sort of idealized essence rather than as a concrete social phenomenon.

Talk about technology must be scrutinized for such regularities, the genealogy of these regularities must be traced, and where necessary, demythologized. By demythologized, I refer to Roland Barthes' use of the term in *Mythologies*, wherein he exposed attempts to "naturalize" statements as common sense, as *universal* or as inevitable. He demonstrated their historical contingency as opposed to their universal applicability or essentialism. By demonstrating the historical relativity of statements such as "Technology depends on how you use it," one can not only challenge their absolutism and doxalogical character, but also generate alternative statements and perhaps even alternative technologies. In other words, such a demythologization is the first and necessary step towards the realization of an alternative discourse on technology and an alternative technology itself. The implications of a discursive order for such political practices as policy-making are significant. Consequently, a good site to begin a study of a theory of technology is with an analysis of discourses on technology.

Many statements about new communications technology may be allo-

cated to one of two epistemological camps: a) one which treats technology as essence or as idealized abstraction from the environment in which technology is manifest, and b) one which treats technology as existing in no other way than as a material occurrence positioned within a real social environment. The essentialization or idealization of technology abstracts it from those concrete social contexts in which it necessarily exists. Such abstraction runs the risk of deferring social dialogue about desirable typos of technology and about the means necessary for achieving this technology. Essentializing technology places it out of the reach of social judgement and decision-making because all such perspectives allow us to say about it is that technology is inevitably the way it is because such is its essence.

On the other hand, were technology to be understood as a form of historical, actual, social manifestation, then discourse about technology would be able to study technology in direct relation to society, and to suggest how society might influence concrete social manifestations of technology. Here, potential for judgement and change would replace a discourse of inevitability and acceptance of the naturalized or essential status quo of technology.

It is to these two alternative stances and to their respective implications for social discourse on and response to technology that Castoriadis makes reference:

> But there is nothing different with the global attitude toward technics; most of the time, contemporary opinion, be it popular or knowledgeable, remains stuck in the antithesis of technics as a simple man-made instrument (perhaps today misused) and of technics as an autonomous factor, fatality or "destiny" (benevolent or malevolent). As such, thought is continuing its ideological role: give society the means with which to avoid thinking about its real problem and with which to elude its responsibility in the face of its own creation.[4]

I have rehearsed these epistemological issues grounding the technology debate in order to establish the terrain on which Leiss's work will be discussed. Indeed, there is a place for a study about Leiss's relation to the Frankfurt School or about his recent work on advertising. However, my intention in writing about Leiss's work, and in setting his ideas into dialogue with Foucault's and Habermas' writings, is an attempt to answer the questions: Does Leiss's field of discourses on technology consistently opt for the first or the second epistemological camp; and how does this choice imply the ways in which society and technology are related to one another?

Most of the traditional discourses on technology which Leiss himself will

be seen to criticize fall into the essentialist epistemological camp. If Leiss himself wishes to go beyond a mere negation of these discourses then it will be crucial for his own discourse to remain consistently within the other camp. If Leiss's discourse is to posit an alternative relationship for technology and society, and also to posit alternative technologies, then, it must itself be an alternative discourse in terms of its regularities and epistemological presuppositions. Leiss's own discourse on other discourses that talk about technology would have to fall within a different "episteme" from the one which situated the criticized discourses.

The Historical Contextualization of Discourses on Technology

Leiss treats present-day statements about technology as actual historical practices to be contextualized. *The Domination of Nature* demonstrates that many current discourses on technology which view it as the solution to economic, environmental and interpersonal problems define technology implicitly or explicitly as instrumental reason. By instrumental reason Leiss refers to the tradition which defines knowledge as means for *The Domination of Nature*. This early work may be read as Leiss's historical contextualization of the many statements and practices of technology based on instrumental reason. Even today, Leiss never relents from the task of showing present-day discourses's "failure to appreciate the long-range historical dimensions of the problem that they seek to elucidate." He impresses this upon the reader by returning to seventeenth-century thinkers such as Bacon, Hobbes, Descartes, and others in order to remind her that they founded "modern" science which conceived of knowledge, first and foremost, as *technological* knowledge, that is, as means to accomplish an end: mastery over nature. Leiss argues that in order to explain modern-day discourses on and practices of technology, one must demonstrate the link between power and knowledge which has occurred over the past three centuries.[5]

Leiss takes great pain to quote examples from Bacon, Descartes and Hobbes in order to demonstrate that they themselves spoke very explicitly of this link. Not only does Leiss quote the much over-used Cartesian statement that mastering the right scientific method would make us "masters and possessors of nature," but he also quotes Bacon's suggestion that "growing scientific understanding of the "laws of nature" (would) eliminate the familiar causes of human misery and social disorder."[6] Leiss shows that seventeenth-century thought justifies the domination of nature on philanthropic grounds. Domination of nature, Bacon argued, leads to an increase in social and material well-being. Leiss notes that this dream "still enthralls the imagination of industrial societies."[7]

Leiss demonstrates how confidence in the philanthropic ends of the technological domination of nature was justified more on metaphysical or religious grounds than on empirical material evidence. Bacon and Descartes grounded technological knowledge in God. They were simply understanding "God's plan."[8] God assured the order of the universe which the scientist discovered and then advocated it as the right and the good order to be believed and followed by the rest of society, i.e., by the non-scientists. Natural, divine and social order were all identified with each other; the scientist discovered this order; God assured it; society should follow it as the good and just order.

Then, Leiss goes on to demonstrate that not only did Bacon and Descartes make "progressive" claims for science which we see repeated so often in writings about the information revolution, but Marx did as well.[9]

The first step in Leiss' historical discursive contextualization of present-day talk about technology was to reveal the overtness of claims to domination of nature by seventeenth-century science. The next crucial step in Leiss's argument is to suggest that certain aspects of that domination were not so candidly exposed: 1) domination of what kind of nature? and 2) domination by whom? Leiss suggests that something was awry with this utopian version of science's relation to society. Despite promises of equality, empirical historical evidence reveals that at this time human inequality and suffering continued, even in this society ruled by the new science. Furthermore, Leiss points out some properly discursive evidence: neither in Bacon's nor in Moore's utopian scientific projects was there ever any mention of democratic rule, and this, despite their promises that the fruits of nature yielded by science would be for all mankind.[10]

Leiss's explanation of this contradiction is based on an epistemological critique. He argues that the contradiction between utopian promises of mastery over nature and dystopian social relations ensues because Bacon and others took science and technology out of the concrete social contexts in which they were practiced in order to evaluate their social implications. In short, they idealized technology and abstracted from its social context.

> Bacon prejudiced the understanding of the implications contained in the conquest of nature by abstracting if from the actual historical situation in which it was developing and by suggesting that the conquest of nature was intrinsically related to a harmonious social order.[11]

These contradictions begin to reveal the darker side of the domination of nature, an aspect which was obscured by most of the philosopher-scientists of the mastery of nature: *the nature to be dominated was human nature in society; i.e., mastery of social change.* Leiss does suggest, however, that some

thinkers made this darker side more apparent rather than occult it as did Bacon and Moore. Not only Saint-Simon, but also Hobbes, explicitly stated that the domination of nature would lead to the domination of human nature, i.e., to social control.[12]

In referring to Hegel's dialectic of master and slave, Leiss theorizes that there are analytical and logical grounds for demonstrating that domination must of necessity be domination of *human* nature. According to the *Phenomenology of Mind*, in order for there to be real domination, one must be recognized by that which is dominated. In other words, says Leiss, one can only dominate another self-consciousness, another "for-itself."[13]

Thus, when we read in business magazines from the 1950's to the present, such as *Fortune* and *Business Week*, that "new communications technology will increase 'control' and give executives the type of mastery over variables in the business environment,"[14] we find but a repetition of this, the social meaning of domination:

> If the idea of the domination of nature has any meaning at all, it is that by such means — that is, through the possession of superior technological capabilities — some men attempt to dominate and control other men. The notion of a common domination of the human race over external nature is non-sensical.[15]

"Mastery of nature seems less a grand enterprise of the species than a means of upholding the interests of particular ruling groups."[16]

Leiss affirms that he takes his cue for such an interpretation of the discourse of the domination of nature from Nietzsche and Marcuse, who both interpret science as serving to reinforce and establish relations of interhuman domination and social control.[17] Indeed he quotes Lukács as defining "nature as a social category;" he reminds us that Marcuse stated: "Man's struggle with Nature is increasingly a struggle with his society;"[18] and he quotes Horkheimer who makes explicit the logical relation between domination of nature and domination of mind: "Mastery over inner nature is a logical correlate of the mastery over external nature."[19]

While Leiss contextualizes the theme of the domination of nature within an historical reservoir of discourses on technology, showing that there is nothing new in this concept, he advances one step further. Leiss insists not only on contextualizing one discourse within other discourses about technology, but also within the empirical historical context. Between 1970 and 1972 at least, Leiss's writings make the case that the proper contextualization of the claims made by those who would associate the mastery of nature with utopian social possibilities is the socio-historical environment. In order to assess whether the social implications of the domination of nature

implied utopia or domination of man by man, Leiss suggests that we look to "a wide range of empirical data."[20] In an article which preceded publication of *The Domination of Nature*, Leiss, quoting Gresford, suggests that the domination of nature as the domination of man is empirically confirmed.[21] At this early stage in Leiss's thought, then, the interface of society and technology can only be studied by looking at how technology operates within concrete historical contexts where it is itself a manifest social entity.

Grounds for a Critique of Domination

"So what's wrong with domination, even if it is human domination of humans, and even if it is socially inequitable?" This is a question which has often been posed by the less philanthropic 'gurus' of the communication age. It would seem that, despite most governments' claims to be democratic and to ensure a just allocation of resources to all of their citizens, one must still find some basis on which to ground a critique of social domination. Indeed, the whole enterprise of critical theory and its successors might be viewed as the search for a "ground" for a critique of technology. In *The Domination of Nature*, Leiss has elaborated several grounds, not all of them epistemological, for a critique of the domination of human nature by other humans. In his later work, he abandons some of these grounds although he does not introduce any new ones. These grounds are:

1) An empirical, historical critique which exposes the broken promises, the contradictions and the crises of the utopian theory of technological knowledge. This early critique recuperates the Marxist critique of commodity fetishism and class alienation.

2) A Weberian critique of technology as instrumentalist reason which reduces all questions of technology and society to questions of means to the exclusion of any questioning of values or goals. This entails a critique of the ubiquity of instrumental rationality (means-ends rationality) at the expense of other forms of rationality, such as "Wertrationalität" — value rationality.

3) The Husserlian critique of exact science as having become universalized but unable to relate to or resolve non-instrumental problems of the "Lebenswelt" — lifeworld. This critique, I will argue, is in part tied to the Weberian critique of the ubiquity of instrumental reason.

1. Marxist Critique of Commodity Fetishism and Class Alienation

In his article "Technology and Instrumental Rationality in Socialism and Capitalism," Leiss outlines a critique of domination based on the thought of Marx and later of the Frankfurt School. The Frankfurt School combined a

Marxist critique of commodity fetishism and class alienation with a Weberian critique of instrumentalist reason. This linkage enabled them to attach a negative value to the alienation stemming from commodity fetishism which they saw as arising out of instrumental reason's insistence on the domination of nature (human nature) in order to increase growth, efficiency and productivity. The aim of socialism for the Frankfurt School was to "overcome alienation, commodity fetishism, bureaucratic authority and domination over non-human nature."[22] Leiss reminds one of his reviewers, d'Amico, that Marcuse's foundation for a critique of instrumental reason was the opposition to the intensity of the possible exploitation of human labour (which) is directly dependent upon the attained degree of mastery over external nature. In his article "Utopia and Technology," written relatively early, Leiss accepts this basis for a critique of domination in technological reason. He claims to find empirical grounds attesting to the link between technological reason and social domination, decrying that "the human social order has been characterized traditionally by vast inequalities of power and by the exercise of control by some men over the behaviour of others."[23]

It is this ground for a critique of technology which Leiss rejected later in his writings. His reasons for so doing need to be explained at length because they not only requalify the status that Leiss gives to technology but also constitute his major contribution to critical social thought. In a recent paper entitled "Nature as a Commodity: Landscape Assessment and the Theory of Reification," Leiss elaborates upon his disagreements with the Frankfurt School's critique of technology based on the Lukâcsian fusion of Weber's critique of instrumentalist rationality with Marx's critique of reification and commodity fetishism.[24] Of course, when looking at Leiss' critique we should bear in mind that, as a student of Marcuse, Leiss was once himself, as he terms it, "a true believer" in the Frankfurt School's critique of technology.

The starting-point for Leiss' criticism of a critique of technology based on reification is the dubiousness of the Frankfurt School's fusion of the Marxist critique of commodity fetishism with Weber's theory of instrumentalism. He then proceeds to take issue with the Frankfurt School's blanket acceptance of Lukâcs' distinction between reified and non-reified social relations, where technology (defined in Weberian terms as instrumental rationality) is identified with the former.* *In what he considers to be his major contribution to social theory*, Leiss looks more closely at the meanings

*This aspect of Leiss's thought certainly begs further discussion. Many Marxist scholars would argue that there is *no* Marxist critique of reification. Also, Lukácsian scholars will find entirely provocative Leiss' theorisation of the unresolved antinomies of organicism and rationalism in Lukács' critique of reification.

associated with the German terms for the opposite of reified relations, namely "*naturwüchsig*" and "*urwüchsig*." These terms supposedly referred to non-reified or natural social relations. The tension in socialist thought, then, became one between, on the one hand, reification, identified with the technical rationalization of life, and, on the other hand, non-reification, the spirit of autochtonous communalism. However, when one sets out to discover just what non-reified, "naturwüchsig" social relations are, the distinction between reified and non-reified social relations becomes a tenuous one, according to Leiss. Lukács tries to flesh out a Marxist critique of reification by adding to the notion of reified relations all of the ideal traits that Weber associated with formal rationality.[25] Thus, non-reified social relations are defined as the opposite of the tenets of what Weber described as constituting instrumentalist rationality:

> What are urwüchsige Beziehungen? In this mode human labor is an "organic" unity; it takes place in a community — for example (the only example offered) a "village community." The unity of labor's product is also described as "irrational" and "qualitatively determined;" this unity of product "as a use-value" means that produced things have an "immediate," "qualitatively," and "material" character. Finally, Lukács mentions — apparently as a model that synthesizes this list of terms — handicraft production and the "organic manufacture of whole products based on the traditional amalgam of empirical evidence.[26]

And reified relations are described as the set of terms used by Weber to define formal rationality:

> Conditions of human labor undergo a process of rationalization with the following characteristics: specialization of function, mechanization, calculation based on quantified units of measure, breaking down of productive stages into component units (atomization); determination of work by units of time (thus quantitative measure), abstract or formal equivalence of these quantitative measures, reduction of concrete individual attributes to general averages; fragmentation of the subject (the worker, whose specialized function never relates concretely to the whole finished product) and the assimilation of human agents into the whole process as if they were mechanical parts of a productive machine.[27]

Leiss's criticism of this conflation of commodity fetishism theory with Weber's theory of instrumentalist/formal rationality, relies on his percep-

tion that, for Lukács, non-reified social relations would exist only in "small communities made up of craftspeople, each of whom independently produces finished articles from ready-to-hand materials, including of course foodstuffs."[28] Leiss's objection to such a qualification is that it excludes any form of industrial production, including cottage industry. This, says Leiss, is probably not what Marx or most modern socialists would understand by non-reified social relations. The Frankfurt School conflated Marx's theory of much criticized fetishism with Weber's theory of formal rationality in order to condemn them both without really elaborating critique of the latter. However, in the absence of any adequate description of what non-reified society would be, the distinction between reified and non-reified society becomes an abstract one, for Leiss. The association of "good" values with non-reified and "bad" values with reified forms is entirely unjustified.[29] Furthermore, Leiss would add, this tension has not been a fruitful one in that it has given "no account at all (...) of what real alternatives to capitalism appropriate to contemporary conditions, were possible and desirable."[30] No other model than that of a village community has been suggested as a way of replacement for reified, formal rationalist social relations.

One cannot but agree that it is indeed theoretically tenuous to identify a Marxist theory of reification with Weber's theory of formal rationality. For one thing, a close reading of Weber's writings shows that he himself does not do so even though he was aware of Marx's theory of commodities. Weber states that this form of rationality existed before capitalist society and would continue to exist in a socialist society.[31] Formal rationality for him was more a form of bureaucratic reason than a properly capitalist logic. Indeed, it served not only capitalist production but feudal record-keeping procedures and the allocation of tasks as well as the military.[32]

However, in my opinion, the principal problem in identifying reification theory with Weber's theory of formal rationality is an *epistemological* one. Reification theory, of course, pretends to be based on an empirical, materialist epistemological ground. On the other hand, Weber's concept of formal rationality is Kantian. Formal rationality is a set of ideal(ized) traits which may or may not be manifest in "substantive rationality."[33] Actual practices of military organization, however, would also be a manifestation of "formal rationality." Weber, is perhaps best known for his theory of "ideal types" which, along with "formal rationality," cannot be divorced from the Kantian tradition. "Formal rationality," for Weber, is made up of ideal, non-manifest traits which may then subsequently be manifest in "substantive rationality." For example, a substantialization of formal rationality would be actual economic practices in business. In short, to combine a materialist concept of society with a somewhat idealist concept of rationality, is to describe technology within an epistemologically inconsistent framework.

The Frankfurt School first universalizes a theory of technology and then claims that in actual social activities, e.g., relations of production, technology always functions nefariously. This is an idealized abstraction of technology from the social context: "Technology is always inherently evil," which is then read back into an empirical materialist view of society."

2. Alternative Grounds for a Critique of Technology: Weber and Husserl

The second and third grounds for a critique of domination developed in *The Domination of Nature* and which Leiss continues to espouse today are derived from Weber's and Husserl's critique of technological reason. They argue that technological reason has become ubiquitous, replacing all other forms of reason. One of Weber's major critiques of instrumental rationality is that it disenchants — *entzaubert* — the world. The world has lost its magical qualities, having become explainable by instrumental science, by mathematical calculation, by an insistence on quantifiable means at the expense of values and goals. For Weber, other types of rationality, which do not disenchant the world have existed: religious, value-oriented, ritual, and affective rationalities. Indeed, Weber's main objection to instrumentalist rationality is not that it reifies social relations nor that it is inherently evil in itself, but that it has become ubiquitous or dominant and has replaced all other forms of rationality which served important roles in non-instrumentalist dominated societies. In Innisian terms, instrumentalist rationality exercises a "monopoly of knowledge." Or again, as Foucault would say, instrumentalist rationality had become the exclusively "dominant episteme."

A corollary of this objection to the reduction of all rationality to instrumentalist rationality is that it precludes the possibility of any discussion of ends or goals. The question: "What type of society do we want?" is sacrificed to the belief that the only rational discussion possible would be about means: "How do we most efficiently achieve?" All knowledge functions, in the sense of "episteme," are reduced to the knowledge function of knowing how to do or to make, i.e., to "techne." In the words of George Grant, all episteme is reduced to techne.[36] Or as Leiss states: "The real effect of the concept of formal rationality is to destroy the possibility of even imagining a process of rational *goal selection*."[37] And further, "The sustained effort of demythologizing modern times ends by stripping the world of all inherent purpose."[38]

The cliché about technology which epitomizes the demythologization of the world is one where technological means legitimate themselves with no attempt to seek a ground in goals or ends outside of themselves: "Technol-

ogy for technology's sake," and "Technology is imperative." Instead of asking what would be a good technology for society it is assumed that what is required is a good society for technology because only means are considered to be important (or able to be discussed rationally).

For Leiss, Husserl's critique of technology is closely related to the "ubiquity argument" that we find in Weber, although there is a slight twist with the insertion of the problematic of the "Lebenswelt."[39] Although Leiss, in his review of Husserl's *Crisis*, rejects the phenomenological alternative to technological knowledge, he does accept Husserl's theory that there is nothing inherently wrong with technology *per se*. It is simply that technological reason is not relevant to another series of problems and concerns that occur in other than calculable realms of life, i.e., the "Lebenswelt."

> (...) unlike the situation in earlier historical periods, there is no crisis "of" the *modern sciences*, strictly speaking. Rather, the sciences proceed from success to success, incorporating an increasingly refined methodology and set of techniques, while, by virtue of these very successes, simultaneously contributing to the development of a general social crisis.[40]

For Husserl, then, modern science is itself not a failure. It *succeeds very well* in *knowing* its *objects* in the natural world and in manipulating that world. However, this exact science can shed no light on another category of objects, "value objects" and "practical objects" belonging to the "lifeworld" of human, subjective experience. We can only criticize as *ideological* the ubiquity of instrumentalism, as a totalization of one type of knowledge, not instrumentalism *per se*.

This is an interesting use of the term ideological in that it intersects with Umberto Eco's definition of ideology in semiotic terms as a-contextuality while maintaining the Marxist notion of ideology as false consciousness.

Eco declares any sign-field to be ideological which is partial yet which takes itself to be total.[41] Thus, for Husserl and Leiss, technological reason would be ideological in that it is a partial form of reason which totalizes itself, resulting in its application to contexts to which it is not pertinent. Both Husserl and Leiss abandon the quest for a ground upon which to critique technology in itself, looking rather to a critique of the fit between technology and its context of application.

Furthermore, Leiss, again referring to both Weber's notion of instrumental rationality and to Husserl, attacks traditional discourse on technology because it "idealizes" the world as opposed to recognizing the "existence" of various types of nature:

> Husserl argued that the rationality of modern science is based upon an "idealization" of the world which can be called "the mathematization of nature." This idealization is a way of looking at the world as if it were nothing but non-qualitative material objects ... existing in relations that can be expressed in symbolic (mathematical) form; ... This rationality represents ... a kind of "mastery" over *idealized* nature, in the context of its "openness" to technological applicability and the openness of a particular social setting to these applications, the operational capacity of human beings in the world was expanded enormously.[42]
>
> Instrumental rationality is simply guilty of social abstraction. Where instrumental science attempts to deal with all nature it is making both an epistemological error, in that it claims to be dealing with empirical things but it does so through abstraction, and an ontological error in that it equates all nature with the ontological status of "the objects of natural science." ... The ontological basis of current social science methodology is essentially rooted in a particular form of society, and likewise the "truth" of its results is meaningful only in reference to it.[43]

In other words, Husserl is suggesting that we need to revise the ontological status of the object of "true" scientific knowledge: "... the exact sciences of nature, ever more refined and perfected in their methodology *do not give us any* "true" knowledge of nature;... ."[44]/[45]

Technology: inherently neutral essence?

In order to decide whether or not Leiss himself avoids the pitfall of idealizing technology it is necessary to rehearse a set of distinctions that he wishes to make between 1) science and ideology; 2) technology and interests or values; and 3) between technology and techniques. Special attention will be paid to the epistemological and ontological grounds on which these distinctions are made.

In *The Domination of Nature*, Leiss argues that we cannot separate values or interests from science. He takes his cue in this matter from Nietzsche, whose basic intention was "to show the primacy of evaluation in all forms of human experience — in religion and aesthetics as well as in logic and metaphysics."[46] And, of course, Leiss still upholds the Weberian critique of technical science on the basis that it eliminates all concerns of values and goals from possible scientific discussion. Leiss, then, would still

wish to uphold a place for value, despite instrumentalism's attempts to evacuate it, in all science, technical or other. As recently as 1980, Leiss argued that values must be incorporated into science. In "A Value-Basis for Conservation Policy," Leiss insists that science must provide us with some value-legitimation about the sense of well-being. Science must identify relations between society's values and its social economic order. "Values must possess recants his earlier espoused Marcusean and Lukácsian identification of instrumentalist rationality with "bad" social values. This indicates a wish to declare that technology and science have no inherent values, be they good or bad, as indeed he had done with reference to Husserl. Could Leiss be reiterating a variation of the old adage "It all depends on how you use it" when he states: "Castigating ideas for the emergence of repressive social development is a fruitless undertaking?"[48]
when he states: "Castigating ideas for the emergence of repressive social development is a fruitless undertaking?"[48]

In order to argue that technology is not inherently value-laden or ideological, Leiss makes an *analytical* distinction between "technique" and "technology." Leiss will argue that technology is somehow potential whereas techniques are actually manifest and applied combinations.

> Technologies, therefore, are combinations of techniques, and the combinations represent choices among alternative uses or goals in the service of which the techniques are applied. In most cases it is inaccurate to refer simply to "technology," because very often this term carries the implication that there is some fixed character in a society's technological apparatus itself. (...) .
>
> The main reason for distinguishing between techniques and technologies is that only the general modes of social organization and not the specific properties of techniques themselves determine which types of techniques will be encouraged and promoted and which will be downplayed or perhaps forbidden.[49]

By arguing that "there are almost always alternative technologies potentially present in any ensemble of techniques," Leiss maintains that the socio-economic contexts within which technologies are realized as techniques determine whether or not technology will be ideological or value-laden. "Technologies are, in turn, incorporated into more general forms of social reproduction and in the latter they often embody structural contradictions that give rise to alternative possibilities for their application."[50] Technology, which is not taken as specifically manifest, socially situated techniques, is an abstraction from society, a sort of aesthetization or essentialization of material reality. Leiss is making a distinction between applied technologies

— "techniques — within specific social contexts or cultures and technology which exists above and beyond these "techniques:" "(...) cultures have differential capacities for adopting new techniques and for recombining techniques within alternative technologies."[51] Leiss does, however, insist that applied technologies may indeed be very value-laden. In a recent essay entitled, "Politics of Environmental Issues," Leiss shows how in policy debates the figures concerning water pollution were somewhat "fudged" in order to convey the tremendous economic weight of the outcome.[52] Time and again, Leiss tells us that the values and ideologies are not in technology *per se* but in the socio-economic contextual manifestations or applications or combinations of technologies as techniques. Indeed, this is in keeping with Leiss' Husserlian and Weberian analysis of technology whereby technical reasoning in itself is not considered to be ideological, but rather the social context in which technology is ubiquitous.

> If rationality is simply identified with rationalization — in other words, if knowledge means only or even primarily organized technical knowledge applied to production — then the concepts or rationalization and organized knowledge themselves tend to become "ideological," dogmas propounded to serve the particular interests of those who manage the productive process.[53]

Leiss does not criticize the domination of nature as an inherent trait of technology itself but as a set of technologies or techniques which are manifest within particular exploitative, capitalist social, political and economic contexts. The domination over human nature is *not* an inherent aspect of science or technology *per se* but of contradictory modes of social production which, for Marx, says Leiss, include: 1) generalized market exchange; 2) incorporating technologies of production and consumption; 3) a particular form of political domination; and 4) domination over non-human nature.[53]

Furthermore, Leiss is entirely consistent with this epistemological position in his concrete advice concerning how to deal with technology in society today. He restates in his more applied work on environmental and new communications technology issues that there is nothing inherently evil about technology; the evil lies with its contextual manifestations. For example, he claims that the hype on new communications technologies, acts as a form of noise, which distracts policy issues from real social problems and goals such as "zero sum issues."[54] In other words, don't worry about technology *per se* but worry rather about the *social context* of technology. Social organization determines our choices of techniques and it is with these that we should be concerned rather than with technology in general. This

position appears similar to that taken by an Enzensberger or a Goldhaber, who argue that in the right socio-economic conditions the right technologies (techniques which will be emancipatory) will be chosen and made manifest. Technology, therefore, is potentially emancipatory or potentially constraining depending on how it is concretized as techniques in the social environment. In the following quotation, Leiss makes it clear that he holds out for a difference between applications of technology and a sort of "essential" technology which he refers to as technology itself.

> In modern society the dominant forms of social reproduction have shaped the *applications* of industrial technology in accordance with authoritarian hierarchical modes of authority; one of the consequences of this pattern is the pervasive alienated character of labor activity, which is by no means an *inherent* attribute of technology itself. (...) the choice of which techniques and how they have been utilized is primarily the outcome, not of the inherent "rationality" of the techniques, but of the serviceability of the chosen techniques for the maintenance of wealth.[55]

To summarize, Leiss has certainly not abstracted the technology debate from the social. Nor has he idealized or essentialized the social context of technology. We must query, however, whether Leiss does not essentialize technology by virtue of his analytical distinction between technique and technology wherein the latter is somehow non-manifest but existent. If one separates technology from the social and cultural forms in which it is embodied as a specific set of choices or combinations then the ontological status given to this non-manifest technology can only be that of essence, and, epistemologically, one must be an idealist to know such essences. I do not think that Leiss would accept such an epistemological position given his commitment to empirical contextual observation in his ongoing analyses of other social phenomena such as advertising. However, in several places Leiss actually does talk of essences in relation to technology. In an early essay entitled "Utopia and Technology," Leiss seems to agree with Benjamin's use of the term "essence" to qualify technology:

> Walter Benjamin remarked that it is incorrect to regard the *essence* of human technique as the ability to dominate nature. Rather he suggested, we should see it as the mastery of the relationship between nature and humanity.[56]

More recently, Leiss once again uses the term "essence" when he quotes a policy research document. While he disagrees with the argument of the

following document that we need to find a response to the essence of technology, I do not think that he is taking issue with the notion that there is an essence of technology. Instead, he is stating that we need to come to terms with society rather than with (the essence of) technology which may nevertheless exist:

> A new technology demands a response from us that is appropriate to its essence and modes of action. We need to find civilized ways of dealing with such issues.[57]

Without this essentialist aspect, Leiss' discourse does provide an alternative to the dominant epistemological and discursive presuppositions that underpin most statements about technology. If we made one small modification to Leiss' approach to technology we could avoid the ontological equivocation between social manifestation and essence, as well as the epistemological compromise between materialism and idealism. In so doing, Leiss' discourse on technology would permit us to criticize not only social environments but technology as well. Moreover, this revision would provide a discursive and epistemological basis upon which to suggest alternative technologies and alternative relationships between technology and society which policy-making might in future encourage.

Technology as Nothing but Social Practice

What if we were to say that above and beyond what Leiss calls techniques or actual social occurrences of technology, technology does not exist? What if we were to define technology simply as a type of social practice?

Leiss' distinction between technique and technology resembles the semiotic distinction between '*parole*' and '*langue*', respectively. Parole and technique are manifest practices characterized by the imperfections of a particular in relation to a universal or ideal, which latter is the non-manifest, ideal structure (langue or technology) or essence of language or technology. Somehow the particular and the universal are related but we never quite understand how, since the manifest structure is judged or derived in relation to the non-manifest one, and yet the ideal structure is an abstraction from and universalization of the manifest particulars. *To say that technology or language is both a universal, ideal structure and an historically situated material manifestation is to wish to have one's empirical cake and to eat it (idealistically) too.*

While maintaining Leiss' refusal to abstract from nature or society, I argue that technology itself is nothing more than a social practice. There are no pure formalities of technology, no non-manifest structure. And, as such,

there are no non-ideological, no non-value-laden technologies because each manifestation of technology is socially contextualized, but also socially produced as a practice. If we can "generalize" about the properties of technology it is not by idealizing it but rather by perceiving *post res* any regularities in the specific practices that repeat themselves in any given time and place. Foucault would call such regularities "procedures", which are nothing more than regularized sets of very concrete, very contextually manifest empirical practices. Beyond this, there is nothing: the ontological status stops with the regularization of social practices. Now, for Foucault, knowledge, science and technologies are themselves nothing more than such regularized sets of social practices, some of which are discursive practices and some of which are non-discursive. For Foucault, technology and knowledge are social practices, which may be discursive or non-discursive, and which when regularized become rules or procedures of how to practice knowledge and technology. For example, Taylorism would be a set of discursive procedures understood as regularities of the discursive practices of instrumental rationality, i.e., how to increase efficiency, productivity, control of labour, etc. The assembly line, based at least in part on Taylorism, would be a set of non-discursive practices designed to increase efficiency and control of labour. Furthermore, Foucault, in a recent lecture at the University of Vermont, Burlington (Fall 1982), declared that these regularities, taken as a set of discursive and epistemological rules which characterize social practices and which condition future possible practice, may be called "technologies." Technologies, then, are nothing more than social practices of knowledge. Technology would be neither a machine-object, nor an essence, but the set of regularities that these practices manifest, by virtue of their redundancy. Thus, for example, new communications technologies would be nothing more than regularized sets of discursive practices.

This alternative definition of technology gives rise to a very different conception of the relationship between technology and social context. Neither social context nor technology is idealized. Rather than totalizing the economic (as Foucault accuses small "m" marxist critics of doing),[58] Foucault has shown in *Les Mots et les choses* that the procedures of economics, taken as a discipline, do not determine the procedures of technology or dictate its ideological content. For example, the procedure referred to by Foucault as "exchange" is not specific to the economic discourse but is found also in the discourses of grammar, zoology and the pictorial arts in the seventeenth-century. The ideology of exchange is a practice of false identity which is redundantly practised by all of the discursive practices of what Foucault calls the "classical episteme." Such procedures are not universals; they are redundancies of specific discursive practices within a delimited time and place, in this case occidental society since the seventeenth-century.

Exchange, then, is not a procedure of the economic context imposed upon technology; it is the regularity of the set of discursive practices making up the classical episteme. There is no question of treating technology as some form of superstructure that is conditioned by an economic infrastructure. Both technology and economics constitute the discourses of the episteme and both constantly repeat the practice of exchange. The procedure of exchange is inherent in the practice of technology and of economics. Hence values and ideology are inherent within the social practices of technology. Other procedures that constitute the regularities of the practices of science in the seventeenth-century have been excavated by Foucault's discursive analyses of various types of discourse in this age and include those of order, hierarchization, exclusivity and panoptic surveillance.[59] This set of procedures makes up the rules of knowledge for the classical episteme, rules which characterize the scientific practices known also as technical or instrumental reason. Before discussing how this alternative ontological status for technology opens the way for the suggestion of alternative technologies and alternative societies, a rather concrete example of a social practice in modern day technology will help to clarify what is meant here by social practice and discursive procedure as opposed to essence or universal.

In a recent study of new communications technology, I analysed how contemporary technology is conditioned by specific discursive practices. I also illustrated how new communications technology itself could be understood as a set of discursive practices. The study of many of these practices as manifest in a host of texts dealing with new communications technology as well as in the very organization of the hardware and software of new communications technology revealed certain redundancies or regularities. Again these regularities are determined *post res* as opposed to pre-supposed *ante res*. They are more akin to what C.S. Peirce would call "habits" of actually manifest semiotic relations than to ideals or a priori categories.[60] By way of example, I will concentrate on a single procedure of the discourses both on and of new communications technology: *Panopticism*.

Notes

1. William Leiss, "The Information Society: A New Name for some Old Tricks," paper presented at the annual 1982 Departmental Colloquium, "The Social Responses to Technological Change and Environmental Impact," Department of Sociology, University of Calgary, March 24-26, 1982.
2. Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" in ed. & trans. Donald Bouchard, *Language, Countermemory, Practice*, (Ithica, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).
3. Marike Finlay-Pelinski, "Technologies of Technology: A Critique of Procedures of Power and Social Control in Discourses on New Communications Technology," Working Papers Series, Graduate Program of Communication, McGill University, 1983.
4. Cornelius Castoriadis, *Les Carrefours du labyrinthe*, (Paris: Seuil, 1971), p. 222.

5. W. Leiss, *The Domination of Nature*, (New York: George Braziller, 1972), p. 49.
6. Leiss, *Domination*, pp. 57-59.
7. Leiss, "The Social Function of Knowledge in the Liberal Tradition," in ed. Michael McGrath, *Liberalism and the Modern Polity*, (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1978), p. 196.
8. *Domination*, p. 52.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
11. Leiss, "Social Function," p. 583.
12. *Domination*, p. 142.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
14. Finlay-Pelinski, "Nouvelle technologie des communications: émancipation ou contrôl social?" in *Communication/Information*, Automne, Vol. V, no. 1, pp. 147-177.
15. *Domination*, 1. V pp. 122-123.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
17. Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Gordon et al., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), pp. 134-145.
18. *Domination*, p. 22, note 22.
19. Max Horkheimer, in *Domination*, p. 152.
20. *Domination*, p. 155.
21. Guy Gresford, "Qualitative and Quantitative Living Space Requirements," *Final Report*, Annex IV, p. 1. (Unesco document SC/MD?9, 6 January 1969), in Wm. Leiss, "Utopia and Technology: Reflections on the Conquest of Nature," *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. XXII, no. 4 (1970), pp. 578-9.
22. *Domination*, pp. 135-6.
23. Leiss, "Ideology and Science," *Social Studies of Science*, Vol. 5, (1975), pp. 196-8.
24. Leiss, "Nature as a Commodity: Landscape Assessment and the Theory of Reification," forthcoming in *Boston Studies in the Philosophy of Science*.
25. "Nature as a Commodity," ms., p. 6.
26. *Ibid.*, ms., p. 7.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
31. Weber makes it quite explicit that bureaucratic reasoning did not emerge with the advent of capitalism but rather long before. Weber traces its existence back to the rationalization of public finances in Egypt, the organization of feudal societies, and to the functioning of the military in pre-capitalist societies.

    Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Mills, Parsons et al., (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 71-72.
32. That this debate is still current in critical theory is attested by Agnes Heller's dialogue with

Habermas in: Jürgen Habermas, "A Reply to My Critics," in ed. J.B. Thompson and Held, *Habermas: Critical Debates*, (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982), pp. 225-9.

33. Weber, *Economy and Society*, pp. 85-86.
There is no question in this discussion of attempting value judgements in this field, but only of determining and delimiting what is to be called "formal." In this context the concept of "substantive" is itself in a certain sense "formal;" that is, it is an abstract, generic concept.

36. George Grant, "Ideology in Modern Empires," in ed. J.E. Flint and G. Williams, *Perspectives of Empire*, (New York: Longman, 1973), pp. 189-193.

37. Leiss, "Technology and Instrumental Rationality in Capitalism and Socialism," in ed. Frederic Fleron, *Technology and Communist Culture*, (New York: Praeger, 1977), p. 125.

38. *Domination*, p. 150.

39. Leiss, "Husserl's Crisis," *Telos*, no. 8 (Summer 1971), pp. 109-121.

40. "Husserl's Crisis," *Telos*, p. 114.

41. I discuss Eco's and Marx's theories of ideology at length in: Finlay-Pelinski, "Semiotics or History: From Content Analysis to Pragmatics of Communicational Interaction," *Semiotica*, Vol. 40, no. 3/4 (1982), pp. 229-266.

42. Leiss, "Ideology and Science," p. 195.

43. "Husserl's Crisis," *Telos*, p. 117.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

45. As it is described in Husserl's *Crisis*, the life-world, the Lebenswelt, is not simply the world in which we live; it is the world we live in as contrasted to the world of exact science. Furthermore, it is this world, so contrasted, as named by phenomenology. "Life-world" in a word expressed in transcendentalese, not a word expressed in ordinary language. The turn to the life-world is a philosophical move, not simply a relapse into prephilosophical and prescientific experiencing." p. 92. Robert Skolowski, "Exact Science and the World in Which We Live," in *Lebenswelt und Wissenschaft in der Philosophie Edmund Husserls*, ed. Elizabeth Ströker (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1971), 92-106.

46. *Domination*, p. 107.

47. Leiss, "A Value Basis for Conservation Policy," ms., p. 13.

48. Leiss, "Ideology and Science," p. 199.

49. Leiss, "Technology and Instrumental Rationality in Capitalism and Socialism," in ed. Paul Brienes, *Critical Interruptions*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), pp. 119-120.

50. Leiss, "Technology and Instrumental Rationality," p. 121.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 121.

52. Leiss, "Political Aspects of Environmental Issues," in ed. Leiss, *Ecology Versus Politics in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 264.

53. Leiss, "The Social Function of Knowledge," p. 188.

54. Leiss, "The Information Revolution," cf. Conclusions.

55. Leiss, "Technology and Instrumental Rationality," pp. 121 & 129.

56. Leiss, "Utopia and Technology," p. 588.

57. Gamma Group, in Leiss, "The Information Revolution," ms., p. 22.

58. Frank Lentricchia, "Reading Foucault (Punishment, Labor, Resistance)," Parts I & II, *Raritan*, Vol. 1, no. 3 and Vol. II, no. 1, pp. 5-33 and pp. 41-70.

59. Michel Foucault, *Les mots et les choses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966).

60. Finlay-Pelinski, *Powermatics: Discourses on New Communications Technology: New Communications Technology as Discourse* (forthcoming).

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TECHNOLOGICAL NATIONALISM

Maurice Charland

There was a time in this fair land
When the railroad did not run ...

Gordon Lightfoot

Picture clarity and intellectual clarity
are limited by electromagnetic resources.

H.A. Innis

In the opening sequence of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's production of the *National Dream* — Pierre Berton's history of the Canadian Pacific Railway — the pristine majesty of the Rocky Mountains and a lone Indian are confronted with the technological dynamo of a locomotive.

This television image of a railroad as the "national dream" heroically spanning the wilderness to fashion a state reveals in a condensed narrative the manifold relations between technology and a Canada which can imagine. Here, we are encouraged to see technology as constitutive of Canada, and as a manifestation of Canada's ethos. The *National Dream* highlights, of course, the role of space-binding technology in Canada's history. This CBC epic reminds us that Canada exists by virtue of technologies which bind space and that the railroad permitted a transcontinental economic and political state to emerge in history. Furthermore, the *National Dream* is an instance of the discourse of technology in Canada, of its rhetoric. The CPR is presented as the archetypal instance of Canada's technological constitution. More significantly, the CPR is offered as the product of political will. A nation and railroad were "dreamt" of by Canada's architects and then consciously created. We see a Canada which imagined itself into existence.

Canada's imagination, a *Canadian* imagination, is manifest by the

National Dream itself. Berton's televised history is a rhetorical epideictic for a technologically mediated Canada. This rhetoric of a technological nation, basing itself on a romantic interpretation of history, equates the construction of the CPR with the constitution of Canada and praises each with reference to the other. Canada is valorized as a nation because it is the product of a technological achievement, and the railroad is the great product of heroic individuals who dreamt a nation. Curiously, the *National Dream* rearticulates a rhetoric which gave rise to its own materialization. That rhetoric is offered through a product of itself, the CBC. The CBC exists by virtue of a discourse of technological nation-building, and reproduces the rhetoric which legitimates it and the Canadian state when it invites us to join Berton and dream of nationhood.

In this essay, I will explore what I perceive to be a rhetoric of technological nationalism in anglophone Canada which ascribes to technology the capacity to create a nation by enhancing communication. As I will show, the rhetoric of the CPR becomes the power-laden discourse of a state seeking to legitimate itself politically by constituting a nation in its image. This is a significant rhetoric, for it underguirds Canada's official ideology and guides the formulation of federal government policy, at least in the area of broadcasting: the CBC is legitimated in political discourse by the CPR. Furthermore, I will argue that the rhetoric of technological nationalism is insidious, for it ties a Canadian identity, not to its people, but to their mediation through technology.

Rhetoric and Ideological Discourse

This is, then, a critical theorisation of the development of Canadian ideological discourse. With regard to the "method" of ideology-analysis, the study proceeds (1) by identifying how Canadian ideological discourse is grounded in the politics and economics of the early Canadian state; (2) by tracing out the rhetorical effect — the consequence — of that discourse on the Canadian political, economic and indeed popular mind, as it calls a certain Canada into being; and (3) by examining how this discourse creates the conditions of its own reproduction. I will demonstrate that the rhetoric of the CPR, seeking to constitute a state, becomes the rhetoric of the CBC, seeking to constitute a *polis* and *nation*. This rhetoric, the rhetoric of technological nationalism, is the dominant discourse of the official ideology of nation-building through state-supported broadcasting, and has been a significant (but not exclusive) determinant of the form of Canada's broadcasting system. It is also the dominant discourse of Canadian nationalism in anglophone Canada.

While my concern is with rhetoric and its significance, I will not simply study discourse. Such an approach would numb my critique, for rhetoric is precisely the form of discourse which projects outside of itself into the realm of human attitude and action. I will take a lead from Kenneth Burke who has rightly observed that while there exists a difference between things and words about things, words provide an orientation to things.[2] Thus, I will examine the relationship of words to things: specifically the relationship between two distinct but intertwined entities — the Canadian rhetoric of a technological nation, and the technology of the Canadian state. Both technology and rhetoric were necessary for Canada as a "nation" coming to be, but they constituted a Canada within a spiral of contradictions. I will seek to identify these contradictions. Indeed, my claim is that the contradictions between these two have produced the recurring crises in Canadian broadcasting policy and in the quest for a Canadian "identity." Technological nationalism promises a liberal state in which technology would be a neutral medium for the development of a *polis*. This vision of a nation is bankrupt, however, because it provides no substance or commonality for the *polis* except communication itself. As a consequence, technological nationalism's (anglophone) Canada has no defense against the power and seduction of the American cultural industry or, indeed, of the technological experience. Canada, then, is the "absent nation."

My analysis will take inspiration from James W. Carey's and John J. Quirk's application of Innis in their study of the rhetoric of electricity in the United States.[3] I will consider how what Innis terms the "bias" of communication technology undermines the promises of that technology's rhetoric, as Carey and Quirk put it:

> Innis uncovered the most vulnerable point in rhetoric of electrical sublime. ... Innis principally disputed the notion that electricity would replace centralization in economics and politics with decentralization, democracy and a cultural revival. Innis placed the "tragedy of modern culture" in America and Europe upon the intrinsic tendencies of both printing press and electronic media to reduce space and time in the service of a calculus of commercialism and expansionism.[4]

Following Michael McGee, I take rhetoric to be a necessary material condition of human social existence.[5] Indeed, rhetoric is a constitutive component of the social application of technology, for it guides its possible applications. Consequently, my aim is to consider the appropriateness of the rhetoric of technological nationalism in the face of Canadian exigencies.

Canada, Technology, and Technological Rhetoric

Canada is a technological state. This is just to say that Canada's existence as an economic unit is predicated upon transportation and communication technology. In addition, the *idea* of Canada depends upon a rhetoric about technology. Furthermore, we can understand the development of a Canadian nation-state in terms of the interplay between this technology and its rhetoric.

That Canada owes its existence to technologies which bind space is readily apparent. Canada is a sparsely populated territory in which rock, mountains, and sheer distance inhibit human contact between those who live in its several distinct regions. The telegraph and the railroad to a degree overcame these obstacles and permitted the movement of goods and information across what was, in the nineteenth century, an undeveloped wilderness. Indeed, as Harold Innis observes, "[t]he history of the Canadian Pacific Railroad is primarily the history of the spread of western civilization over the northern half of the North American continent."[6] Through the CPR, Innis points out, western Canadian territories became integrated into the economic and political systems which had developed in Eastern Canada.

And what is the nature of this "civilization?" It is one based in the circulation or communication of commodities and capital. The civilization the railroad extended was one of commerce as the CPR extended eastern economic interests. The railroad reproduced and extended a state apparatus and economy which concentrated power in metropolitan centres, permitting the incorporation and domination of margins. If the CPR was a "national project," it was so first and foremost as an economic venture. The railroad was built with a combination of public and private capital for the advantage of the state and merchants, and the former, like the latter, saw its interests in terms of economic development. The nineteenth century British-style state was, after all, a state of capitalists.

The railroad did more though than enhance trade. It permitted the development of a political state and created the possibility of a nation. It did so by extending Ottawa's political power: it permitted Ottawa to exclude a powerful American presence from western Canada and thus establish its political control over the territory.[7] Specifically, the CPR fostered immigration into the Western plain, effectively discouraging Minnesotans from moving northward and annexing a sparsely populated area; the CPR permitted Ottawa to establish its military presence in the west, as it did when suppressing the Métis rebellion, and, of course, eastern Canadians no longer had to travel through the United States in order to reach British Columbia. Furthermore, this physical spanning of the country permitted Canadians, including those in Quebec, to unite in patriotic sentiment, as they

did when militia from Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Ontario fought side by side against Riel's supporters in Saskatchewan.[8]

In a sense, the power the CPR extended could become the object of a "national" experience; the CPR offered those in Canada the experience of a technologically-mediated political unity as a common denominator.

My point here is that the CPR permitted more than the physical linking of a territory. Apart from joining the country to facilitate commercial intercourse and political administration, the CPR offered the possibility of developing a mythic rhetoric of national origin. Following McGee's arguments on the development of collectivities, I would argue that such a rhetoric is necessary to the realization of the project of Canadian nationhood.[9] That rhetoric is necessary both as a *legitimation* of a sovereign united Canada within the discursive field of parliamentary government, and as an *inducement* for those in Canada to see themselves as Canadian; for Canada to be legitimated, a myth is necessary. The CPR is well suited to such mythologization because (1) its construction in the face of political, economic, and geographic obstacles can be presented as an epic struggle; (2) the CPR was a state project and thus can be represented as the manifestation of a *Canadian* will to survive politically; and (3) the steam engine itself offers Canadians the opportunity to identify with a nationalized icon of power. In sum, the CPR is significant not only as a mode of transportation and communication, but also as the basis for a nationalist discourse. The technological nation is discursive as well as political. Furthermore, the very existence of the CPR can be understood as a moment in the nationalist rhetoric it renders possible, for it was a symbolic strategy in the face of political exigencies.

To put it bluntly, the CPR's existence is discursive as well as material, for it stands as an articulation of political will. While the CPR proved economically profitable for its backers, the linking of Montreal to Vancouver was not a happenstance or the result of a private entrepreneurial venture, rather the road was built under the auspices of Canada's federal government for the explicit purpose of extending spatial control over a territory. That is to say, the determination of Canada to remain British in character rather than be absorbed by the United States preceded the railway's construction. Furthermore, the construction of the Pacific Railway was not even a necessary condition to British Columbia's entry into Confederation: That Pacific colony had demanded only that Ottawa build a wagon road. Thus, the CPR was part of a rhetorical ploy. Cartier and MacDonald offered more than was necessary, a rail link to the west coast within ten years of British Columbia's joining the Dominion.[10] Consequently, the CPR cannot be viewed as the product or manifestation only of economy. The construction of the railroad was more than an overdetermined response to material and political exi-

gencies; a will to statehood preceded it. It was an element of a strategy based in the belief that a nation could be built by binding space. As the materialization of belief and of political will, the railroad is the consequence of political rhetoric, of discourse which constitutes power. As John A. MacDonald put it, speaking in the House of Commons:

> The road will be constructed ... and the fate of Canada, will then as a Dominion, be realized. Then will the fate of Canada, as one great body be fixed.[11]

This epideictic oratory reveals that the railroad project exists as a moment in a species of rhetoric: technological nationalism. This rhetoric is evident in MacDonald's discourse above, for it links Canada's fate to a technology. Sir Charles Tupper, for example, could refer to the CPR as a "our great national work."[12] This rhetoric presents the railroad as material condition of possibility for the existence of Canadian nation, and it finds its contemporary echo in Berton's treatment of Canadian history, as he features MacDonald as a mythical hero and asserts:

> [I]t was Macdonald's intention to defy nature and fashion a nation in the process. His tool, to this end, would be the Canadian Pacific. It would be a rare example of a nation created through the construction of a railway.[13]

The myth of the railroad, or of the binding of space technologically to create a nation, places Canadians in a very particular relationship to technology.[14] In Kenneth Burke's language, this rhetoric privileges "agency" as the motive force for Canada's construction.[15] Canada's existence would be based in a (liberal) pragmatism in which technology is more potent and more responsible for Canada's creation than the so-called "Fathers of Confederation." In the popular mind, Canada exists more because of the technological transcendence of geographical obstacles than because of any politician's will. Thus, technology itself is at the centre of the Canadian imagination, for it provides the condition of possibility for a Canadian mind.

The import of "agency" or technology in Canada's official popular culture also can be seen, for example, in Gordon Lightfoot's "Canadian Railroad Trilogy," where the CPR fuses with an entrepreneurial spirit and heralds the truly modern project of expansion and "progress":

> But ... they looked in the future
> and what did they see?
> They saw an iron rail running
> from the sea to the sea ...

The song of the future has been sung,
All the battles have been won.
We have opened up the land,
All the world's at our command ...
We have opened up the soil
With our teardrops and our toil.

In the rhetoric and construction of the CPR, we see the genesis of technological nationalism as a component in the project of building the national state. This project has two components: one, physical, the other, discursive: (1) The existence of a transcontinental Canada required the development of a system of transportation facilitating territorial annexation, colonization, and the implantation of a military presence. (2) The existence of this Canada also required the development of a rhetoric which ideologically constituted those in Canada as Canadians, united in the national project and under the political authority of a national government.

For the moment, let us focus on the rhetorical component of technological nationalism. The Canadian tradition of parliamentary public address, which Canada inherited from Britain, places particular demands on the rhetoric of the Canadian state. In this "Whig Liberal" tradition, political power is legitimated by a rhetoric of the "people."[16] That is to say, attempts to discursively secure legitimacy will argue that a national "people" exists which authorizes the state's power. For Ottawa to successfully exercise the power the CPR extended, it must counter arguments in favour of provincial autonomy or, conversely, annexation by the United States by persuasively representing those in Canada as forming a Canadian people. Indeed, the existence of such a pan-Canadian collectivity was asserted by Georges Etienne Cartier in defense of Confederation.[17] Without such a persuasive rhetoric of "national" identity and "national" interest, Ottawa's power would dissolve.

In Canada, the constitution of a "people" of individuals united under a liberal state requires that the barriers between regions be apparently transcended. As it permits mastery over nature, technology offers the possibility of that apparent transcendence. Consequently, in order to assert a national interest and unity, Ottawa depends upon a rhetoric of technological nationalism — a rhetoric which both asserts that a technologically mediated Canadian *nation* exists, and calls for improved communication between regions to render that nation materially present. In other words, Canada is a state which must constantly seek to will a *nation* in its own image, in order to justify its very existence. The CPR can be understood as one manifestation of this necessity, but as a form of *economic* communication, it gave rise neither to a common Canadian culture, nor to a Canadian "public" of

citizens capable of participating in the country's political will formation. At most, it offered those in Canada the possibility of jointly participating in the rhetoric of the national project. Primarily, the CPR enmeshed Canada within a series of networks of domination. As Innis observes and the suppression of the Métis uprising of 1885 makes manifestly clear, space-binding technologies extend power as they foster empire.[18] Because of the CPR's inability to create a people or nation, another technological instrument was necessary, an instrument which would permit the representation and actualization of some form of Canadian "public" and common Canadian culture. Both the rhetoric of national identity and the fact of a Canadian political community required a *cultural* rather than economic form of communication. Technological nationalism required radio, and the advent of the broadcasting era advanced the project of a technologically-constituted nation.

Technological Nationalism in the Broadcasting Era

The development of electronic communication, and in particular broadcast technology, permitted a new articulation of the rhetoric of technological nationalism. Technological nationalism became a major factor in the development of the structure of broadcasting in Canada, as radio and television were enlisted into the national project. However, this rhetoric of a technologically-mediated Canada is contradictory.

Significantly, Canada's first national radio network was established by a railway. While local radio had been pioneered by private entrepreneurs, national radio was the product of a state agency, the CNR. The national railway saw in radio a means to foster immigration, to enhance its own image, and to support the project of nationhood.[19] CNR radio, which initially broadcast to railroad parlour cars, developed in 1924 into a network of stations in major Canadian cities from Vancouver to Moncton. It offered symphony broadcasts, comic operas, special events, and in 1931, a dramatic presentation of Canadian history.[20] State-supported radio, following the railroad's path, presented those who live in Anglophone Canada with an image of Canada.[21] CNR sought to bind Canada with information just as rail had bound Canada economically. Thus was forged the link in the official Canadian mind between railroad, radio, and national identity. As the official biographer of Sir Henry Thorton, the CNR's president and instigator of its radio services, writes:

> As a direct result of Sir Henry's abilities to see the possibilities inherent in a new medium of expression, the railway did for Canada what she was to apathetic to do for herself. ... He saw radio as a great unifying force in Canada; to him the political conception tran-

> scended the commercial, and he set out consciously to create a sense of nationhood through the medium of the Canadian National Railway Service.[22]

The rhetoric of technological nationalism had incorporated radio. It sought to enlist another space-binding technology in the project of constituting a nation in the image of the state. Furthermore, this vision of an electronically constituted Canada did not remain Thorton's, but became that of the national government. Thus, one of the first "live" national broadcasts was a celebration of Canada. Prime Minister MacKenzie King's voice was heard across the country as he spoke from Ottawa on July 1, 1927, Confederation's anniversary. Commenting on that moment a month later at the Canadian National Exhibition, the Prime Minister presented radio, a gift of science, as the means whereby Canada would develop a "people" or "public" to justify its government:

> On the morning, afternoon and evening of July 1, all Canada became, for the time-being, a single assemblage, swayed by a common emotion, within the sound of a single voice. Thus has modern science for the first time realized in the great nation-state of modern days, that condition which existed in the little city-states of ancient times and which was considered by the wisdom of the ancients as indispensable to free and democratic government — that all the citizens should be able to hear for themselves the living voice. To them it was the voice of a single orator — a Demosthenes or a Cicero — speaking on public questions in the Athenian Assembly or in the Roman Forum. Hitherto to most Canadians, Ottawa had seemed far off, a mere name to hundreds of thousands of our people, but henceforth all Canadians will stand within the sound of the carillon and within hearing of the speakers on Parliament Hill. May we not predict that as a result of this carrying of the living voice throughout the length of the Dominion, there will be aroused a more general interest in public affairs, and an increased devotion of the individual citizen to the commonweal?[23]

King's statement preceded a national radio policy by five years. However, it can be understood as a charge to future policy makers. Certainly, it articulated the major themes of technological nationalism in the broadcasting era. In particular, it reveals the paradoxical promise of democracy and domination inherent to the rhetoric of technological nationalism. MacKenzie King's speech reduces Canada to a community or small city which does not suffer from the isolating effects of distance, regionalism, or cultural diversity. Here, technology would create a *polis* where the proximity of

speaker to audience would promote "freedom" and give rise to a "democracy" of a public sharing a commonweal. As MacKenzie King also put it: "It is doubtful if ever before ... those in authority were brought into such immediate and sympathetic and personal touch with those with whom their authority is derived."[24] As such, technological nationalism is a form of liberalism. It proposes the electronic *polis* and affirms no value save the communication of the people's voices as expressed in Parliament. However, this vision of a society in and through communication is undermined by technological nationalism's other goal, that of creating a *united* Canada. This second goal is also implied above. Note that the speech identifies an interest in public affairs with "devotion," and that the community called into being is but an audience, subject to a voice. Radio, if it offers community, also offers domination, as Innis observes in counterpoint to MacKenzie King:

> The rise of Hitler to power was facilitated by the use of the loudspeaker and radio. ... The radio, appealed to vast areas, overcame the division between classes in its escape from literacy, and favoured centralization and bureaucracy. A single individual could appeal at one time to vast numbers of people speaking the same language. ...[25]

MacKenzie King's remarks capture the spirit of the rhetoric of Canadian government policy towards broadcasting as a means of binding space from his own time until the recent flirtations with cultural continentalism. As with rail service in Canada, broadcasting was consciously regarded as a means of *creating* a Canada with sufficient commonality to justify its political union, while simultaneously, it was also considered a means of simply enabling Canadians to be aware of each other and their already constituted values and identity. Such a contradictory role for broadcasting was articulated in various government reports dealing with the problems posed by broadcasting technology including the 1929 *Report of the Royal Commission on Broadcasting*, and the 1932 *Report of the Parliamentary Committee on Broadcasting*. These and subsequent reports offered a rhetoric which asserted the existence of a distinctly Canadian (and thus unitary) consciousness which required technological mediation and also charged broadcasting with the task of realizing that consciousness and its nation.

The Development of a Broadcasting Policy of Technological Nationalism

The 1932 Broadcasting Act followed rather than anticipated broadcasting's development. Canada's first commercial radio station was licenced in

1919. A decade elapsed before the Royal Commission on Radio Broadcasting, chaired by Sir John Aird, former president of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, issued a report calling for exclusive government control of broadcasting, including the nationalization of existing privately owned outlets.[26] The Commission's stance was one of "defensive expansionism," as Margaret Prang would put it, for it pointed to the threat of Americanized airwaves and called for protective federal initiatives.[27] Of course, the Commission asserted that the airwaves must be protected from an American expansion driven by market forces. More significantly, the Aird Report also echoed MacKenzie King as it asserted that radio must become a means for developing Canadian hegemony and fostering a unified culture in the face of geography and regionalism:

> At present the majority of programs heard are from sources outside of Canada. It has been emphasized that the continued reception of these had a tendency to mold the minds of young people in the home to ideals and opinions that are not Canadian. In a country of the vast geographical dimension of Canada, broadcasting will undoubtedly become a great force in imparting a national spirit and interpreting national citizenship.[28]

The official Canadian mind conceives of Canada as a nation which must come to be in spite of space. Thus, even though the Aird Commission did not seek to establish a repressive single Canadian discourse, but called for a broadcasting system in which programming would be provincially controlled, it sought to create an extended community in which common Canadian interests would be articulated and a shared national identity could emerge. The popular mind, like the land, must be occupied. Note, however that technological nationalism only defines Canadian ideals and opinion by virtue of their not being from foreign sources. This is significant because, in its reluctance or inability to articulate a positive content to the Canadian identity — an identity still to be created — technological nationalism is a form of liberalism, privileging the *process* of communication over the substance of what is communicated. Consequently, if radio were to bring forth a nation by providing a common national experience, that experience would be one of communication, of sheer mediation. This is the first contradiction of technological nationalism: The content of the Canadian identity would be but technological nationalism itself.

Ottawa did not, of course, permit a great deal of provincial autonomy in broadcasting. Nor did it, ultimately, establish a state monopoly. The 1929 Depression began weeks after the Aird Report's publication and the government turned to more urgent matters. Meanwhile, several provinces, led by Quebec, challenged Ottawa's jurisdiction over broadcasting in the courts.

This delayed the implementation of a Canadian radio policy. Canada's Supreme court upheld Ottawa's jurisdictional claim in 1931. The British Privy Council rejected Quebec's appeal of that ruling in 1932. Only then did Ottawa act.

Prime Minister Bennett, who considered radio "a most effective instrument for nation building," established in 1932 a special committee of the House of Commons to examine broadcasting and draft appropriate legislation.[29] The 1932 report echoed both the rhetoric and the recommendations of the Aird Commission. More strongly than before, radio was presented as heir to the railroad's mission. Thus, the chairman of the 1932 Parliamentary committee, Dr. Raymond Moran, asserted:

> Had the fathers of Confederation been able to add this means of communication to the ribbons of steel by which they endeavored to bind Canada in an economic whole, they would have accomplished a great deal more than they did, great even as their achievement was.[30]

The committee realized that national radio service, like national rail service, would not develop without state direction and capital. The Canadian culture and unity sought after would not spring from unbridled commerce, but would have to spring from the state itself. Thus the committee, linking radio to railroad, called for the creation of a radio commission empowered to nationalize private broadcasting stations. The hoped-for result would be a united Canada. The Commons committee's report led to the 1932 Radio Broadcasting Bill. That bill was introduced to the House by Prime Minister Bennett. As he presented the legislation, he charged radio with the task of creating national unity and serving the Empire. Radio, like the CPR, would permit a technologically mediated state and *nation*:

> Without such (Canadian) control radio broadcasting can never become a great agency for the communication of matters of national concern and for the diffusion of national thought and ideals, and without such control it can never be the agency by which national consciousness may be fostered and sustained and national unity still further strengthened. ... Furthermore, radio broadcasting, controlled and operated in this way, can serve as a dependable link in a chain of empire communications by which we may be more closely united one with the other.[31]

Bennett's rhetoric appropriated for Ottawa the right to create a consciousness. Certainly, his discourse is apparently liberal, for it presumes that

national concerns and thoughts pre-exist radio and need only to be "communicated" and "diffused." However, Bennett's address also reveals that without the common denominators of radio and state, there would be no nation, for it is a nation dependent upon technology to be created and sustained. Radio was to be a means of socialization, diffusing the ideal of the nation to be constructed, the ideal of communication. In other words, the process of communication would legitimate the state and the (British) empire whose power it extended.

The Contradictions of Economic and Cultural Communication

Canada did not end up with the exact broadcasting system these reports envisaged, of course, for the abstract principles of policy are not easily realized. In particular, the development of both communication and transportation infrastructures are based on technologies and economic forces which exist somewhat autonomously from the state. Indeed, from the outset, radio offered little promise of creating or strengthening the Canadian state or *nation*, since American signals penetrated Canada's borders far more easily than steel rails. By 1930, Canadians were more likely to receive American than Canadian signals: nearly all Canadians were within reach of an American station, while only 60% could receive a signal originating in Canada.[32] Furthermore, American-made programs were very popular among Canadians. At least 50% of Canadian listening time was devoted to United States programming.[33] While the CNR at that time operated a national network service (albeit of limited scope), it could not compete with American programs, be they distributed in Canada by Canadian stations, or by powerful stations based in the United States. In consequence, Margaret Prang points out, as I observed above, that Canadian broadcasting policy has been characterized by "defensive expansionism." It has been sensitive to American expansion, and has called for a concerted state effort to use technology both as a form of defense and as a means of establishing Canadian hegemony over its territory. Canada had secured its western territory through space-binding technology; it had not, however, secured its cultural territory. Thus the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, and its successor, the CBC, were instituted to occupy and defend Canada's ether and consciousness.[33]

While various governments in Ottawa could rhetorically call for a technologically mediated *nation*, they were in no way assured of success, especially since radio, like rail, is an extension of an economic system dominated by American capital. In spite of Prang's "defensive expansionism," and the conscientious work of broadcasters at the CRBC and CBC, anglophone

Canada found itself saddled with a model of broadcasting as entertainment largely developed outside of the country, and with a timetable for its development over which Ottawa had little control. Canada was the subject of what Boyd-Barrett terms "media [as opposed to cultural] imperialism."[34] And, of course, both of these could only be countered through major government expenditures. Technological nationalism thus encountered its constraint.

In passing the 1932 Radio Broadcasting Bill, Parliament sought to empower the discourse of technological nationalism. However, while talk may be cheap, its transmission by radio is not and Parliament was ultimately unwilling to advance the funds necessary for the new radio service, the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission (CRBC), to nationalize existing stations or establish many new facilities.[35] The federal government, under John A. MacDonald's leadership, had been willing to subsidize the CPR, but that project ultimately would promote Canadian commerce and the Canadian accumulation of capital. State radio, on the other hand, offered no financial benefits. On the contrary, state radio would always be a drain on the public purse, particularly if it were to avoid commercialization and seek to "uplift" its audience, rather than transmit popular (and predominantly American) programmes.

We see here a fundamental difference between the railroad and radio. While both were and are called upon to help create a nation, the railroad's nation is economic, while radio's is cultural and ideological. That the CPR would carry American goods, or that its Canadian cargo would be undistinguishable from American freight, was unimportant. Canadian commerce could be identical in content to its American counterpart and remain Canadian. Conversely, radio is not a common carrier and is thus quite unlike rail service. If radio were treated as a common carrier, like the railroad, its content would be irrelevant. Radio would be successful if it were profitable. However, radio is Canadian by its content, and is thus quite unlike the CPR. *Canadian* radio must create its own "freight," and find a market for it as well. However, before Canadian radio had developed into a mature form, the nature of demand in the radio market had already been constituted by the distribution of American programmes. Consequently, Canadian radio, unlike Canadian rail, could be either profitable or Canadian, not both. We see here then the second contradiction of technological nationalism: it identifies a medium ultimately based upon a foreign economic and programming logic as the site for Canada's cultural construction.

The CRBC's main failure was its inability to compete successfully with commercial broadcasters and so transform the airwaves into a medium fostering nationhood. This failure was not unique to the CRBC, but is endemic to Canadian broadcasting's history. The Canadian Broadcasting

Corporation, established to succeed the CRBC in 1936, faced the same dilemma. From its creation until the advent of television in Canada in 1952, the CBC did, to a degree, offset the influence of American broadcasting in Canada. Certainly, without state-sponsored radio, the airwaves in Canada would have become but another market for American networks. In particular, the CBC did offer to Canadians a common experience and its popularity increased during the second world war, as Canadians sought information on Canada's war effort. Nevertheless, American programming remained popular in Canada — Toronto and Montreal had US network affiliates, and the CBC's most popular programme were American productions such as "Fibber McGee and Molly" and "Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy."[36]

Communication technology, heralded as the means of promoting Canadian statehood and nationhood, paradoxically offered those in Canada a common "national" experience which included cultural commodities from the United States. This phenomenon was intensified with the development of more sophisticated and expensive media. New media, as they accelerated the binding of space and the rise of empire, increasingly drew Canada into the American cultural system. Thus, when CBC television was born in 1952, there were already 146,000 receiving sets in Canada with antennae pointing south.[37] Television as a medium, with expensive genres of programming, styles of production, and a star system, was already developing in the United States. Canadian television could scarcely compete. Only the CBC's monopoly over Canadian TV network programming and the still poor penetration of cable television preserved a Canadian presence on Canadian screens. Thus, the 1957 Royal Commission on Broadcasting observed that Canadian television could not be Canadian and turn a profit, and reasserted the state's role in constructing a national identity:

> The choice is between a Canadian state-controlled system with some flow of programs east and west across Canada, with some Canadian content and the development of a Canadian sense of identity, at a substantial public cost, and a privately owned system which forces of economics will necessarily make predominantly dependent on American radio and television programmes.[38]

As in previous decades, the threat of American expansion is presented as warranting state action. And, as in the past, this 1957 report articulates the imperative of technological nationalism: It likens broadcasting to the CPR as it affirms that "the building of the first Canadian railway was only the first of many devices to pull together into a nation the vast expanse of Canadian territory."[39] It then asserts that without public expenditures, a Canadian nation could not exist. Within the logic of a technologically

mediated nation, the committee's observations are, of course, "true." More significantly, as an argumentative justification for a public policy of nation-building, their import is rhetorical. The need to support Canadian television is based upon a vision of technology as a means of creating and maintaining a nation at will. Significantly, this rhetoric sees a Canadian *nation* and identity as exegetic of the state itself. Ninety years after Canada's political constitution, a *national* identity is still so ephemeral that the state, and its agencies, feel compelled to create it. Technological nationalism refuses to consider that Canada is not a nation but a state, and that Canadian cultures could exist outside of their technological mediation.

Canadian television initially offered a varied menu which included many high quality programmes. The CBC's schedule was marked by acclaimed dramas, musical programmes, and documentaries.[40] However, as television "matured," it increasingly failed to create the nation that the rhetoric of technological nationalism envisaged. As early as 1956, only 45% of programming on CBC English-language television was of Canadian origin.[41] The CBC, in order to fill its schedule, raise advertising revenue, and respond to viewer demand, offered what it considered to be the best of US programming. Writing the research report for the 1957 Royal Commission, Dallas Smythe wondered whether the CBC was not its "own worst enemy," offering the "best" in US programmes and so arousing a desire for more of them.[42] The economics of the technology whose mission it was to consolidate Canadian unity permitted the diffusion of American culture into Canada. Furthermore, as television expanded in Canada, the number of hours of American productions viewed on Canadian screens steadily increased. In particular, as television developed, it increasingly offered the potential for profit. Thus, private interests were anxious to gain access to Canada's major markets and compete with CBC stations.

In 1958, a new broadcasting act removed from the CBC the power to regulate broadcasting and established a new agency for that purpose. In 1961, the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG), yielded to business and viewer demand and licensed second-television services in Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, and Halifax.[43] The creation of the CTV television network increased Canadian viewer choice, and so further extended US television into Canada. In retrospect, the BBG's decision might seem to have been ill-advised. Certainly, it did not promote Canadian unity and identity as broadcasting was charged to do. However, the technological imperative is not the exclusive property of the state. The technological and economic possibility of offering a second television service to Canada begat a desire for it both among an audience mesmerized by television's delights and entrepreneurs eager to turn a profit. Television, as a key vehicle of consumer culture, gave rise to a desire for itself.

The BBG, while presiding over the Americanization of Canadian airwaves, could only echo faintly the rhetoric of technological nationalism and promulgate a series of ineffective Canadian programming content regulations. Needless to say, except for news, public affairs, and hockey, Canadians preferred programs produced by the American media empire. Canadian broadcast technology had become primarily a channel for American cultural products. Television was increasingly like a railroad, for it was primarily a delivery system for standardized commodities produced in the United States. Furthermore, television's tendency to integrate Canada into the cultural system of the United States was accelerated by the cabling of Canadian cities. Cable television rendered the idea of a *Canadian* mediated culture nearly obsolete.

By 1976, close to 50% of Canadian homes were served by cable and 71% of Canadian English viewing time was devoted to programmes of foreign origin.[44] This was, in fact, noted by the BBG's successor, the Canadian Radio Television Commission (CRTC), which asserted: "we now have in place a distribution system more effectively oriented to the development and distribution of more foreign programming than to the creation and evolution of distinctly Canadian works."[45] Clearly, space-binding technology has not permitted the development of an authentic Canadian culture, shared by the majority of Canadians, which is autonomous from American culture. Communication technology has perhaps offered Canadians a shared experience, but only as it has also included them in the American cultural market. If regionalism has been softened by technology, the identity or culture fostered is hardly a distinctive Canadian one. Furthermore, it could be argued, as does Bernard Ostry, that efforts by Ottawa to develop cultural unity have fueled demands in Canada for regional autonomy.[46] In the face of a discourse of nation-building, a turn away from a technologized culture in the image of the federal state would hardly be surprising.

Nevertheless, federal policy-makers continue to dream a nation and rhetorically assert the legitimacy of their efforts through technological nationalism. For example, in 1977 CBC president A.W. Johnson announced the corporation's plan to "Canadianize" its programming. He characterized the American cultural "onslaught" as "rape" and likened today's CBC to Confederation's CPR:[47]

> Our forefathers were prepared to pay the premium as they supported John A. MacDonald with his and our national dream. They paid the premium building East-West communication links which have been the life-giving arteries of our nation from the time of the voyageurs, the Hudson Bay trappers, and Van Horne to the contemporary connective series of railroads, telephones, airlines, pipelines,

> radio, and television. Without these East-West links Canada would not survive, for effective communications and transportation systems are far more significant factors in the existence of Canada as a political and social entity than for any other nation on earth.[48]

Johnson here depicts Canada as a technologically constituted society. Without technology, there would be no Canada. Indeed, Canada does not emerge out of the land, but out of its conquest by technology and political will. And, for Johnson, technology and political will must again, as always, counter the American threat.

The Contradictions of Culture and Technology

While, certainly, the Canadian economic state depends upon technology, we should question whether technology constitutes or regenerates a Canadian culture. Technological nationalism offers Canadians a common experience of signs and information in which culture is disembodied. Thus, technology promotes a cultural experience which is not grounded in a region or tradition, particularly if it is in the service of some "national" interest. Because the state itself is the basis of a Canadian commonality, its national consciousness would be the product of a bureaucratic cultural apparatus. Once a culture is associated with television, and technology generally, the nature of the American subordination becomes clear. American culture (or, what's the same: intense commodification) is imposing itself on Canada through the very technologies which should be constitutive of the Canadian experience and essence. Furthermore, America's presence on Canadian screens is a curious form of subordination, for Canadians enjoy American cultural products, even while recognizing the cultural invasion, or what, in broadcast industry jargon, is referred to as "market penetration." It seems, then, more accurate to say that Canadians are being seduced by American cultural commodities designed for a technology capable of eliciting desire.[49] This points to the third contradiction of technological nationalism: The mediated culture which is imperative to Canadian statehood has within its logic the seduction of technology itself.[50] American television exploits the seductiveness of the technological experience.

Even in the ideal world of Canadian television envisioned by the CBC, the Canadian experience would remain an experience of technology, of the state, and of power. In its 1978 submission to the CRTC, the CBC asserts that Canada's shared experience includes Paul Henderson's 1972 winning goal for Team Canada against the USSR, the televised drama of the Montreal Olympics, and Peter Kent's reporting of federal election results.[51] Note that each of these moments of experience are "media events" where national identity is inscribed in a mythos of power, and where official state

culture is celebrated. Each of these elements of our "national experience" exists precisely as an absence of a non-technologized commonality. The Canadian imagination, according to technological nationalism, is a technologically mediated one which derives from the state and is in opposition to nature as well as regionalism. But, in the face of the American presence and regional cultures, traditions, and history the discourse of the Canadian state and its institutions can only offer mediation itself as the ground for unity, as I have earlier observed. Just as the CPR would be our "national dream," so the CBC would be our common cultural ground. Thus, the CBC can assert that its purpose is "the *creation* of our national consciousness" (my emphasis).[52]

As is obvious to even the casual observer of Canadian broadcasting, and as the CBC and CRTC have at times complained, electronic delivery systems cannot, in themselves, create a culture. As the 1956 Royal Commission on Broadcasting observed, what is important is the programming. In order to give rise to a Canadian identity, communication technologies must carry Canadian products. However, to simply berate Parliament for its unwillingness to better fund Canadian television, to criticize commercial interests for their unwillingness to sacrifice profit for the sake of a national culture, or to attack the CRTC for lacking the courage to halt the development of cable systems, is in large measure to miss the point. The failure of technological nationalism lies not in Parliament, CTV, or the CRTC, but in contradictions inherent to technological nationalism itself.

Conclusion

Rail and radio differ. The latter binds space much more efficiently than the former. The railroad depends upon the physical domination of geography to join distant points. Radio, on the other hand, does not so much bind space as annihilate it. The railroad binds space one-dimensionally as it links east to west; radio renders space insignificant across two or three dimensions as all points become proximate. Thus, radio, and electronic technology in general, will tend to ensnare Canada within an American web of information. The advocates of Canada's continual technological reconstitution seem to have intuitively, but naively, grasped what Innis observed, that technologies of communication extend and strengthen empires. They sought to favour the Canadian (and British Empire) domination of a geographic and cultural territory, but they failed to realize that such technologies were not merely the tools of political will permitting control over a region. As Innis saw, space-binding technologies favour and transform existing centers of power. They are not the political, economic, and cultural equivalents of string and tape, which can patch together a territory. They are media which extend power, and for Canada in the twentieth century, power is based in

the United States. Thus, as broadcasting developed in Canada, it adopted the form and content of American programmes.

The Americanization of Canada's airwaves should hardly be surprising, for the American industry of cultural production has economic, technical, and human resources which Canada could not match. Sheer economic forces favoured the integration of English Canada's cultural market to the American one. This is particularly so because the penetration of American over-the-air signals into Canada during broadcasting's early years established the form of media in Canada. Broadcasting, the technology called upon to form a Canadian cultural identity, became a form of spectacle and entertainment.[53] American signals defined what radio and television would be in the popular mind. Thus, from the outset, radio and television were media dedicated to the distribution of cultural commodities. In the "cultural" marketplace, a Canadian industry could hardly compete. Indeed, private broadcasters, acting with great economic rationality, largely contended themselves with distributing cultural products produced elsewhere rather than attempting to create their own.

The economic forces drawing Canada into the American system of cultural production, as accelerated by technology, perhaps could have been undermined by a very powerful political will. One could argue, as does Johnson and the CBC, that just as Canada did build the CPR against great odds, it could have created a *Canadian* broadcasting system through high levels of public expenditure. Certainly, with sufficient funding, an all Canadian CBC would be possible. However, this view fails to consider that for television to offer a "national" *experience*, it would of necessity need to integrate itself into the logic of the cultural commodity system.

A Canadian culture would depend upon Canadian audiences, and would therefore have to attract viewers in a market defined by the American cultural system. And, for Canadian products to be consumed in the cultural commodity marketplace, they would have to become "Americanized," either to compete with American signals straying into Canada, or to compete in either the American or USA-dominated "world" markets. Indeed, recent initiatives by the Department of Communication and the CBC to promote the international marketing of programs suggests a recognition that media products are commodities, that the culture system is an industry.[54] This abdication to the logic of space-binding technology leads us to competitive Canadian cultural products such as *Porky's*, set in Florida, the *First Choice* Pay TV Canadian content offerings such as features starring Red Skelton and Robin Williams, and a documentary on US General Douglas McCarthur. Canada's prowess in developing space-binding technology, celebrated as a national achievement in the *National Dream*, ironically serves now to undermine Canada's cultural autonomy.

In the absence of the American (culture as commodity) presence, it is doubtful whether the logic of technological nationalism would be any more successful. Technological nationalism, as a form of liberalism, presumes that communication will reveal a common interest uniting Canadians in spite of their differences: The CBC would both express Canada's diversity and promote a (singular) Canadian identity; Telidon would be tomorrow's soapbox and town meeting hall.[55] Technological nationalism presents technology merely as a neutral medium facilitating nationhood. However, it is hardly so benign, for it locates the state's very *raison d'être* in the experience of technological mediation. Indeed, as Innis observed, space-binding technologies establish dominions of power by extending markets and the commodity system. Radio and television, and other communication technologies, may appear unlike the CPR or the system of trade because they distribute information rather than goods. However, the content of media are commodities which are produced, bought and sold, and electronic media extend the economic and cultural influence of centres of production over marginal areas. Most importantly, media promote the cultural dependency of margins. While the rhetoric of technological nationalism promises a public in which Canadians would share their commonality and participate in political will formation, it offers ultimately a state in which listeners are subject to a discourse which can only be produced by specialists. Technological nationalism's liberalism ideologically conceals a set of power relations. This is apparent in McKenzie King's comment on his 1927 Diamond Jubilee address: Canadians, under technological nationalism would be *subject* to a voice. They would form an audience to a media product which would be the basis for their common experience and identity. Technological nationalism undermines the possibility of a community of participation. As Carey and Quirk note:

> Modern media have, however, a common effect: they widen the range of reception while narrowing the range of distribution. Large audiences receive but are unable to make direct response or participate otherwise in vigorous discussion. Consequently, modern media create the potential for the simultaneous administration and control of extraordinary spaces and populations. No amount of rhetoric will exorcise this effect. The bias of technology can only be controlled by politics, by curtailing the expansionist tendencies of technological societies and by creating avenues of democratic discussion and participation beyond the control of modern technology.[56]

Broadcast communication technology does not create the site of a true *polis*. Furthermore, just as MacKenzie King was also the embodiment of the

Canadian state and its power as he addressed Canada, Canada's discourse on itself would be the discourse of technologized power, for Canada's national dream is a dream of technology.

Canada is a country whose *national* experience follows its state experience. Consequently, a Canadian identity and culture would be rooted in the state itself, for it is through the state that Canada's populace is constituted as a people. Technological nationalism therefore cannot but offer the empty experience of mediation. Not only do communication technologies favour centers of power and promote the suppression of marginal experience, but they transform culture into the experience of commodities and of technology itself. Thus, even if technological nationalism could offer a Canadian experience and promote a national identity across space, that identity would become a disposable one.

To conclude: Technological nationalism's promise is suspect because the commodified culture it would constitute would have no stability, and would be but another instance of the culture of technological society. As Innis observes: "Stability which characterized certain periods in earlier civilizations is not the obvious objective of this civilization."[57] Our space-binding culture, also a commodity culture, changes rapidly — fashions, music, politics, are celebrated and then their value is exhausted.[58] A technologically mediated Canadian culture, based in the experience of media commodities, would contribute little to a Canadian self-understanding. Rather than interpreting some supposedly Canadian experience, and offering "a sense of balance and proportion,"[59] technological nationalism can only offer itself in a constantly mutating form. We must develop new rhetorics about and for ourselves, and create our cultures otherwise and elsewhere. The national dream offers only the dark sun of alienation.

Notes

1. The *National Dream*, based on Pierre Berton's history of the CPR, was originally broadcast during the 1973-1974 television season as an eight-part series. The series was rebroadcast in 1982 and 1985.

2. Kenneth Burke, *The Rhetoric of Religion: Studies in Logology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961), p. 18; *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966): 362-373.

3. James W. Carey and John J. Quirk. "The Mythos of the Electronic Revolution," *American Scholar* 39 (1, 1970): 219-251; 40 (2, 1970): 395-424.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 238.

5. Michael Calvin McGee, "The Ideograph: A Link between Rhetoric and Ideology," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (February 1980): 4-9.

6. Harold A. Innis, *A History of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (1923; rpt. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), p. 287.

7. I am subscribing to a "metropolitain" interpretation of Canadian history. This perspective is central to Innis' analysis and is discussed in J.M.S. Careless, "Frontierism, Metropolitainism, and Canadian History," *The Canadian Historical Review* 35 (March 1954): 1-21.

8. Quebec initially supported, albeit with some reservations, Ottawa's decision to put down militarily the 1885 Métis uprising. Popular support in Quebec for Riel developed subsequent to his defeat. See, Robert Rumilly, *Histoire de la Province de Québec*, vol. 5 (Montreal: Editions Bernard Valiquette, 1942): 1-108.

9. Michael Calvin McGee, "In Search of the 'People': A Rhetorical Alternative," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 66 (February 1980): 1-16.

10. G.P. de T. Glazenbrook, *A History of Transportation in Canada*, vol. 2 (1934; rpt. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1964), p. 47.

11. Canada. House of Commons, *Debates*, 17 January 1881, p. 488.

12. Canada. House of Commons, *Debates*, 14 December 1880, p. 50.

13. Pierre Berton, *The National Dream* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1970): 11.

14. Various rhetorics of technology are possible. Canada's rhetoric is rooted in its colonial origins and state-supervised development. In the United States, where local development preceded the federal state, a different rhetoric of technology arose. There, "clean" electrical technology was heralded as a means to restore the pastoral ideals of a democratic community and harmony with nature. See, Carey and Quirk, pp. 226-235, *passim*.

15. Kenneth Burke, *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945), pp. xv-xxiii, 275-317.

16. McGee, "In Search of the 'People.'"

17. Georges Etienne Cartier, address to the Assembly of Lower Canada, 7 February 1865, in *Le manuel de la paroles: Manifestes Québécois*, vol. 1 (Sillerey: Editions du boréal express, 1977), pp. 53-61: "Les nations sont formées maintenant par l'agglomération de divers peuples rassemblés par les intérêts et sympathies, ceci est notre position dans le moment actuel. Une objection a été suscité au projet maintenant sous notre considération [Confederation], à cause des mots 'nouvelle nationalité'. Lorsque nous sommes unis, si toutefois nous le devenons, nous formerons une nationalité politique indépendante de l'origine nationale, ou de la religion d'aucun individu."

18. The interests of empire in the CPR are quite evident: Great Britain took an interest in the CPR's construction, Canadian Pacific instituted steamer service from its western terminus to Australia and the Orient in order to link British territories, and the railway came to be considered part of the Empire's system of communication and received a British postal subsidy. See, John Murray Gibbon, *Steel of Empire* (London: Rich & Cowen, Ltd., 1935): 355.

19. Frank W. Peers, *The Politics of Canadian Broadcasting 1920-1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969): 23-24.

20. *Ibid.*

21. CNR radio did offer some French-language programming on its network, much to displeasure of many in Western Canada who objected to the French language being on the air outside of Quebec. As Innis observes of radio: "Stability within language units became more evident and instability between language units more dangerous." Harold A. Innis, *The Bias of Communication* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1951): 82.

22. Darcy Marsh, *The Tragedy of Sir Henry Thorton* (Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1935): 115-116.

23. William Lyon MacKenzie King, address at the Canadian National Exhibition, July 1927, in *Signing On: The Birth of Radio in Canada* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada Limited, 1982): 190.

24. *Ibid.*
25. Innis, *Bias of Communication*, p. 82.
26. Canada. *Royal Commission on Broadcasting, 1929 (Aird Commission), Report*, pp. 12-13.
27. Margaret Prang, "The Origins of Public Broadcasting in Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review* 46 (1, 1965): 11-31.
28. Aird Commission, p. 6.
29. Reprinted in Peers, p. 78.
30. Reprinted in *Ibid.*, p. 97.
31. Reprinted in *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
32. Prang, p. 3.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
34. Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "Media Imperialism: Towards an International Framework for the Analysis of Media Systems," in *Mass Communication and Society*, edited by James Curran, Michael Gurevitch, and Janet Woollacott (London: Open University Press, 1977): 116-135.
35. The CRBC's funding problems are discussed in E. Austin Weir, *The Struggle for National Broadcasting in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965): 173-177.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 281; Peers, p. 283, 285.
37. Canada. *Royal Commission on Broadcasting*, 1957 (Fowler I), *Report*, p. 313.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 9.
40. Weir, pp. 368-402.
41. Fowler I, p. 365.
42. Dallas Smythe, "On the Comparative Availability of United States TV Network Programmes in Communities with TV Service in Canada and in the United States," in *Ibid.*, p. 403.
43. Second service television stations were licenced in 1960 and 1961. The CTV network was licenced in 1961. See, Canada. Board of Broadcast Governors, *Annual Report*, 1960, p. 8; 1961, pp. 7, 12.
44. Canada. Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, *Special Report on Broadcasting in Canada*, vol. 1, pp. 19, 49.
45. Canada. Canadian Radio Television Commission, *Policies Respecting Broadcasting Receiving Undertakings (Cable Television)*, 16 December 1975, p. 3.
46. Bernard Ostry, *The Cultural Connection* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978): 25-26, 61.
47. A.W. Johnson, *Touchstone for the CBC*, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, June 1977, pp. 4, 10.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
49. For a discussion of the seduction of technological experience see, Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant* (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1984 and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 53-74; and Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1969): 138-147.
50. *Ibid.*
51. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *The CBC — A Perspective: Submission to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commissions in Support of Applications of Network Licences*, May 1978, p.1.

52. *Ibid.*

53. Of course, electronic technologies are in themselves spectacular. Radio's initial appeal, for example, lay not in its programming, but in its ability to invisibly and magically connect distant points.

54. For instances of the recent competitive strategy for what ironically are now termed "cultural industries" see, Canada. Department of Communications, *Towards a New National Broadcasting Policy*, February 1983; and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, *The Strategy of the CBC*, 1983, pp. 79-80.

55. Canada. Ministère des Communications, *Notes pour une allocution du Ministre des communications l'honorable Francis Fox devant l'association canadienne des communications*, Ottawa, 5 June 1982, p. 17: "Il est indéniable que les technologies nouvelles ont le pouvoir de nous atomiser, de faire de nous des isolés reliés individuellement à un centre informatique multimédia. Mais elles ont aussi le pouvoir de nous rapprocher, de donner naissance au village global, ou plutôt à la ville globale dont Télidon serait la place publique, le crieur et le conteur."

56. Carey and Quirk, p. 240.

57. Innis, *Bias of Communication*, p. 141.

58. For an enlightening exploration of the implications of the ephemerality and impermanence of "space-bound" contemporary culture see, James W. Carey, "Harold Adams Innis and Marshall McLuhan," *The Antioch Review* (Spring 1967): 29-35.

59. Innis, *Bias of Communication*, p. 86.

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TECHNOLOGY AND EMANCIPATORY ART: THE MANITOBA VISION

Arthur Kroker and Kenneth J. Hughes

The Artist as Prophet

In *Understanding Media*, Marshall McLuhan said that the age of electric technology is a period of intense anxiety and bewilderment.[1]

It was McLuhan's special insight that in the era of electric technology artists have a very vital role to play. "Art is precise advance knowledge of how to cope with the psychic and social consequences of the next technology".[2] For McLuhan, artists can no longer loosely be spoken of as being ahead of their time for the simple reason that "our technology is, also, ahead of its time".[3] The artistic imagination provides an early indication, sometimes "decades in advance" of coming technological changes and their likely impact on society. To the extent that the artist "possesses the means of anticipating and avoiding the consequences of technological trauma",[4] then the artistic imagination is also prophetic. As the individual of "integral awareness", the artist is most deeply embedded in the reality of the times, and most receptive, at any moment, to grasping at a deep level the implications of new technologies.

If McLuhan is correct in his assumption of the artist as the "prophet" of technological experience, then there is a desperate, and very practical, need to look at Canadian art for clues to human survival. As it happens, we are fortunate in this regard in Canada, for there exists in contemporary Canadian art a powerful, coherent, and unique discourse on technology. Indeed, it might even be suggested that in the works of four contemporary Manitoba artists — Esther Warkov, Tony Tascona, Don Proch and Ivan Eyre — there has developed a radically new exploration of the dialectic of technol-

ogy and society. Taken collectively — though they are not a "school" — these artists have produced a visual discourse on technology which has few equals in contemporary art. For they have done, in fact, that which is most difficult. They have infused the question of technology with an *historical* concern (the remembrance of the prairie past); with a *moral* concern (the exploration of a democratic and critical approach to technology); and with an *aesthetic* concern (the creative use of new technologies in expanding the artistic imagination). Thus the extent that we grasp the urgency of a more creative approach to the technological experience as a vital necessity for Canada's survival, these prairie artists emerge as guides, indeed prophets, in the exploration of a new "national consciousness". They confront us with a new "vision" of Canadian society. And what's more: their artistic productions demonstrate that in the age of postmodernism *the most local is also the most cosmopolitan.*

These Manitoba artists have not, of course, developed a monolithic understanding of technology. On the contrary, their work is significant precisely because it is internally divergent and heterogeneous. Their use of the artistic imagination represents, in fact, perhaps all of the major positions which we can possibly assume on the question of technology. Thus, Esther Warkov brings to a new height of visual eloquence the perspective of *technological dependency.* The work of Tony Tascona is, in an important sense, a reverse, but parallel, image of Warkov's. Tascona represents, and this brilliantly, the perspective of *technological humanism* in the artistic imagination. And, midway between these poles of dependency and humanism, we discover the ironic, and yet searing, visions of technology which inform the works of Don Proch and Ivan Eyre. To study the artistic productions of Proch and Eyre takes us on a journey of discovery which leads us through all of the variations possible on the theme of *technological realism.* To Warkov's noble dirge for the victims of technological society and to Tascona's creative exploration of the inner language of science and technology, Proch and Eyre add the impressive attempt to create a new mediation between past and future, between technology and environment.

Lament, utopia and realism: the dominant themes of these Manitoba artists as they confront, on our behalf, the new world of technology. But in the end, it does not matter so much that their artistic imaginations serve the task of prophecy, for they have another crucial ethical enterprise on the agenda. They take seriously the social obligation to be agents of historical remembrance. The dynamic meeting in their works of a future-oriented prophecy and of a constant invocation of Canadian historical traditions makes their artistic productions the fusion-point for a new national consciousness. These artists teach us two vital lessons: first, there is a sharp division between the human use of technology and the imposition of a

technocracy which carries within it all of the signs of a living death; secondly, the creation of a ethically-informed technology would involve the development of an active relationship among morality, technique, and environment. As we study therefore the discourse on technology in Manitoba art we embark on nothing less than a radical experiment in learning: we learn how to *rethink* anew the meaning of the technological experience.

Technology and Dependency

The Canadian philosopher, George Grant, posed the fateful question of how to live critically inside the technological dynamo. In *Technology and Empire*, he inquires: If "technique is ourselves", if we cannot recover a language of "the good" by which to measure the deprivations of technological society, then must it be the tragic Canadian fate merely to "celebrate or stand in silence" before the relentless power of technology? He responds with a solitary hint about a possible escape-route from the prison-house of technology and dependency: we can live critically in the technological dynamo only by "listening intently for the intimations of deprival".[5]

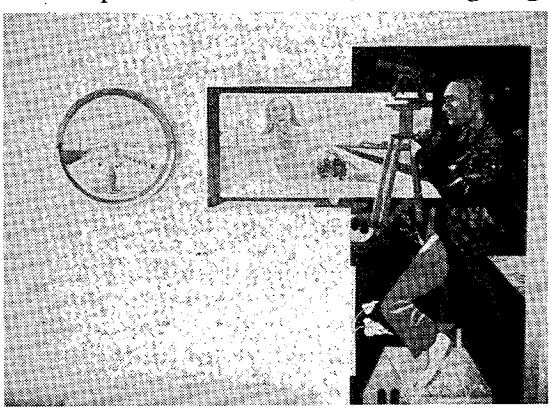
Esther Warkov approaches the *critical* ideal of neither remaining silent in the face of technology nor of celebrating the coming to be of technique. She listens "intently for the intimations of deprival". In fact, her artistic imagination becomes precious precisely because it begins the recovery of a language of the human good against which to measure the deprivals of technological society. Warkov attempts to do the impossible: running against the tide of the "technological dynamo" which works by speed-up and constant acceleration, Warkov reverses the process by insisting on the necessity, and, indeed, dignity of the recovery of the historical imagination. She reminds us of who we are and what we are rushing to become, and she does this through the almost "theatrical" device of arraigning the victims of post-modernity — demolished cultures, dead families and children, suppressed civilisations — against the claims to freedom of the present. In a society which functions by forgetfulness, she holds up the mirror of the past as a prophetic sign of the future.

All of Warkov's painting, ranging through the *Rabbi Series*, the *Scream Series*, and the *Camera Series*, have a measured and haunting sense through which the active remembrance of victims of the dynamo recover an intimation of the losses suffered by the inhabitants of the contemporary century. Her artistic imagination emerges as that of the sympathetic, critical historian of the post-modern fate for each of the works reveals an explicit and painful probing of the human wreckage left in the wake of the will to technological mastery of the present. In a recent interview, Warkov remarked: "I think from an early age, I was attracted to old photographs.

I've always been fascinated with the past".[6] But this fascination with the past is specific, always directed to the site (and sight) of a fundamental human loss. In a way unfamiliar to the contemporary eye her artistic imagination produces a visual lament for the excluded, the lost, in the meeting of technology and empire. For example, Warkov admits that she often builds her paintings around photographs. *Surveyor in the City of Lost Dreams*, her brilliant depiction of the deep division between industrialism and sensual experience, began with the photograph of an engineer. *Passing Through* she constructed around a photograph of the anonymous figure of the driver (the *camera obscura*) who witnesses the genocide of civilisation. *Rolling Home to Moses*, her haunting and complex "figurative" presentation of freedom and domination, developed out of a photograph taken by Margaret Bourke-White at the opening of the death-camp of Auschwitz.[7]

To study Warkov's paintings means to be in the presence of a prolonged *keaning*: a meditation in the form of a lament for the *exclusions* of the contemporary century, the absence of which speaks directly to the impoverishment of modern times. Always Warkov pulls us painfully to the site of the exterminated. Her paintings become, in fact, a recitative of human deprival, for her visual imagination works at the threshold of menace and terror. Everywhere in her paintings we feel the presence of a nameless, silent and almost decentered power. Images are violently detached from one another; all is a matter of fragmentation, dispersion, and shattered possibilities. Her figurative art, in fact, produces the cumulative effect of a silent scream. Warkov notes about her projects: "My intent has always been to create an art that had a soul"[8] Why? Perhaps because she approaches the model of what the art critic, John Berger, has described as the "primitive artist"[9]: the prophetic, artistic imagination which fuses in art objects the collective unconscious, the daily stress of life.

One critical event provides Warkov in an unforgiving way, with a



A: Warkov, *Surveyor in the City of Lost Dreams*

privileged access to understanding post-modernity: the holocaust. She says of her ethnic Jewish self: "There's always that sense of doom or terror".[10] Or further: "I think for a Jewish person there is always that sense that you are a traveller in the night".[11] We mention this only because Warkov seems to be that rarity among contemporary artists: a visionary who has managed to step outside the all-encompassing horizon of the technological dynamo, one who has proceeded to strip its logic down to a minimal, fundamental struggle between exterminism and life. She has the artistic imagination of the survivor. Warkov seems to have a special insight into the different ways that the power of exterminism works: the power of the surveyor (*Surveyor of the City of Lost Dreams*) to annihilate nature through the imposition of an industrial landscape; the brutal power of the soldier (*Passing Through*) evident in the vivid red blood of violence; the power of Christian culture in *Stonewallian's Lament* both to screen off the spontaneity of the self, and to silence the sensuousness of nature. The logic of post-modernity, understood as the technological will to mastery, appears in quite different ways in her painting: sometimes as a "gun" (*Passing Through*), as a "cart" (*Rolling Home to Moses*), as an urban landscape (*Our Lady of the Jewelled Rose*). But all of these are variations on a common central theme: the general struggle of technique against life, rationality against sensuality, violence against culture. In fact, we might say that Warkov poses the key question as to whether or not technological society becomes the equivalent of the power of death over life.

Warkov's lament goes beyond an historical remembrance of the loss of precious aspects of experience. Its haunting-effect, what makes it a fascinating indictment and *challenge*, is that is describes in detail the specific *method* of exclusion. If she points to the need to overcome historical forgetfulness, then she also describes the geography of this amnesia. Each of her paintings depicts, in almost clinical detail, the origin and consequences of historical forgetfulness in technological society.

For example, of *Surveyor of the City of Lost Dreams*, Warkov writes:

> A surveyor who is part bird, part man, looks at the city where his secret love applies her lipstick. She is lost in daydreams of her new love and is unaware that she is being watched by the birdman. He is ready to fly to her, aided by the tiny wings on his ankles. We have all been surveyors in the city of lost dreams.

This painting offers, perhaps, as vivid and complex a description as could be found of how alienation appears now as seduction in technological society. Warkov can say that we have all lived as "surveyors in the city of lost dreams" because technique does not exist outside of us: in a lifeless,

machine-world which we can hold separate from our deepest sense of self. For her, "technique is ourselves". Thus, the ideology of consumer culture, the actual text of *Surveyor of the City of Lost Dreams*, also speaks the language of sexual desire, and yes, of love. The terrible secret of technological society, in fact, its deepest deprivation, may be that as a mediation of human relationships in the modern century, it becomes utterly invisible to its participants. Technique as *screen* separates us from nature, from others, from ourselves. It leaves in its way a collage of fragmented identities. This may be why, perhaps, Warkov structures the canvas of *City of Lost Dreams* in the form of a movie camera or projector. She begins by intimating that consumer culture privileges the image over the actual bodily self, over nature. In this imposition (through the *geometric* vision of the surveyor) of alienated and fragmented identities, everything holds together through the language of seduction. It is also the human identity which is wagered in this encounter with technique.

Surveyor in the City of Lost Dreams begins, in fact, with a double-seduction. We meet, first, a visual-verbal sexual pun which connects the watching man with a cockerel. This fragment of a man watches a fragment of a naked woman. The sheer physical fragmentation of the painting thus becomes part of a larger spiritual fragmentation which emerges as the theme of the work. The birdman and his secret love relate only through voyeurism for the naked woman serves as a perfect image of a commodity in the market-place. She represents the "come-on" of the technological apparatus in the background of the painting. However, the reduction of the secret love to an "object" in consumer culture has another side. The opposite of pure materialism is represented by the spiritual *Venus Celestis* figure in the sky. As with the divided identity of the woman, so with the man. We see his alienated "other" spiritual self on the bottom left square canvas. The head-dress on the male symbolises the spiritual even as it suggests the original unalienated culture of native, Indian people. But the alienated surveyor directs his gaze to his "materialistic" love with the levelled telescope, while his theodolite-cum-telescope points upwards to the heavens unused. This material-spiritual difference of focus conveys the sense of deprival at the centre of Warkov's work. We find ourselves in the presence of a rich, figurative art which contrasts at the very different levels the deep divisions in technological society between culture and nature: industrial landscape and flowers; the geometrical shape of the urban landscape and the organic horizon of the sky; the lunar image and the *Venus Naturalis*; even the organic opposition between the square canvas (a symbol of closure) and the circular canvas (symbol of organic growth).

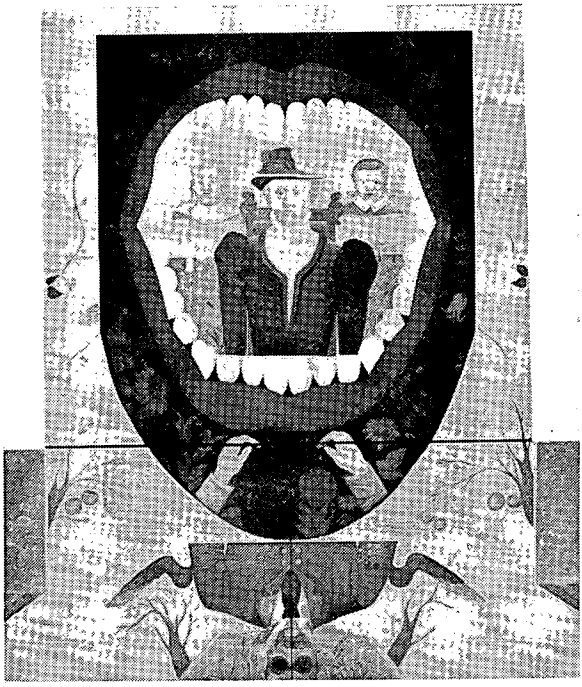
The nature-culture conflict reveals the surveyor ("we have all been surveyors ...") to be alienated from his own human nature. Meanwhile,

predominance of the geometrical forms of the twentieth-century urban factory landscape dominate the land or nature, to reveal the larger social dimensions of his alienation. Putting the scene in historical perspective, Warkov makes the surveyor's foot hang above a simple nineteenth-century building which exists in a balanced relationship with nature. The work in this way tells us that we have been overwhelmed by the materialism (consumer culture) of technological society. The wings on the heel of the surveyor turn him into the Hermes of Greek and the Mercury of Roman mythology. But both gods here become solidly associated with merchant society, Hermes being also the "the messenger of the gods and escort of the dead". The "City" (a place of trade) joins with the "Lost Dreams" (dead dreams of what might have been) of the title.

To say, however, that Warkov paints the "deprivals" of technology does not mean that her artistic imagination dissolves into a relentless fatalism. Quite the contrary. The total effect of her paintings point in the direction not of the pessimistic but the realistic. Warkov seems to say in her work that the horror of technological society must be studied so as to find a way of releasing future beauty. Thus, what is at work in her paintings is a constant struggle between an imposed static, technological order and a surging new, more organic reconciliation of nature and culture. The ideal of listening for the "intimations of deprival" perhaps also produces a way of founding the possibility of a new Eden on precisely that which has been silenced. The painter of human deprival has thus discovered a lost good, not outside technological society, but within it. If we have become the "commandments" of technology, then Warkov tells us that the recovery of meaning begins with the emancipation of those portions of the "self", and of nature, which have been *screened-off* by technique.

The signs of human regeneration appear everywhere in Warkov's paintings. The pregnant woman in *Passing Through* exists as the symbol of new life, even in the midst of the exterminism of the present. In *Rolling Home to Moses*, we cannot miss the powerful symbol of the "stag" of freedom (followed by the peasant's gaze). In *Ice Dream* and in *Our Lady of the Jewelled Rose*, Warkov employs a common, theatrical device: the separation of the canvas into a square unit to the right and a smaller, circular unit to the left. In both paintings, the square canvas, both in its shapes and in its contents, depicts a decidedly impoverished world; while the circular canvas symbolizes the possibility of "redemption" in history. The temporality of the square canvas works against the circular, eternal ideal of the other. Thus, exactly as in *Surveyor in the City of Lost Dreams*, the circular canvas of *Ice Dream* contains a figurative landscape which promises new, dynamic harmony of nature and culture.

We find the very same thing with Warkov's choice of colours. Initially, the sheer beauty of the painting seems to be at odds with the choice of



B: Warkov, *The Scream Room*

subject-matter: the "screening-off" of the prairie landscape; the "resurrection of the dead", almost as in a dream; the haunting image of *The Scream Room*, where the "scream" represents inner nature tormented by repressive culture. The beauty of Warkov's colours are only a seduction lulling us into her artistic vision, and then forcing, almost unaware, to see the reality of the real world of technology and dependency. At the same time and without contradiction her choice of rich, floral colours dignifies that, even in the midst of pain and exclusion, we live in a world of plenitude. The beauty of her colour thus exists in a dialectical relationship with the less than beautiful reality of the content and themes as a possible and realisable potential. Warkov's artistic imagination offsets the power of the present repressive technological order with the myth of Eden, that realisable secular Eden of the millenarian sects from the Middle Ages down to the present. Warkov recovers in her paintings the language of the myth of Eden as the lost good of our times.

Technological Humanism

Tony Tascona looks at technology in a different way from Warkov. The perfect embodiment of technological humanism, his method of depth

involvement brings creative participation in the technological experience to a new height. If, a McLuhan claims, the role of the artists in our age becomes prophetic in the sense of providing an early warning of the "psychic and social consequences of new technologies", then Tascona might be viewed as sketching out the history of the future. And he does so in two ways. First, his work has become a single ongoing and dynamic "experiment" with the creative adaptation of new technologies to human survival. Tascona's artistic vision provides the key to understanding the underlying principles of a new, and more organic, reconciliation of technology, nature, and imagination. His work reveals how ecology and technology might be made compatible. And, second, over and beyond the content of his artistic productions, Tascona had developed a "creative method" for responding to the imposition of new technologies: a critical scientific approach to technology which, based on the principles of depth involvement, total participation, and an experimental attitude, may be the only viable human strategy in responding to a bewildering array of new technological inventions.

Tascona's approach to technology throws itself into the future and this tells us that his vision of the technological experience reverses but parallels Warkov's. We might indeed say that Tascona and Warkov represent opposite, although complementary, sides of the Canadian mind on the question of technology. Tascona's artistic imagination is future-oriented, experimental, and interventionist. Warkov's perspective, which begins by privileging time as history, shows with Tascona's perspective a centrifugal and introspective reality. Tascona asserts of his work: "I carry it a step further and say to myself *I would rather be a landscape* — I'd rather go into the landscape, be a part of it, and come out of it with something".[13] Warkov states the opposite: "I think what I like to do primarily is to interrelate the past and present and make it all seem one. I'd even like to interrelate the past, present and the future and create a whole new world."[14] To Warkov's fascination with the camera (and thus the images of the past), stands Tascona's opposing claim: "I don't want a camera. I just want to walk and enjoy and experience ... or become agitated. I want something to happen to me. I want some friction".[15] That Tascona throws himself outwards as one of the "poles" of the field of technological experience indicates only that he represents that side of the Canadian mind which privileges extension (the abandonment of a "fixed perspective"), formalism (the study of the "inner structures" of physico-social change), and universalism (the priority of space over time). While Warkov makes visible the "intimations of deprival", the silent horizon of a technological society, Tascona allows us to actually see the "aura" surrounding the internal, minute transformations in bio-social experience. That Tascona and Warkov bring different angles of vision to bear on the technological experience signifies, in the end, that the

Canadian discourse on technology has become powerful and unique precisely because it contains a plurality of competing, artistic perspectives. And if we can accurately claim with the physicist, Werner Heisenberg (*The Physicist's Concept of Nature*), "indeterminacy" as the core aspect of the technological experience, then we might also note that one consequence of the principle of indeterminacy allows that contradictory perspectives on the same experience may *all* be true simultaneously.

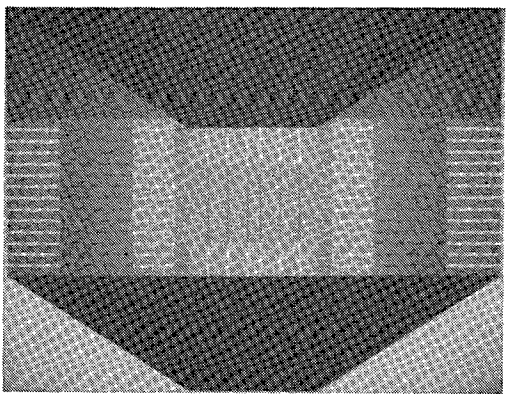
Like Foucault's "lightning flash", Tascona's work illuminates for an instant the dark obscurity of the world of atoms and cells and tension and flux. This is not a monolithic art for Tascona deliberately chooses fantastic subtlety of colour values and tone registers. As he says of the "close values" of his work: "I would rather not use that many strident values. They sometimes become a way of masking what the subtleties are really supposed to do. Can you imagine all of us walking around with our veins showing in red? Incredible!"[16] But we can discover perhaps another reason for the delicate, geometrical shapes and severe precision of the art. Tascona's imagination has moved beyond the frontiers of the publicly observable contents of experience to a radical exploration of the *formal* structures of experience. His art cannot be called abstract in the sense that it represents an escape from the "reality" of solid objects conceived in naturalistic terms. Instead, his art "abstracts" the essence, the real, from within a multiplicity of particulars existing in a highly complex world, the real conceived of from a scientific, technological angle, yet thoroughly informed with a humanistic perspective.

Consider, for example, Tascona's *Seranade*, an acrylic lacquer on laminated aluminum piece in the Drache Tascona Collection at the Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba. The work has been well named, for it offers the psychological effect of a gentle, ordered clarity. This gentle quality Tascona captures through form and colour. The white centre arising out of the grey relief base speaks for itself, for white serves as the conventional symbol of purity or life, as opposed to greyness or darkness. Again, the white becomes the ordered music which emerges out of the "silence" of greyness. The balanced series of circles can easily be seen as the abstract expression of notes in a gentle, progressive and harmonious order. Circles traditionally symbolize perfection and the eternal, as opposed to imperfection and the temporal; thus, the geometrical circular shapes operate with the dominant white colour to create the tranquil effect of the work.

The very same thing happens with the embossed silkscreen print *White Sphere*. Here a white sphere sits in a red space with four narrow concentric rings on its outer periphery, two on the white inside which bleed through the white, and two in a darker red outside the sphere itself. This symbolizes the atomic interaction of an object with its environment to stress activity

and dynamic process rather than passivity. Inside the sphere we discover another example of this with a couple of embossed lines which run horizontally across the top of the sphere. These symbolise the earthly and the temporal and they push the circle downwards. Surging up towards this, a series of embossed "V" shaped lines thrust against the horizontal lines to suggest a *tension* between vertical and horizontal elements, between temporality and eternality, between dependency and freedom. What finally is this, though, but a perfect visual expression of the ebb and flow of gravity itself?

Tascona seeks to concentrate the *medium* of technology: he does this to illustrate the high drama that takes place in the invisible world of technology turned inside out. He wishes to evoke a psychological response to the internal rules of order of the bio-social world, and to the sheer beauty (*and formal elegance*) of the "dynamic tension", the "edge" which results when technique, space and imagination come together as worlds in collusion. Tascona wishes to fulfill the Medieval promise of technology: to make an experiment again of the technological imagination. His work discloses that human freedom, which in any event cannot be separated from participation in technological experience, can only be renewed on the basis of a creative rethinking of the human relationship to technology. We have here the best of the technological imaginations: the precise point where technology becomes, once more, a way of humanising the world, a way of *seeing ourselves* in the mirror of technology.



C: Tascona, *Re-entry*

That Tascona can join freedom and technology may be due to his participation in depth in the actual "craftsmanship" of technology. Having worked for a number of years as a technician in the Air Canada shops at Winnipeg,

he had on-the-job training and became a shop floor expert in the theory and practice of plating and related chemico-electrical processes. To untrained eyes the act of plating appears to be a sort of mechanical process in which a piece of metal placed in the liquid of a tank takes on a new appearance, just as it would if put into a tank of paint. The educated imagination, however, sees intricate and controlled non-visual processes at work, a scientific structure of matter and transition which consists of largely empty space "filled" with electrical charges, but almost in reverse image. As he says when he describes his first reactions to the "surface tensions" at work in the act of plating: "I became very interested in all the organic structures, the transitions that took place, and the transition was magic to me. It has a kind of aura that really mystified me".[17] Tascona has translated that original sense of the "mystical, spiritual quality" in the transitions of simple forms, simple shapes, into an elegant series of artistic visions of the "inner structure" of change. The primitive act of "seeing" techno-scientific processes at work seems to have been literally swept up into this art object and reproduced as a taut and highly delicate series of "meditations" on the structure of experience. Tascona's imagination thus becomes a *creative mediation* between the natural and industrial landscape and the student of his work. This is the painter who can "see" the invisible "surface tensions" as process: in bodily chemistry, in the physical landscape, in industrial processes.

For example, many Tascona paintings during the 1960's use sculptured bas relief effects obtained through the building up of surfaces around carefully placed tapes, a practice that Tascona continues to present in his more hard-edged geometrical work. The origin of this technique *as practice* belongs to his experience in the Air Canada workshops. The source of the sculptures painted line *as idea* in white has other implications. Apparently producing sculptured two-dimensional works of abstraction in accordance with the modernist distrust of three dimensionalty in the first (late sixties) phase of his native style, still in fact, stayed close to the landscape, *but it was landscape viewed from above.* The influence — and it was an unconscious one — came from flying over the Manitoba landscape at relatively low altitudes (an experience we can still undertake to produce sights that are uncannily like a series of Tascona painting of this period). Between 1956-71 while he was with Air Canada, Tascona flew regularly on airline passes as well as privately. On these occasions he absorbed and appropriated the landscape which then emerged in two forms of painting: the textures, organic works of the early sixties which capture the Pre-Cambrian north of Manitoba and Western Ontario; and the more geometrical works of sculptured fields, rivers, roads and air strips of the Manitoba plains landscape seen from above which he produced in the latter half of the 1960's. These phases were by way of a preparation for his entry into the structures of

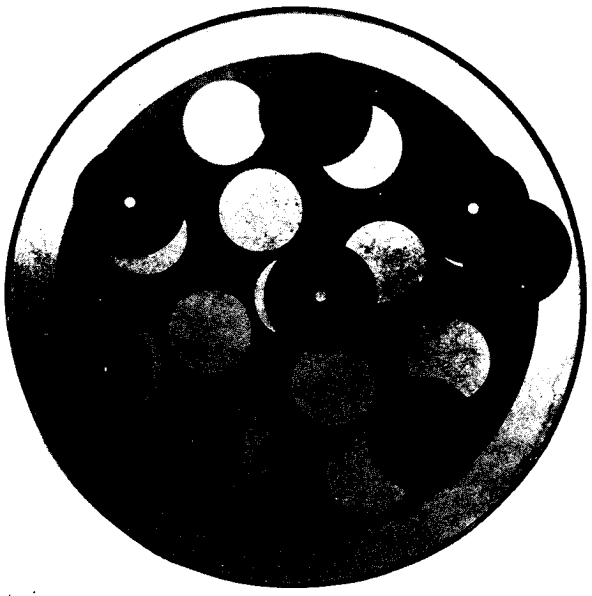
things as processes which brought with it an upward and joyous shift in colour value.

Tascona's ability to experience technology as a matter of the "dynamics of controlled precision" finds no more elegant depiction than in his silkscreen print, *Re-entry*. At first, this work captures our attention as a visual representation of space flight. Tascona strips away any suggestion of heroic individualism through his abstract, non-figurative approach. On the basis of his experience in the aero-space industry, he realised that contemporary technology can only be a collective effort and therefore has no room for heroic individualism. Thus, the controlled precision of the lines points to the precise technology and collective labour that alone made space flight possible. And, as an artist of "surface tensions", Tascona sets the colours and lines of *Re-entry* in opposition to one another. The red symbolized the heat of re-entry and the double layer of red in a downward direction suggests the heat shield and capsule respectively. Tascona's horizontal and vertical lines set in tension against each other recall the jet directional guidance system of the space capsules. Rather than individual heroic action, we have very carefully calculated and precise collective *process* at work here.

The recovery of the promise of technology begins with a very different way of seeing mechanics and engineering. Tascona says: "there's beauty in mechanics, and there's beauty in engineering. Everything depends on the applications of the creative imagination." For him, "When you are casting in resin you can see the transitions taking place, and you can see the transformations. You can actually see the transformations from a liquid to a solid". He always works towards the "crescendo", for as he says: "You can also watch things pyramid. You watch them — you watch them *actually reach a peak*, they become very empirical. They have to crest! It's the order I'm interested in, and everything has an order."[18]

Interiors perfectly illustrates the "order" evinced by Tascona. We find at work here a dynamic ecological relationship between the artist and his technical creation; and then, by implication, between *Interiors* and ourselves. What appears to be a serene, placid production reveals itself to be, at any moment, the focus of rapidly changing relationships. There is, at first, the purely experimental relationship between the artist and his product. Tascona says of casting in resin: "I actually work backwards to my end result. I have to build up that layer on layer and tension on tension. I never get away from the tension part. There's always anger there and hidden energy".[19] And further: "It's a very personal thing ... You're always riding the edge ... You're operating on that border line which is interesting".[20] What do we have here, then, but the *method* of involvement in depth and total participation? and no distinction emerges between Tascona's experimental attitude towards art and his personal life. Most strikingly, his verbal comments

during interviews indicate a deep continuity between bodily experience, daily life and artistic creation. Thus, Tascona moves continuously from an analysis of underlying chemical processes of change to comments on his own "bodily chemistry", from the "transitions that take place in this country" to transitions in mobiles as they filter light at different points of the day. As he remarks: "You can leave the house, go for your walk and by the time you get back the temperature may have dropped thirty degrees or gone up thirty degrees or fifty. And this is the kind of change that I really enjoy, because it does something to my bodily chemistry and (as soon as that happens) it comes out in my work".[21]



D: Tascona, *Interiors*

We can draw another side to *Interiors* when we viewed it as a perfect model of ecology. Tascona insists that in dealing with the environment, he wants to see transitions taking place: "I deal with light. I want to see something change; I want to change the whole mood, the whole concept of structure, by adding something in it that doesn't take away from the structure". By bringing nature (in the form of the play of light on the hanging sphere), art mediates between nature and building as technology. The success of *Interiors* as technology can be attributed precisely to the fact that it serves as a creative and unobtrusive mediation between structure (the building) and nature (the changing rays of exterior sunlight on the resin). *Interior* thus always changes! Depending upon the time of day or night (and thus the disappearance or reappearance of the sun) and the location (state

of attention) of the viewer, *Interiors* undergoes a continuous transformation, almost in an organic harmony with the tempo of human and natural activity. *Interiors* gives to nature that which is nature's and to technology that which is technology's. It accommodates the biologically and physically given to the socially created and made. This process makes Tascona the creator, the embodiment of a technological humanism.

Technological Realism

A third, powerful perspective on technology in the Manitoba vision we can call the artistic vision of technological realism. This expression of the visual imagination — the relationship of technology, landscape, and society — situates itself midway between the poles of lament (technological dependency) and utopia (technological humanism). If Warkov provides a series of haunting images of the tragic aspect of modern technology, and if Tascona explores the prospects for creative freedom in the development of a new approach to understanding technology, then technological realism exists as a dynamic synthesis of these contrasting perspectives on technology. As a "way of seeing" technology the realist perspective shares fully in the lament for the suppression of historical traditions by the ruthless imposition of the culture and economy of advanced technological society. Its psychological force produces initially a profound and overwhelming impression of *despair*. But technological realism also refers to a dynamic meeting in the artistic imagination of past and future, domination and freedom, resignation and creation. So just at the moment that it threatens to dissolve into a paralyzing sense of moral grief for that which has been lost in the coming-to-be of technological society, at that precise instant it gets suddenly pulled into the future, and hope, by the promise of an *emancipatory* technology. The peculiar agony, and certainly the source of the great creativity, of technological realism is that it is a product of an ongoing struggle between the "warring" perspectives of technology as domination and freedom. In the artistic vision of technological realism we suddenly move into something entirely new and unpredictable! At any moment, the realist perspective exists as the forward edge of the continuing "reconciliation" in the Canadian discourse between the extremes of utopia (*cultural* imagination) and dependency (*historical* imagination). Technological realism might, in fact, be interpreted as an almost literal, psychological read-out of the Canadian mind, on where we stand as a political community between the poles of domination and emancipation, between instrumentalism and finalism. This troubled artistic perspective becomes a controversial and brilliant record of the "thinking out" in Canadian society of the relationship between technology and civilisation.

TECHNOLOGY AND ART

Two Manitoba artists exemplify the perspective of technological realism: Don Proch and Ivan Eyre.

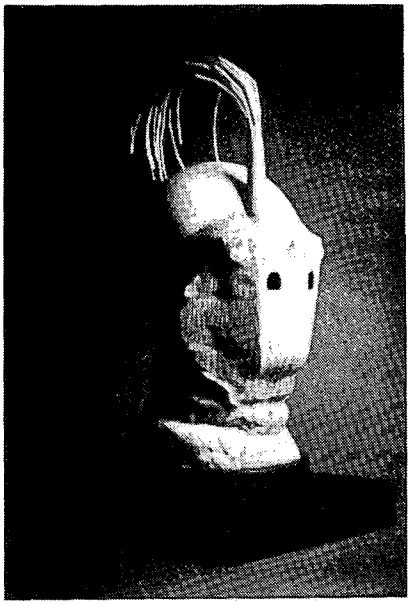
Proch has pioneered the use of the *mask* to express the paradoxical and ambivalent interplay of technology and the prairie landscape. Not incidental to understanding the *method* of Proch's realism is the incipiently populist political-social basis of that method which we find as the Ophthalmia Company collection. Since his first, major exhibition in Winnipeg in the early seventies, Proch has worked whenever possible with a group of friends and relatives who band together as The Ophthalmia Company of Inglis, Manitoba. Ophthalmia is not a legal corporation, but in the genuine populist sense a community of friends held together by the pioneer values of solidarity and mutual self-help. Ophthalmia itself means *inflammation of the eye or its appendages*. In the vast, new world opened up by Proch's imagination, everything becomes ophthalmia, or eye irritation. Proch commonly takes familiar scenes, objects, concepts and distorts them in order (a) to break the patterns of habit that prevent us from seeing social reality clearly or (b) to force us to "see" experience so as to create a proper remembrance of the past (rural) even as it is brought under the influence (technological and urban) of the present. In fact, the Ophthalmia Company inflames the eye of the viewer only to shift his mechanisms of perception, to transform the way in which he actually "looks" at the world. Proch insists that we *learn* anew how to look directly at our own technological reality; and, specifically, at the complex relationship among technique, community and space. As Proch says of his artistic productions: "I work high-technology in with some remnants of the past: fibre optics, laser beams, together with bones".[24] In his work, the future (of high-technology) rubs against the past (the remembrance of the Aessippi experience); an utopia of formal beauty grates against the sheer despair of contents. Everything functions to express the "tension" in society between past and future. But Proch does not emerge as the artist of either lament or of utopia: his singular imagination fuses despair and fascination into a new vision of the human situation. He is, in fact, the "Innis" of Canadian art: the artist who, however, unconsciously, has expressed in the language of visual art the essential insight achieved by Harold Innis in *Empire and Communications*. In that work, Innis says we must view the history of technology as coeval with the unfolding of western civilisation. And it has been in the specific sense that the inhabitants western civilisation have always experienced technology as a warring struggle between "centrifugal and centripetal forces", between time and space. Innis tells us that "Concentration on a medium of communication implies a bias in the cultural development of the civilisation concerned either towards an emphasis on space and political organisation or towards an emphasis on time and religious organisation".[25] All of Proch's works, in

some measure, express an eloquent and searing tension between time and space, between power and remembrance, in the meeting of modern technology and the prairie landscape. And what makes Proch the authentic artist of the "New World" is that, in his work, everything hangs in balance, nothing has been settled. The protracted struggle over the fate of technology, whether it will be an emancipatory experience or an instrument of domination, remains to be decided.

There is always a lightning quick reversal in Proch's work. He shows us that the interplay of technology and landscape contains contradictory possibilities, and this simultaneously. All depends on our ability to see clearly, without flinching, technological dependency, and to have the courage to act. In this regard, Proch emerges very much as existentialist in the tradition of the French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre insisted that human freedom begins with the understanding that while we always remain *implicated* in the human situation, the crucial task of free human beings must be to attempt to transcend their situation, to become the creative agents rather than the dupes of history. In the end, individual Canadians become the wild cards, the undecided fate, in the technological experience.

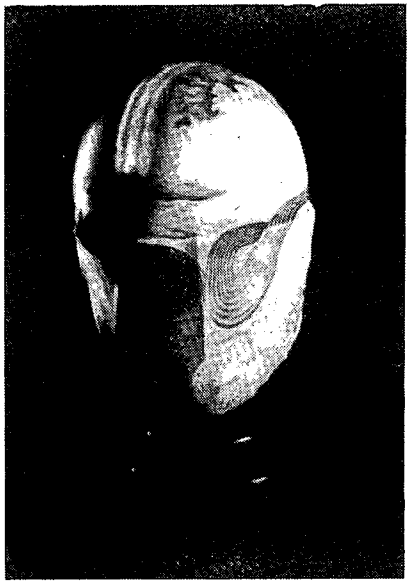
We can catch something of this ambivalence in Proch's understanding of technology in his use of the *mask* as a way of representing artistically the struggle in the prairie experience between tradition and technocracy, between time and space. Proch's series of masks perfectly express the warring possibilities in the technological experience. On the one hand, the masks (*Prairie Plough Mask, Manitoba Mining Mask, Chicken Bone Mask*) offer as starkly a realistic, as grisly an image as could be found of the overwhelming effect of technocracy in *reworking* the landscape of nature and the human mind. To the extent that what appears on the outside of the mask signifies what the mind sees from the inside, we come as close as possible to what the Canadian thinker, Edmund Carpenter, warned would be the human fate when confronted with the power of technology: "They became what they beheld".[26] Proch's masks visually represent the impact of the industrial technology "massaging" the human brain, and suppressing both organic nature and human imagination. They are almost *suffocating* images of life in contemporary society. Proch thus provides nothing less than a deep, psychological insight into the functioning of modern technology. The loss of that which is most precious in human experience (Proch speaks always of the need for "remembrance") seems almost irrecoverable. Death lurks everywhere within Proch's work: the mining shafts as "eyes" in *Manitoba Mining Mask*; the hands sticking out of the muskeg in *Walking Plow*; the skull image in *Prairie Plough Mask*.

But the search for the source of the tension lead us to another meaning of the masks. When Adele Freedman (*Saturday Night*) heads an article with the words "Don Proch is the shaman of prairie art", she does so because the



E: Proch, *Manitoba Mining Mask*

mask has a symbolic, mythological meaning. This shamanistic quality of the mask has been described eloquently by Karyn Allen in her review of Proch's contribution to an important exhibit: *The Winnipeg Perspective 1981 — RITUAL*:

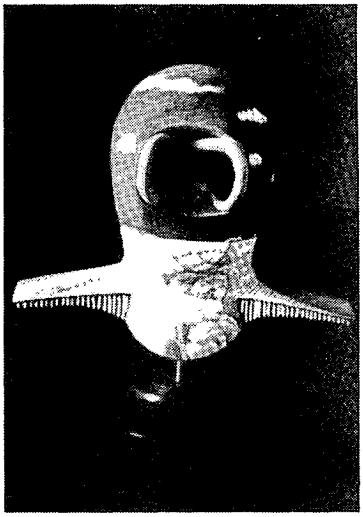


F: Proch, *Rainbow Mask*

> The donning of the mask as a means of summoning an absent spirit is a central practice of shamanistic rites. The ritual implication is that, by the wearing of the mask, one exchanges identities with the spirit implied by the mask's symbols and images. In several of "Proch's own masks there is an implied interchange, or fusion, between the human and imagistic elements. In other of his masks, the shamanistic notion of the mask as protection from the evil spirits might be inferred. The *Manitoba Mining Mask* is an obvious example.[27]

Proch's masks, in a profound sense, summon "forth ... the spirit of the land"[28] Proch, in fact, makes the exchange of identities implied by the "donning of the mask" explicit when he describes the "clouds as brains" and emphasises that there is always "a relationship to the eyes".[29] "The idea of the landscape on the head just came from a vision of the prairies where you relate to it at eye level. It's almost like 360 degree peripheral vision, so that even though you are looking at one area you have a sense of what's around you and behind you. It's much the same as turning on a turntable, except the inverse of that".[30] The mask serves the purpose of "rethinking" the relationship between human purpose (technology) and environment in the prairie experience. Here technology itself (the *human presence* in reworking the land) becomes the *third dimension* of the prairie environment. Proch says: "I consider my pieces three dimensional drawings. Drawing the landscape in three dimensions is again a way of being aware totally of your environment or of trying to get as close to it as you can".[31] If Proch can correctly be called "the shaman of prairie art", then, it is because in meditating on the dialectical interplay (the "fusion" of identities) between the environment and technology, he has actually articulated a new language of seeing. Proch masks, by forcing us to become "aware totally" of the environment, mark also the beginning of along, human recovery. They suggest that the environment (*Inglis View Mask, Rainbow Mask, Prairie Nude*) works its effects silently, but relentlessly, by providing its inhabitants with a different way of seeing. And by seeking to make us aware of the impact of industrial technologies in "screening off" the environment, Proch appeals to the spirit of the land itself for assistance in the delicate process of "healing damaged human personalities. Ultimately, Proch's work has an important *therapeutic* value.

It's the very same with the artistic imagination of Ivan Eyre. This Canadian artist has created a series of mythological painting of post-modern society (*Moos-O-Men, Birdmen*) which seem almost unspeakable because they force to the surface of our consciousness the deep archetypes at work in technocratic society. In much the same way as Freud said of Leonardo da



G: Proch, *Night Landing*

Vinci, we might remark of Eyre that he woke "to find himself in the middle of the nightmare that he thought he was only dreaming".[32] Eyre says, in fact, of his "mythological" paintings that their dominant themes move and play at the edge of "distant madnesses". "They (distant madnesses) usually occur on the horizon line out of my touch, out of my reach, which is the way I see violence as never having happened to me directly, but as always out there somewhere".[33] The painter of "distant madnesses", Eyre expresses his perspective on technology in a different language of painting from that of Proch's. But, we can see the artistic visions of Proch and Eyre to be similar to the extent that both disclose a nightmarish account of modern society, a society — in its technocratic dimension — which they reveal to be ghoulish, demonic, and a matter of dead souls. Eyre's work compels us to see, perhaps for the first time, the *dark side* of technocratic society. While Proch has recourse to the rich imagery of the mask as a way of shattering normal vision; Eyre's imagination has roots in the language of archetypes. He introduces us to a dream-like state which forces us further and further back in time, always in search of the deep, and monstrous, symbolism released by technocratic society. Eyre says of the *method* of his strictly mythological paintings: "Each viewpoint tends to live in a long, horizontal rectangle; and as one moves from one demarcation line to the next, *one tends to shift from one time sequence to another as you move up the canvas*". His paintings evince an almost single-minded fascination with the archetypes of modern experience. This leads Eyre to state his main concern, which run through the landscape and mythological works, to be the "basic form irrespective of

subject".[34] While Proch employs the mask as a way of evoking the "dual landscape" inherent in the meeting of technology/nature in the prairie environment, Eyre deals in the more ambiguous language of "metamorphosis". His works act as an "early warning system" which states explicitly that in equating human freedom with the release of the "dynamic energies" of technology, we may have, however inadvertently, released demons beyond our control. The ancient myth of Prometheus works behind Eyre's imagination. His paintings hint, over and over, that we have yet to pay the price for our technological domination of nature. The technoscope has allowed us to be promethean, or god-like, in the sense of extending, almost without limits, our control over human and non-human nature. But now, just as the Canadian theorist of technology, Eric Havelock, said in his classic study, *The Myth of Prometheus*, the other side of the "dream" of prometheus reveals itself. The dark side of the promethean dream, the "will to technology", shows itself to contain the seeds of destruction. The future doom of society motivated by an unlimited urge to mastery lay hidden and already foretold in its past. The "metamorphosis" (*Moos-O-Men, Birdmen*), a constant theme of Eyre's imagination, only says that a sure and certain doom awaits those civilisations which disregard the limits of tolerance of social and non-social nature.

Eyre becomes a technological realist because, like Proch, his work evinces a profound ambivalence. In Proch's work, the oscillation between technological humanism and technological dependency, appears most strikingly in the vast difference of themes between the threatened landscape of *Manitoba Mining Mask* and the organic unity of *Rainbow Nude* and the unsettling effect of *Night Landing*. In Eyre's imagination, the warring struggle between the contrasting impulses to utopia and dependency is even more striking. It's the clash of perspectives between the "mythological" paintings and the almost "mystical" painting of *Hill Mist* or *Sky Pass*. The sharp transition in Eyre's vision between the nightmare of the past (*Moos-O-Men, Birdmen*) and the utopia of the spirit (*Sky Pass*) resembles the earlier work of another Canadian painter, Lawren Harris. Like Eyre, Harris's work also moved between an earlier phase of naturalism (the artistic analogue of dependency) and a later stage of mystical (idealistic) paintings, guided by the religious humanism of theosophy.

The genius of Eyre lies in his ability to harmonise the geometric, "cool" lines of abstraction (the *sine qua non* of the technological experience) and the organic flow of the natural landscape. His paintings suggest that human intervention (technique) in the environment should work, not to produce a boring flatness of effect, but a paradise of "high contrasts". This is most explicit in *Sky Pass*. Of this painting, Eyre has said that here is a "contrast

H: Eyre, *Birdmen*

and conflict in the processes which make for a kind of drama in it. The trapezoid embodies a work that the surrounding space can't really embody".[35] We might say, that for Eyre, the relationship between technology and nature should always have something about it that resembles the relationship between art and experience. "They are separate realities. And as soon as we begin to confuse art experience with our everyday life, then I feel less enchanted with it. I'm not as interested".[36] The secret of Eyre's imagination is his wonderful capacity to take us by surprise; to teach us, in effect the preciousness of a world view which works by "creating surprises", "foils", in order to provide another, perhaps richer, perspective on nature and life. And so, *Sky Pass* takes us by surprise; it draws out the magisterial quality of the mountain landscape by introducing the "high contrast" of the space-like trapezoid. "The impetus (for the trapezoid) had to do with a sensation I had while travelling through the mountains; of imagining my spirit to be running free through the valley. (It's) another way of moving through that space, perhaps opposite to the lateral movements that are going on in the rest of the painting. It's a way of getting up and through that central area in, dare I say, a spiritual or elevated state".[37]

To the extent that the recovery of a *substantive*, as opposed to instrumental, approach to technology depends upon a new way of thinking about the complex relationship of nature, community, and technique, then Eyre is also

instructive in developing an alternative "language of technology". What Eyre has to say about the language of painting applies directly to rethinking the fundamentals of the technology experience. Eyre argues, and this very eloquently, that "in the painting, intellect without feeling is meaningless. All the human emotions have to be within the language of painting".[38] The "purpose" of painting is neither to submerge itself in life (thus Eyre says

G: Eyre, *Sky Pass*

that art and life are different) nor is it to remain detached from "social problems". For Eyre, painting should remain *abstract* in the precise sense that "the abstract mind is the mind moving at full tilt".[39] And a mind "functioning at full tilt" is one which fuses imagination and environment in such a way as "to build something that in some ways suggests the future". Eyre seeks a "language of painting" which, in an entirely realistic fashion, draws out the radiant energy of the human being.[40]

> I don't think of a human being as a silhouette with a head on top, two arms, a torso in the middle with two legs. I see it as something far more complicated and complex and unknowable.
> Almost an energy system with changing viewpoints, where the spaces outside the figure are invited into the interior as a real physical force, rather than letting the figure be the reality and the space beyond simply the background.[41]

In Eyre's viewpoint, the language of painting aims at grasping the inner structure of society, of individual human reality, *by working its way inside them*. The painter is most creative when he is isolated *within* society, not

outside of it. And thus, the "language of painting" works it effects as a creative agency within society by insisting on the dynamic "symmetry" of human experience. "(It's like) borders within borders, and boxes within boxes, where there is a kind of core; and things fold out from that (core) or come in again: like a flower, opening and closing".[42]

Now, Eyre's approach to painting as a way of blasting through ideologies and of uncovering a "multitude of perspectives" within the human situation, also provides a vital key to the creation of a new language of technology. If, finally, George Grant is correct in saying the "technique is ourselves", then, perhaps, we have to rethink technique in the creative imagery of Canadian artists. By implication, Eyre would tell us that a *substantive* understanding of technology would begin by insisting that social productions set in motion a dynamic *process* of self-transcendence and self-fulfillment. A worthwhile technology would be like the trapezoid in *Sky Pass*: it would express in dynamic *form* the inner beauty of life and nature, while providing, at the same time, a "high contrast" with the present human predicament. It would be realistic in the sense of speaking to *real* human needs; and, simultaneously, it would make demands on the human imagination. Like a painting which draws together the pure "mental formations" of the intellect with almost primitive human feelings, technique would represent a "dynamic synthesis" of morality, intellect, economy, and feeling. And the ultimate objective of a *substantive* technology? If Eyre is correct, it might, in fact, be erroneous to think in terms of an extrinsic end for technology which would stand apart from actual, *lived* experience. Technology might better be rethought as a creative process, each phase of which would be intended to amplify the "radiant energies" of human beings and to connect again to an inner harmony of structure and history between the land and its people.

The Mirror of Technology

Considered not as a static event but as a creative process, the technological experience would fulfil the promise *and* the challenge inherent in the works of Proch and Eyre. A creative technology would explode closed ideological systems and provide for the generation of a "multitude of perspectives" on the human situation. And the means towards the ideal of technology as a creative process? Nothing other, of course, than the challenge of rethinking the technological experience from the dynamic perspective of the "language of painting". It may be that Proch and Eyre have shown us more than the "mirror of technology"; their ambiguity, what makes their work fascinating, is precisely that there is also an *inner curvature* in the mirror of technology. It's not just a matter of living in a transitional age in which everything is

easily divisible into past and future, and into remembrance and possibility. It is now the human fate to live in a fully ambiguous and contradictory age: an age in which the historical lament of Esther Warkov can exist simultaneously with the dynamic utopia of Tony Tascona for the simple reason that *both are true simultaneously*. If "technique is ourselves" then it is also the human fate that we witness being played out in the mirror of technology. And, to the extent that we stand with Eyre in a nightmarish world which is literally flying apart at the seams, a world in which the "centre can no longer hold" and, with Proch, on the forward edge of a new human possibility: well, to the extent that *contradiction* is our fate, then everything depends, as it always has and ever will, on the human courage to think the world anew in the ambivalent language of painting.

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H: Eyre, *Birdmen*
I: Eyre, *Sky Pass*

Notes

For a more elaborate description of the Canadian discourse on technology, see Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant*, St. Martin's Press: New York, 1985/ New World Perspectives: Montréal, 1984. For a more intensive description of the artistic productions of six contemporary Manitoba artists, see Kenneth J. Hughes, *Manitoba Art Monographs*, Winnipeg, 1982.

This article is also being published in French translation ("*Technologie et art émancipatoire: la vision manitobaine*") in *Sociologie et Société*, Université de Montréal (Winter, 1986).

The interviews with Tony Tascona, Esther Warkov, Don Proch and Ivan Eyre were conducted by TV Ontario, and used as background material for the development of a series on Canadian artists titled *Visions* (1983).

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
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6. Esther Warkov, "Feature Interview", *Arts Manitoba*, Volume 2, Number 1, (Fall, 1982), p. 11.
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9. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, New York: Viking Press, 1973.
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12. Kenneth J. Hughes, *Manitoba Art Monographs*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, p. 39.
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14. Ester Warkov, loc. cit., note 6, p. 12.
15. Tascona, *Visions* interview, pp. 1-2.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
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19. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
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ESCAPING EXTINCTION: CULTURAL DEFENCE OF AN UNDEFENDED BORDER*

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Much has been written, and even more said, about what constitutes the Canadian character, what identifies the quintessential Canadian. A definitive answer continues to elude us, but two features clearly emerge as dominant elements in the make-up of both French- and English-speaking members of our family: we are constantly brooding over who we are, what gives us our Canadian character, and what makes us different from other nationals. Most of the latter never think about such things or take the answers for granted. Secondly, we share a keen awareness of, interest in, and concern with all things American, that is, with the U.S.A. Popular culture, sports, politics, even tourist attractions south of the border are part of the mental map of most Canadians and are frequently as important to us, if not more so, than corresponding indigenous realities. Inside every Canadian, whether she or he knows it or not, there is, in fact, an American. The magnitude and effect of this American presence in us all varies considerably from person to person, but it is ubiquitous and inescapable.

The economic dependence of Canada on the United States only exacerbates this state of affairs. Economic issues usually arouse the greatest interest and controversy; they are viewed from a variety of perspectives, depending on current problems and fashions. Right now, the debate about sectorial free trade is privileged, and it is an awesome matter, to be sure. But other aspects of our uneasily shared and separated lives are equally important. I shall deal with one of these and shall take a leaf out of the economists' book by also adopting a sectorial approach. The sector explored in this lecture is our culture and our cultural relations, particularly one manifestation of them.

ESCAPING EXTINCTION

You may think that the wording of my title — "Escaping Extinction" — is a trifle hysterical and that to link Canadians, even if only potentially, to the dinosaur, the passenger pigeon, or the dodo ignores the fact that there is a dance or two left in us yet. The greatest threat to Canada lies in the possibility (some might even say "probability") that, as the result of the strong presence of American influences, our cultural development may be stunted. As I have suggested, U.S. styles, ideas and products are never far away. There is, alas, a well-grounded fear that as a consequence, our perceptions, values, ideas and priorities will become so dominated by those of our neighbours that the distinctiveness of Canada will, to all intents and purposes, vanish. The danger is greater with respect to anglophones than francophones, but even the latter have cause for alarm.

Canada's cultural vulnerability vis-à-vis the U.S. is manifest everywhere. Book publishing, the periodical press, film production and distribution, comic books, the record industry, theatre, dance, popular and so-called classical music — all have been dominated by foreign influences in Canada. The indigenous product has had an exceedingly hard time getting started and surviving. This was so, in English Canada at least, largely because of the absence of a suitable native infrastructure and of an indigenous tradition, and because of the easy accessibility of, first, British cultural goods, and later, U.S. counterparts. The facts are only too well known, even if the solutions do not always leap readily to the mind.

No form of cultural activity so clearly displays Canada's cultural dilemmas, and their implications for Canadian-American relations, as the field of communications. This critical and ever more important area is immensely complex. It encompasses such diverse aspects as trans-border data flows, the transnational character of satellite footprints, the allocation of scarce slots for communications birds in the geostationary orbit, and the implications of one country's being dependent on another with respect to computer hardware and software. More important still, it embraces the field of broadcasting.

All of broadcasting, but television in particular, has the most far-reaching effect on the minds of individuals and therefore on the nature of human society. TV is by far the most popular of all the media, engaging, on the average, the attention of Canadians for more than three hours a day. Children spend more time before the little screen than in the presence of teachers. Dominant perceptions of ourselves, of others, of this country and its neighbours, of desirable life-styles, of national and world affairs, of different ethnic, religious, and social groups, of the diverse regions at home and abroad — perceptions of all these things are profoundly influenced by the programming available and watched on television. No wonder then that this medium is a uniquely powerful force in the socialization of individuals and in the formation of collective attitudes, values and aspirations.

And television is, as we all know, predominantly, even overwhelmingly American. This fact is of absolutely central significance in the state and development not only of Canada's culture but also of the country's perception of, and relations with, the United States. It is, therefore, imperative that we understand fully why we are so dependent on the United States and what we can do to ensure that the electronic media serve the best individual and collective interests of Canadians.

There are at least six major factors explaining why Canada is so vulnerable to the television world of the U.S.

First, the physical proximity of so many Canadians to the U.S. border places a vast majority of the population within the reception area of American signals with the aid of only a cheap rooftop antenna. New technologies, particularly cable, and more recently satellites, have placed almost the whole of the country within reach of American programming.

Secondly, eighty per cent of Canadians speak English and therefore have no problem in savouring the consumer culture produced south of the border.

Thirdly, the American entertainment industry is the most vital and vivacious in the world. Growing largely out of the enormously successful and widely applauded American film industry, television programs and stars found easy acceptance everywhere. American television has from the beginning and until the advent of PBS in the late 'sixties been conceived as a commercial medium whose major role is to deliver audiences to advertisers. The content has therefore been designed, and with consummate skill, to appeal to the larges possible audiences. While this may leave something to be desired aesthetically, or in terms of the educational potential of the medium, it has unquestionably produced immensely popular shows. The format and type of drama originated by the American entertainment industry have in the most recent era created a new universal art form which is claiming something close to a world-wide audience. Successful genres of drama as typified by *Dallas*, for example, have not only led to imitations domestically and massive sales in scores of countries, but are actually being copied in communities which in no way resemble the United States. America, having given us the western, has now presented the world with a vastly popular new theatrical form claiming widespread acceptance.

The fourth cause of Canada's vulnerability to U.S. television is probably the most telling. It concerns the economics of television programming and particularly of drama production. It costs about one million dollars to produce a one-hour show like *Dallas*. American networks can afford this expense because it can be amortized in their vast and rich domestic market. Having paid for themselves at home, these programs can then be offered to foreign, including Canadian, purchasers for from three to six per cent of their cost (Juneau). Although the money spent on a program certainly does

not guarantee its quality, it is impossible to present consistently shows comparable to the best American dramas without spending very large sums on them. But the size of the Canadian market does not permit the same investment in indigenous productions as is possible in the States. Even the CBC can only afford to offer its English viewers less than two hours of original Canadian drama a week. The rest of the time the insatiable hunger for entertainment of our audiences can only be met from foreign sources or old stock.

As for the private broadcasters, their involvement in the production of Canadian drama is insignificant. One reason is obvious: they can acquire the rights to wildly popular American shows for very much less than the cost of comparable Canadian ones. It therefore makes very little *economic* sense for commercial broadcasters to try to program Canadian dramas.

The importance of this matter cannot be exaggerated. Fifty per cent of Canadian viewing hours are devoted to drama, but only four per cent of the available shows in this category are Canadian. Films, soap operas, sit-coms and TV plays are at least as important in influencing perceptions and values as public affairs, and yet the menu offered our viewers in this most popular type of programming is, in part because of the facts I just described, almost totally foreign.

Historical antecedents are also responsible for the strong presence in Canadian homes of American programs. They are the fifth factor we need to note. Television made its way south of the forty-ninth parallel in the 1940s. "The year 1948 is commonly accepted as the turning point when TV emerged as a mass medium and the U.S. networks changed their emphasis from radio to television." (Peers, *C in C*, 20) Canada only authorized the new medium in 1952, after the release of the Report of the Massey Commission. In the first instance, service was provided only by the CBC and its affiliates, but in the early 'sixties CTV was licensed and provided an alternative source of programs in many parts of the country. Television broadcasting was, of course, regulated in hopes that the broadcasting system would, in the words of the 1958 Broadcasting Act, be "basically Canadian in content and character."

Viewers who bought sets before the inauguration of the CBC's service were able to watch U.S. shows and this, in a sense, established expectations and patterns which could not be ignored later. Both the CBC and the private broadcasters realized that they would only win and hold viewers, so many of whom could receive signals from abroad, if they themselves offered many of the most popular American programs; the appetite for these therefore became deeply ingrained. Free marketeers argue that in commercial broadcasting it is the viewers' tastes which determine programming. In fact, of course, the reverse normally occurs. The shows available shape tastes, and

in our case it was essentially American television fare which had formed the preferences of Canadian audiences.

This brings me to the last factor to be noted accounting for our vulnerability to American cultural influences. It would be foolish to ascribe the popularity of entertainment provided by CBS, NBC, ABC or PBS to its being crammed down reluctant Canadian throats. On the contrary, a great many Canadians have an avid thirst for most things American and feel perfectly at home being surrounded by them. This applies not only to anglophones but also to francophones, as their mass annual exodus to Florida, among other things, shows. The fact that these sentiments are induced in part by the hype emanating from Hollywood and the U.S. entertainment industry makes the Canadian empathy no less genuinely felt.

Although we have inadequate evidence to permit firm assertions, it looks as if the affinity for our neighbour's culture is not shared equally among all groups of Canadians. A mass-élite dichotomy is evident, with the better educated, higher-income groups being more sensitive to Canadian-American cultural differences and more interested in indigenous cultural products. One consequence of this phenomenon is that the more low-brow an American cultural activity, the wider its appeal in Canada. Similarly, it is largely Canadians with middle- and upper-class backgrounds and with middle- and highbrow tastes who are concerned with the health and viability of Canadian culture. A nationalist foreign cultural policy is therefore more likely to appeal to a minority of the population.

Canadians not only like American programs; they also believe that they are entitled to have full access to them. This strongly held view compelled the CRTC to enable Canadian cable systems to carry the programs of American stations, and it has weakened the government's will to block the widespread pirating of American shows carried on satellites. Not only individuals and companies but also municipalities, sometimes supported by Members of Parliament and provincial governments, have resorted to the unauthorized reception of U.S. signals, many of which are meant to be available only to bona fide subscribers.

The result of being so exposed to other people's electronic offerings is that it is extremely difficult for our own programs to be made and to be aired. Many of our most gifted writers, performers and technicians are consequently forced to find work abroad where they cannot but end up by reflecting the realities and perspectives of another country. Under these circumstances it becomes extremely difficult for very large numbers of Canadians to know the highly textured and varied character of their own land and to allow their imaginations to roam at home rather than abroad. This makes it hard not only to recognize one's own national interest but also to pursue it. American popular culture, and particularly television, are thus

an immense Trojan horse enabling foreign concerns and priorities to infiltrate our very minds and beings.

Lest that martial metaphor of the Trojan horse give rise to a misunderstanding, I hasten to add that the nationalist, pro-Canadian stance espoused here in no way reflects an anti-American sentiment. Although the overall quality of American television may not fully satisfy, many of its programs are good. In any event, Canadians should not be deprived of the opportunity of watching whatever they please from abroad so long as a reasonable chance is provided for their own shows to be available. This is the problem: given the potent forces favouring the foreign product and the latter's plentiful supply, what can be done to create conditions in which Canadians can make genuine choices between foreign and domestic offerings? When only four per cent of drama available is Canadian, such a choice does simply not exist.

Canadian policy planners laboured hard and long in an effort to find a solution to the dilemma. No less than six Royal Commissions and special committees of inquiry, as well as seemingly endless Parliamentary probings, have struggled with the problem, and we are still without a sure-fire remedy.

The issue has both domestic and international dimensions. Students of international affairs now draw important distinctions between the field of *international* relations, which focuses on the interaction between states speaking through their governments, and *transnational* relations, which deal with all manner of individual, corporate, and other contacts across boundaries. Our broadcasting conundrum has both transnational and international aspects, as well as purely domestic elements. To examine it is, in fact, a nearly perfect means of exploring the perspectives the two countries adopt towards each other, since it touches on virtually every facet of their political, social, economic and cultural characteristics and how these affect the relations between them. Canadian broadcasting policy is, in other words, and contrary to what one might at first surmise, a singularly suitable and apposite subject to be tackled in a series of lectures on Canada's Perspective on the U.S.A.

The centrepiece of Canada's broadcast policy has always been an Act of Parliament. The most recent version, that of 1968, as amended several times since, contains a description of what the Canadian broadcasting system should be. It states unequivocally that radio frequencies are public property and hence implies that they should be used in a manner promoting the public interest. The Act nevertheless recognizes that Canadian broadcasting undertakings constitute one system, comprised of both public and private elements. This system, it is asserted, should be owned and controlled by Canadians "so as to safeguard, enrich and strengthen the cultural, political,

social and economic fabric of Canada." Another clause specifies that programming should use predominantly Canadian creative and other resources. The Act also provides for two of the major actors on the broadcasting scene: a nationally owned broadcasting corporation (the CBC) and "a single independent public authority" (the CRTC) which is to regulate and supervise the system according to the objectives enunciated in the Act.

Underlying these and many other provisions is the assumption that broadcasting should not respond merely to the dictates of the market but that it should serve certain national interests, some of them related to the strengthening of a sense of Canadian nationality and identity. This concern with community goals rather than the profit motive (substantially at variance with the American pattern) is also reflected in the Act's specifying that when a conflict emerges between the private and public elements, it shall be resolved in the public interest "but paramount consideration shall be given to the objectives of the national broadcasting service."

The Act thus essentially accomplished three things: it set the goals of the Canadian broadcasting system (in greater detail than is suggested by my summary); it provided the objectives and mandate of the CBC; and it created a powerful regulatory agency independent of the government of the day.

Although the relative position of the CBC had been declining in English television since the creation of the private networks, the Act reaffirmed its primary role in the system. It also charged it with special responsibilities in providing "for a continuing expression of Canadian identity." And it has certainly been the CBC which has played a key role in providing such Canadian drama as has been available. The private broadcasters for the most part tended to focus on producing news, public affairs, and sports broadcasts and some inexpensive light entertainment. In so far as TV drama is concerned, they have relied virtually exclusively on the purchase of popular American shows, a programming policy which, to a lesser extent, even the CBC itself has had to emulate.

The reasons for the CBC's recourse to American drama and such programs as *Hockey Night in Canada* are instructive. As I have already noted, one way which Canadian broadcasters have used to attract audiences is to present popular American shows. Thus, for instance, *Dallas* is brought to us by our very own public corporation. Furthermore, only part of the CBC's income is derived from government subsidies. It must cover some of its expenses from advertising revenue. This is said to have several advantages: it is an inescapable necessity in so far as the CBC's affiliates are concerned. These private stations which operate in places where the public broadcaster does not own an outlet depend for their survival on the sale of commercials. Secondly, advertising provides useful information and thus is seen by many business people and consumers as an essential service. Finally, income

derived from sources other than parliamentary votes is considered to be some protection against possible political interference.

There is, of course, also a down side. Advertising sometimes distressingly interrupts dramatic lines in a story and thus destroys its artistic effect. Many of the potentially most loyal CBC viewers were disgusted by the Corporation's use of commercials during the showing of *The Jewel in the Crown* and forsook the CBC for PBS which had scheduled the series for a later showing without interruptions. The commitment to present the lucrative sports events all too frequently compels the postponement of the *National* and the *Journal* and thus appears to interfere with what some perceive to be a main part of the CBC's mandate. Some also argue that the advertising revenue adds little to the network's independence.

From the perspective of this essay, the most intriguing aspect of the CBC's and the private broadcasters' reliance on U.S. programming is that American cultural products are, in an important way, paradoxically used to diminish the U.S.A.'s cultural influence. Viewers display considerable loyalty to the station to which they are tuned. It is therefore argued that audiences attracted to Canadian stations by U.S. programs will continue being tuned to Canadian news, sports, and other programs which are offered by the CBC because of its policies, and by many private broadcasters because of the need to live up to the CRTC's Canadian content regulations.

The CBC has another excellent reason for purveying foreign shows, sports, and all manner of other programs. The Broadcasting Act enjoins it to provide "a balanced service of information, enlightenment and entertainment for people of different ages, interests and tastes covering the whole range of programming in fair proportion." This immensely broad mandate makes it imperative that the service cover a bewildering array of productions. When it is remembered that it must do this in both of our official languages, that it operates four superb radio networks, a northern service and international shortwave agency, and that it reports Parliamentary debates via satellite, it becomes apparent that the CBC is among the world's largest and most active broadcasters.

Although like all big and aging structures the CBC has organizational problems and confronts formidable internal challenges, it has made and continues to make key contributions to the broadcasting and cultural scene in this country. This is evident at two levels: the quality of its programs is, for the most part, extremely high and its increasingly successful efforts are making Canadian programming available during the prime viewing hours. Compared to the record of the private broadcasters, its performance in this area is phenomenal.

In addition, the program sales arm of the company, CBC Enterprises, is having increasing success in selling Canadian productions abroad, including

in the U.S.A. The latter is particularly encouraging. American audiences, no doubt because of the timid and unventuresome habits of the commercial networks, have amazingly parochial tastes. Except for PBS fans, who comprise only a very small proportion of the U.S. viewing public, Americans are not attracted to foreign shows. It is well known that some Canadian films and TV plays have had to have their Canadian features, such as place and street names or the presence of Canadian banknotes, Americanized before they became acceptable to U.S. buyers. The fact that such programs as *As It Happens*, on radio, and *Seeing Things, The Wayne and Shuster Show, Empire, Inc.*, as well as other CBC productions on television are being heard or viewed abroad indicates that the CBC may be able to benefit from the growing world television market. Still, realistically, one must recognize that the successes so far have been modest and that the costs of major Canadian drama productions are not likely to be recouped through exports. We shall have to continue to a very great extent finding domestic means of paying for our own television production.

If Parliament intended the CBC to be the principal player in our broadcasting bands, then the CRTC was to be the principal conductor. It has, as the Act suggests, licensed broadcast undertakings and has supervised the overall system in an effort to ensure that the goals enunciated by Parliament are realized. Judgement of how successful it has been is by no means unanimous. Some see the regulatory agency as an overbearing ogre imposing élite tastes and unrealistic demands on a potentially enterprising but shackled industry. Others consider it to be a supine slave of the private broadcasters. On balance, it is probably fair to say that it has fought pretty tenaciously for Parliament's goal of a predominantly Canadian broadcasting system but that its efforts have often been blunted by some fundamental characteristics of the Canadian environment.

It has not been aggressive in ensuring the primacy of the CBC within the system and it has been rather lenient with respect to the Canadian content goals. Because of the staggering difficulty of defining the key terms, it has also largely avoided implementing the Act's injunction that "the programming provided by each broadcaster should be of high standard."

Still, its impact on what is available on the air has been very considerable and salutary. The insistence, in the 'seventies, that thirty per cent of the music played on AM radio be Canadian, fiercely attacked by the broadcasters, created a Canadian record industry and poses no serious problems to the licensees. The benefits to Canadian musicians, and hence to their audiences, has been enormous.

Although Canadian content regulations on television are less successful, they have nevertheless made a considerable difference to the availability of Canadian programs on our stations, particularly private ones. In essence

each broadcaster must, on the average, present Canadian programming during 60 per cent of the daily schedule and during at least half of the evening hours. The CBC is governed by more stringent requirements but has for some time exceeded these by a fairly wide margin. One result of the regulations has been that high quality news, public affairs, and sports are widely available on all Canadian stations. Variety, light entertainment, and drama, on the other hand — categories which are expensive to produce — have been woefully neglected by the private sector. With only rare exceptions, domestic children's shows have also been overlooked. To meet the Canadian content quotas, many stations have also resorted to inexpensive quizz-shows and similar "fillers," usually exhibited at low viewing times. This kind of programming and the allocation of inadequate resources to the rare production of Canadian drama have contributed to the low esteem enjoyed, by and large, by Canadian programs. Despite the indifferent reputation of domestic production in the minds of many, when good quality shows or mini-series are available, they attract very significant audiences.

It is probably no exaggeration to say that the most powerful factor in the back of the CRTC's mind has been the need to protect the Canadian element in our broadcasting system. The presence of the U.S. is therefore of major importance in the evolution of Canadian broadcasting policy. Examples abound but I shall mention only two. Knowing full well that Canadian broadcasters, particularly in the private domain, cannot produce Canadian programs unless their revenues are ensured, the Commission has defended the economic viability of its licensees whenever this was compatible with the terms of the Broadcasting Act. Thus rules were developed forcing cable systems to provide simultaneous program substitution when a U.S. and Canadian station carry the same show at the same time. Accordingly, a subscriber watching a program on an American station which is available at the same time on a Canadian channel would see the same material, including the ads, as one tuned to the Canadian source of that program. The purpose is, of course, to protect the advertising revenue of the Canadian broadcaster.

The other reason for the never absent awareness of the "U.S. factor" in Canadian broadcasting on the part of the Commission is that a majority of Canadians can, as we have noted, receive U.S. signals "off air," that is, without cable, and that to prevent Canadian cable systems from carrying U.S. stations is impossible in the current climate of opinion. Thus *too* stringent Canadian content regulations and other prescriptions giving our programming a distinctive flavour and quality could easily drive audiences into the arms of the American networks and out of reach of Canadian broadcasters and of the CRTC altogether. Thus the limits of what we can do in this country are set not only by ourselves but also in a very real sense

by our neighbours. And when I say this, I mean not only the U.S. government but also private companies and individuals.

So far, in our survey of what has been done to give Canadians a choice between watching U.S. and indigenous television, we have caught a glimpse of the Broadcasting Act and its pivotal creatures: the CBC, private broadcasters, and the CRTC. But other instruments are required, farther removed from the Parliamentary umbrella. The most remote, in this sense, is educational television. Under conditions laid down by the CRTC in response to a cabinet directive, educational television services were established in several provinces by agencies legally at an arm's length distance from the provincial government. Some of these, like the Knowledge Network in B.C., are devoted exclusively to instructional purposes but others, notably TV Ontario and Radio Quebec, have defined their mandate very broadly. In some of their activities these networks resemble PBS and they certainly cater in part to adult audiences. Although they carry a good deal of foreign programming, their schedules also provide considerable Canadian content. Substantially different from the commercial networks, they furnish viewing opportunities which are not otherwise available. Their children's services are excellent, but they do not add materially to the availability of Canadian dramatic shows for adults.

As we have seen, the Broadcasting Act focuses on the CBC, the private sector, and the CRTC as the chosen instruments for the realization of a successful policy. But the intractable nature of the problems, particularly in the light of technological innovation, has made it imperative that other agencies and measures come to the rescue. Some have been on the scene for a while, but others have emerged only as the result of growing difficulties. Among the former, the National Film Board is a well-known and widely acclaimed producer of fine Canadian programs. For reasons which must be related to internecine rivalries, NFB programs have not been shown as frequently on Canadian television as they have, in recent years, on PBS. Neither the private broadcasters nor the CBC have utilized the rich storehouse of Film Board footage to the extent possible, although at least one Quebec cable system does make effective use of it and the CBC has done much better than the private networks. Co-productions between the CBC and the NFB have become increasingly common lately and have resulted in some first-rate programs.

Beyond this, the federal government has developed a number of initiatives designed to strengthen Canadian program production and the general health of the television industry. Three deserve our special attention: the negotiation of international agreements facilitating co-productions between Canadian and foreign companies, the Canadian Broadcast Program Development Fund, and the famous (or infamous, depending on which side

of the border you stand) Bill C 58. The first of these can be dispatched quickly. Ottawa has actively sought to enter into agreements with a number of governments under the aegis of which Canadian and foreign partners would be able to benefit, in their production of films and television programs, from joint investments, sharing larger markets, access to their respective television outlets under preferred conditions, and from otherwise reinforcing one another's efforts to maintain a healthy domestic production industry. While many of the signatories are francophone countries, the scheme is by no means confined to them. The U.S.A. is, for obvious reasons, not included, and neither is Britain. In the latter case union agreement makes such accords unacceptable.

The Canadian Broadcast Production Development Fund was announced by the Minister of Communications, Francis Fox, when he launched his new broadcast policy in 1983. Its goal was to provide fairly substantial sums of money annually to private production companies and independent producers for assistance in the creation of drama, children's and variety programs. A pump-priming feature required that for every dollar provided by the fund, the producer must raise at least two dollars elsewhere. Thirty-five million dollars were provided at the start, but the sum was to rise to sixty million by the fifth year. By that time, therefore, the fund was expected to inject $180 million for the production of programs in neglected categories.

Half of the monies available each year were to be allocated to productions intended for exhibition by private broadcasters and the other half by the CBC. The fund was to be administered by Telefilm Canada, the new name given to the Canadian Film Development Corporation. It was also announced that the cost of the project to the government was to be raised from the imposition of a six per cent tax on Canadian cable companies. Since the latter pay no royalties for the programs they deliver to their subscribers, this was deemed to be a fair arrangement, inducing the profitable cable industry to contribute to Canadian production. Canadians were to be given the opportunity to see indigenous programs meeting certain requirements by means of a redistributive arrangement drawing on funds collected from companies who derive their income to a large extent from distributing the services of the American networks.

This ingenious scheme got off to a good start and led to the commissioning of some promising Canadian programs. The CBC made ample use of the opportunity from the start; it committed about $23 million by commissioning new programs from independent producers. The private broadcasters, however, whose record in the production of Canadian drama, variety, and children's programming had for so long been generally shameful, still showed less interest, even with the new incentives, and put up only ten million. The program is now in a state of crisis because the CBC budget cuts

announced by Marcel Masse, the new Minister of Communications, prevent the Corporation from making further use of the fund in the immediate future. The government is in the process of trying to revise the terms of the program so as to rescue it from oblivion.

By far the most controversial initiative of the federal government in support of Canadian cultural development, including broadcasting, was Bill C 58. This piece of legislation received extensive publicity largely because of its impact on the Canadian editions of *Reader's Digest* and *Time*. President Eisenhower personally intervened against the measure. The conversion of *Maclean's* into a weekly would not have been possible without it. But the Bill's most far-reaching impact on Canadian-American relations results from its effect on a small number of American television stations situated near the border.

Introduced in 1975, C 58 sought to stop or reduce the hemorrhaging of Canadian advertising funds from Canada into the United States. Broadcasters to be protected were, for the most part, in the Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal areas. American stations just across the border allegedly deprived the Canadian broadcasters of substantial revenue by accepting and even aggressively soliciting Canadian advertising beamed at Canadian viewers. Some stations were apparently established for the primary purpose of milking the Canadian market. The legislation, actually an amendment to the Income Tax Act, intended to put an end to all this by no longer accepting the cost of TV commercials placed by Canadian advertisers on American stations as a tax-deductible business expense. It has been estimated that Canadians spent about $21.5 million on U.S. TV advertising in 1975. This represented roughly ten percent of all Canadian television advertising. As the result of the legislation, the revenue of American border broadcasters dropped to $6.5 million by 1978.

The American reaction could not have been fiercer. It is no exaggeration to say that the border broadcast dispute, which still continues, has been the most threatening irritant in Canadian-American relations. It also illumines some significant differences between the two countries which we shall examine in a moment. The affected U.S. broadcasters lobbied as best they could to have the legislation rescinded but without success. Since then, major figures have become involved on both sides of the border. Henry Kissinger raised the matter with Alan MacEachen, then Secretary of State for External Affairs. Congress retaliated by passing legislation which severely restricted income tax deductions allowed Americans who attended conventions in Canada. The revenge apparently cost Canada hundreds of millions of dollars in lost tourist income.

This measure was ultimately annulled, but matters did not stop there. It was proposed that punitive changes should be made to the U.S.-Canadian

automotive agreement if C 58 was not rescinded. Legislation was introduced in Congress by Senator Goldwater intended to prohibit foreign ownership of cable if no reciprocal rights are granted — a provision which would have hit several large Canadian companies with cable franchises in the U.S. President Carter and Reagan both urged Congress to pass legislation which would mirror Bill C 58. The most serious attempted retaliation was contained in an amendment to the 1982 Senate mirror bill which would deny U.S. business tax deductions for the purchase of Telidon, Canada's videotext system. A successful move in this direction would seriously harm the future of Canada's high-tech industry, which is expected to play a pivotal role in the country's economy in the emerging information society.

Why has this dispute assumed such a virulent character? After all, a loss of some fifteen million dollars annually in revenue is trifling between countries whose trade exceeds seventy billion a year. As sometimes happens in the relations between states and neighbours, the controversy, though quite insignificant in many ways, encapsulates some extraordinarily sensitive issues which arise from fundamental assumptions and values central to both societies. It also reveals how political structures sometimes create problems as well as solving them.

The Canadian position grew out of a few central assumptions: Canadian cultural life was being threatened by the massive advantages which American cultural products derived from the huge scale of the American market. Measures needed to be devised to create an environment in which Canadian creativity could flourish and which would provide Canadians with their own cultural goods.

With respect to broadcasting, it was assumed that programming must be predominantly Canadian and for this to happen adequate resources must be available. A serious drain in such resources, particularly in the major markets, weakens the economic viability of the licensees and therefore their ability to live up to their commitments, particularly with respect to Canadian content. Something had to be done to protect them. Tax policy was seen as an acceptable means for achieving these ends.

Although economic measures were being used to promote national goals, the purposes of the enterprise, in so far as the government of Canada was concerned, were cultural and were related to the very preservation of a distinct Canadian identity. It was of course also the case that Canadian broadcasters affected by the new measures would derive economic benefits from them.

Two major concerns animated the violent American reaction. The border broadcasters were outraged by what they saw as the unfairness of the Canadian action and they, and less immediately involved Americans, objected on the grounds that Canada was interfering with freedom of

information and with the salutary and efficient operation of the free market.

Canada's broadcasting system, so it was argued, benefited in no small measure from the free availability of American network programs. The Canadian cable industry, in particular, sold subscriptions to the American channels without paying any compensation, and its rapid and vast growth rested on its ability to deliver these highly popular offerings. Canadian practices of commercial or signal substitution were seen as contributing to piracy. The ability to benefit from selling time to Canadian advertisers on the same footing as Canadian stations was therefore considered a fair compensation for a contribution made to Canada by the American stations.

It was further affirmed that the benefits of the Canadian tax provisions would not achieve their intended goal: Canadians would continue watching the American stations and there was no assurance that the advertising revenue accruing to the Canadian companies would find its way into greater Canadian content. This train of thought was echoed in 1981 by Ted Rogers, one of Canada's leading cablecasters: "... there has never been a public accounting by the privileged few companies," he asserted, "who financially benefited from this ... legislation. There should be such a public accounting. ... If the cash flow gains to these relatively few private companies is not going to produce enhanced Canadian programming — then the bill should be repealed." (cited by Arries, 147)

It is doubtful whether the cause of the border broadcasters would have received so much support in the United States, and for so long, had there not been a matter of deep-seated principle involved. A very large number of Americans, inspired in part by the First Amendment, has a passionate and absolute commitment to the free flow of information. No matter that this ideological position often miraculously coincides with crass self-serving economic interests and that, domestically, it is occasionally compromised by the mundane claims of competing interests, the free speech rhetoric arouses ardent and genuine support among most Americans. To interfere with the transfer of information (whether it be related to gun chewing, gum-shoeing, or the Gettysberg address is of no consequence) as directed by the whims of the market, is to impose authoritarian and reprehensible restraints inimical to human freedom. It is this deeply ingrained terror of interference with freedom of speech which has led to the tragic misreading of the MacBride Report and of the New World Information Order and the related U.S. withdrawal from UNESCO, and which has also given the border broadcasters ideological support.

There were other aspects of course. Senator Moynaham, in explaining his "strengthening amendment" linking the mirror legislation to the sales of Telidon, noted that "the Canadians have made the issue a major test of our

will to protect U.S. service industries faced by unreasonable and unfair discrimination by a U.S. trading partner. ... The border broadcast issue is indeed a test of our trade laws." (H and J, 54) So the problem is not seen merely as one of abstract principle but also as one possibly setting a precedent with respect to international trade and even property rights. But whatever the instrumental and egotistical motives for retaliation, and whatever the desire of certain politicians to cater to the interests of their constituents, the ideological drive and concern is not only genuine but also paramount.

What lessons can Canadians derive from this ongoing battle other than that, when the undefended border is concerned, a snowflake into an avalanche may grow? The first is that despite many similarities and affinities, profound disparities exist between our two countries. In so far as these relate to broadcasting, they have been admirably summarized by Theodore Hagelin and Hudson Janisch, on whose study of Bill C 58 I have drawn heavily in the foregoing discussion. Canadian and U.S. domestic communications policies, they say,

> differ both in their ends and their means. Canadian policy seeks cultural development; U.S. policy seeks consumer choice. Canadian policy relies on program content regulation and a strong public broadcasting system to achieve its objectives. U.S. policy relies on structural, or industrial, regulation and a strong commercial broadcasting system to achieve its objectives. (H and J, 56)

A major consequence of these differences is that when disagreements occur between the two countries, which is inevitable, both deep-seated ideological and mundane egotistical forces are likely to come into play. And, as the history of religious wars has so painfully taught us, disputes in which self-interest is bolstered by articles of faith are devilishly hard to resolve.

Secondly, Americans, though in many ways among the most generous people in the world, can also be inordinately tough bargainers. In international relations and transnational dealings they nearly always play hardball and rarely give 2.54 centimeters.

Thirdly, because of the size of the country, its power and outlook, Americans are not always well-informed about prevailing conditions and the philosophical preoccupations existing among others. Even the most enlightened find it hard to understand Canada's cultural nationalism. They cannot see why we would not wish to embrace joyously all manifestations of American civilization and why anyone should be afraid of it or why it should pose any dangers. After all, it is benign, unassuming, and universally valid.

This lack of understanding is exacerbated at the official level by the complex and fragmented nature of the U.S. governmental structure. The Constitution's imposition of the separation of powers has something to do with the highly differentiated character of Washington's organizations, but there are other reasons. The following bodies are involved in formulating international broadcasting policy: several "desks" in the State Department, the FCC, the National Telecommunications and Information Agency, the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, various committees of each House of Congress, and a special Co-ordinator with ambassadorial rank attached to the State Department. The proliferation of agencies leads to specialization which may prevent the adoption of a holistic view on policy matters. It is, for instance, highly likely that the perception of Bill C 58 by officials involved in trade policy will completely ignore the cultural dimension of the legislation and so fail to see its purpose and the importance attached to it by the Canadian government.

Finally, the absence of cabinet government bestows awesome powers on Congress. Since party discipline there is relatively weak, it is not at all uncommon for various regional interests to cohere on policy packages serving specific local groups. Logrolling is rife, and the wishes of fairly small groups like those of the border broadcasters, for example, can be combined with others for the sake of forcing relatively unimportant or even unwanted policies on the nation. There is some evidence that not all the retaliatory notions against Canada introduced in the legislature had the support of the U.S. administration and that the latter does not favour the practice of linking one particular international issue to others which may be quite unrelated to it.

The insights obtained by our examination of the U.S. position on the border broadcasting dispute are instructive with respect to the theme of this essay — how to avoid cultural extinction in the face of the bubbling American presence next to and inside us.

Although the problem is in a sense truly international or at least in the domain of transborder relations, its solutions are essentially domestic. No amount of pressure on Washington or even on American industry is going to sensibly diminish the inexorable American cultural influence. We need to review our attitudes to our country and its cultural traditions and opportunities. The quality of our cultural production must be enhanced so as to enable it to hold its own. This has implications for the educational system and for the organization of our economy. A review of broadcasting policy is in order in the light of current conditions. It appears that the government is gearing up to another (the fourth) attempt to produce a new Communications Act. Some of the matters touched upon in my lecture must be borne in mind while this process takes place.

ESCAPING EXTINCTION

Public broadcasting needs to be strengthened rather than weakened, and its appropriate place and form reaffirmed. Likewise, the regulatory process awaits streamlining and adjustment to guide us effectively into the next century. Other governmental measures cry out for examination, as does a searching look at what must be done by the private sector if we are to maintain our national identity.

As in so many other areas, the prime ingredient in the escape from extinction is to recognize the problem realistically and then to have the will to act upon it. Ironically, whether we have these qualities, whether we can muster the force needed to defend ourselves effectively, depends in no small measure on the extent to which we have already become Americanized. If we trust the market to pull us through, if we fail to pursue the public interest through both public and private means, then, I fear, we are lost.

Political Studies
Queen's University

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*This paper was first delivered as a public lecture on March 6, 1985 at the University of Western Ontario under the auspices of its Centre for American Studies.

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2. Peers, Frank W., "Canada & the United States: Comparative Approaches to Broadcast Policy, Canadian U.S. Conference on Communication Policy", Canadian U.S. Conference on Communication Policy, *Cultures in Collision*, Praeger: N.Y., 1984.
3. *Ibid.*, Arries, Leslie R., p. 147.
4. *Ibid.*, Hagelin, Theodore & Janisch, Hudson, "The Border Broadcast Dispute in Context".

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ELDER: ARTAUD AFTER TELSAT

Loretta Czernis

> Without an element of cruelty at the root of every spectacle, the theater is not possible. In our present state of degeneration it is through the skin that metaphysics must be made to re-enter our minds.[1]
>
> Antonin Artaud

> The one thing that is certain is a hidden violence that makes all things uncertain.[2]
>
> Bruce Elder

Lamentations,* Bruce Elder's new eight and one half hour film, was designed to perform a kind of epistemological surgery, so that, upon leaving the screening, we are changed in some way strangely familiar. Elder operates, through his film, upon the arrogance underlying our "new and improved" discourse. Our conceit emerges from how much we know as "proven" by how many efficient inventions we have produced, and that these intellectual and manual productions have catapulted us into post-modernity. *Lamentations* removes obstructions so that we can consider that which is still largely unknown to us: how we managed to disconnect from history. This film makes us experience our self-confidence as a pathetic cultural narcissism. The laments act as purging insights capable of luring spectators away from an isolated estrangement toward a communal one; we become active participants in (re)creating collective memory.

**Lamentations: A Monument For A Dead World*
Part One: *The Dream of the Last Historian*
Part Two: *The Sublime Calculation*

Artaud believed that theatrical violence could cleanse the human soul. He sought out historical situations of tragedy, believing that it was only in times of tremendous suffering that people could understand reality. In the midst of catastrophe the beauty and the horror of life are as one. A vision, given birth in crisis, can transform us. Artaud wished to recreate such experience in the theatre, searching for the necessary magic in a total spectacle, with actors who knew how to scream, so that we might remember something of the passion and cruelty of Nature/Culture. Artaud wanted theatre to do the same job that narrative painting had done for centuries — teach morality. But he lived during a time when people still went to the theatre to be enriched — before TV, before computer games, before laser lightshows. Anyone now wishing to teach must bring the message to the people in a spectacle which can both caress and jolt our digital sensibilities.

In classical theology, natural and moral evil have always been distinct, the former being the reasoned study of why God would allow natural disasters to occur in Nature, the latter being attempts to understand the origins and nature of evil within human will. Elder renders this distinction arbitrary, reminding us that we think we "own" Nature, when, in fact, we have been allowed co-presence with it. The proof for our folly lies in the ways in which we have imposed names on the forces of Nature, in an effort to dominate and control it. One such name is natural evil. Nature is violent, teeming with deadly plants and animals, floods, earthquakes, and many other elements which humankind takes up as threatening to survival. We have imposed our word for our own fall from grace, "evil", on the earth itself, upon which we depend for our survival. We are all implicated in this treason, this abandonment of our Home. In betraying Nature we betray ourselves.

Baudrillard has discerned that "Illusion is no longer possible, because the real is no longer possible."[3] In his view there is "... only "information", secret virulence, chain reaction, slow implosion and similacra of spaces where the real-effect again comes into play."[4] At museums people feel a brush with history. This is achieved by skillful exhibition of collected objects. The cases, the lighting, the prose on the little catalogue cards must be exactly right in order to create the theatrical effect we have come to know as "historical". Sometimes they even play music to fabricate a total environment. This is not different from entering a funeral parlour, where every object arranged for viewing is neatly masked and out of easy reach.[5] Such lamentable cultural artefacts exhibit a bizarre dualism which emerges, Elder would say, out of a hatred of time. The most insidious illusion is that we can capture what has died and keep it present to us. This folly exhibits our hatred for mortality. We love production; we hate corruption.

History books, documentaries and historical sites are tourist attractions. Every attempt to build a City of God has become a Coney Island. For every "real" cathedral and totem pole there are thousands of plastic replicas.

Indian dolls and bishop dolls switch costumes daily in the bedrooms of little girls everywhere. Punjabi children go to village halls to watch Dallas and National Geographic specials on bears and Hopi indians. TV via Telsat satellite is educating them to read life in the west. Neither the educational show nor the prime time soap opera tell them anything about what life is "really" like in North America. What constitutes understanding now? Information-gathering, not knowledge-seeking, not wisdom-listening. In order to cope in the information society, it is essential to believe in the reproductions.

Historical writing is static description including insular analyses of geographically conditioned "events". When events take precedence over Things, when we forget Being which language represents, we are expelled from history.[6] Forgetting what is always there in the background, we are forced to leave the Garden, because we have failed to be attentive, to care. Outside of the Garden is disconnectedness, despair, hatred, madness; not the passionate madness of creation but the cool madness of rationally planned destruction. We have severed the connection to Home and in so doing we have also alienated and, as Elder shows us with dizzying imagery, driven Nature mad. "A heartless Nature has opened her great maw and swallowed everything."[7]

Bruce Elder is a diary-keeper who understands another way of doing history. "We must resist the folly of historical writing."[8] There is no history to be remembered beyond my own, for my life is a fruit from the family tree of mankind. To try to plot what happened between people hundreds of years ago is an impossible project, and reads awkwardly, like a bad play. We can only read ourselves in history. In (re)writing myself I write about the meaning-world. Elder's diary is about me; mine is about him, and you. We are connected, not isolated. As he states, the last historian is everyone.

This Film Is About You, Not About Its Maker
(at best, a half-truth)[9]

Elder has made *Lamentations* a performance in which the audience must attend to many spectacles all at once. We watch a travelogue. We watch the filmmaker himself reading poetry and filming his friends talking, talking, talking about everything from physical disorders to ladies' perfume to geometry, some wearing costumes, yet always still "themselves". We see ruins from many cultures. We observe sexual relations. There is a narrative on one thing, subtitles relating other things, music, superimposition, rapid montage: reproduction upon reproduction. I began to no longer watch, but to be affected. For a time the scenes changed so fast I couldn't recognize anything. The swaying movement of the images became severe. I was overwhelmed by the intensity of Elder's vision. I found myself in the midst

of an experience for which ... I don't have adequate words. His explosive grammar shattered my assumptions about how to watch a film.

> A direct communication will be re-established between the spectator and the spectacle, between the actor and the spectacle, from the fact that the spectator, placed in the middle of the action, is engulfed and physically affected by it.[10]

Our consciousness contains the memories of how European civilization arrived in North America and Mexico, where it was not needed. Something of that which has died among we who seem to still live must be recorded before Bruce, before each of us, forgets, by recreating the remains of memory. Like all great artists, it is obvious from this film that Elder has had the experience of a very direct, blood-curdling communication with Nature. Accompanying this he has made some contact with his ancestors — our ancestors — who shared a tremendous respect for the earth which is alien to our present everyday understanding. He has travelled to cathedrals, petroglyph sites, hopi and mayan ruins, looking for signs — for points of contact — with the primordial. In these traces he senses how the Holy was once with us, that we once attended to the co-presence of Being and Things. The traces come from his remembering, sparked in surroundings which he realizes nevertheless to be modern productions of what was "ancient". "The record of the events that occurred in these sacred places is written in earth and stone."[11]

> The problem is to make space speak, to feed and furnish it; like mines laid in a rock which all of a sudden turns into geysers and bouquets of stone.[12]

Watching this film was for me at times like jumping into a pool full of prisms. I saw myself from many different angles, distorted in the "open field of possibilities," one moment listening to an actor as the aging Liszt play bittersweet melodies, and at other times being bombarded with cinematic images of people shooting up, getting shot, and electroshocked. This juxtaposition of the sublime and the sleazy does some justice to the complexities of human passions, which should not be seen as linear, but circulatory.

Elder reminds us that language creates meaning, hence reality for the mind. We are also (re)told that words are the symbols for the Things they represent. Speech is both rearticulations and symbols. We have forgotten the symbolic. We censor; we focus on the redundant. In so doing, we negate our own creative potential, for uniqueness arises out of tropes, of taking the courage to see beyond language-as-sign. All else is mimesis.[13]

One of the metaphors Elder elaborates is that of a map. There are scenes

of a couple in foreplay, exploring each other's crevices and plains, peaks and caves. The Elder geneological charts enter our field of vision again and again. So does an actor sitting behind a desk playing a psychiatrist, who speaks into his microphone about a patient he despises. The skit maps the violence of clinical discourse, which in the end traps even the analyst himself in its web. There are maps indicating where certain poisonous spiders live. There are photos of faces, whose deformities and disintegrations plot the indifference of the insect world. A map is filmed which points up the regions around the globe where plague has occurred. The rigourous clarity in the presentation of these images leads me to conclude that Elder wanted to disorient comfortable viewers, to make us leave abstract versus concrete behind, to perform what Artaud could have called a theatrical-alchemical operation for making spiritual gold. The process of purification is also one of purgation. An actor in a dingy alleyway relates aphorisms on pus, intestines, blood, sweat, vomit. We see a vulture eating carrion. These unpredictably recurring images provoke physical reactions. We who are civilized spectators are (re)introduced into our bodies. We are usually only on our bodies. We wear our clean skin and fit limbs like a costume. In everyday life we are not "in" our bodies, with our mucous, our bacteria, our sweat, our excrement. This is the stuff of us.

All civilizations censor, since reasoning implies censoring. Making distinctions is how we carve out a territory, take a position. "Make the smallest distinction, however, and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart".[14] Delineating boundaries makes religious belief, village life, sexuality, etc. into objects of thought to be defended. We have created many efficient systems as a result of setting up distinctions, which then very quickly turn into oppositions: white-red, Christian-heathen, reason-nature, perfection-corruption, rigidity-fallibility, male-female, yes-no, 0-1. Digital technology is logically a form of ethnocentrism. This obsession with positioning is the basis of competition in our global economy.

Our participation in these forces of production, as we well know by now, has alienated us, cut us off from seeing and developing praxis in our lives. This praxis is what we used to call faith (and before that it was what we called praxis). It was the ability to enter situations as open terrain for social relations, for being-with, not as opportunities for combat. It was the ability to acknowledge the futility of separateness.

> ... your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid his [sic] face from you so that he does not hear.[15]

Elder has created a cinema of cruelty. In *Lamentations*, he addresses the "horrifying dualism" which created, then overwhelmed, civilization. This

dualism (our love for making distinctions) though essential for intellectual development, is not necessary, Elder argues, for the development of consciousness as more than rational thought. His is not a blind lament, but rather a diary with a clear and searing message: this dualism is deadly because by focussing on reason without praxis we have forgotten how to care.

> In the anguished, catastrophic period we live in, we feel an urgent need for a theater which events do not exceed, whose resonance is deep within us, dominating the instability of the times.
>
> Our long habit of seeking diversion has made us forget the idea of a serious theatre, which, overturning all our preconceptions, inspires us with the fiery magnetism of its images and acts upon us like spiritual therapeutics whose touch can never be forgotten.
>
> Everything that acts is a cruelty. It is upon this idea of extreme action, pushed beyond all limits, that theater must be rebuilt.[16]

Perhaps the greatest violence Elder inflicts on the post-modern viewer is an invitation to the dance. The end of the film shows scenes of frenzied dancing by many South and North American Indian tribes, who Elder has brought together on film, to recreate the world. Tribal peoples have always believed in dance as a sacred force, generating the power to reverse existing orders. The gestures expose and open up thought-cages, cleansing consciousness so that we may begin anew. I call this a "violence" on Elder's part because he is wrenching us out from under our everyday documentary reality, into an old/new oral tradition, back/forward into praxis. To believe in such imagery requires of us all a great leap into waiting. The trance-dance image provides one strong metaphor for how to make this leap now. All we have to do (the hardest thing for a culture to do that has not privileged contemplation for centuries) is to listen to the ruminations of the soul.

> I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
> For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
> For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
> But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
> Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
> So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.[17]

Elder's celluloid way-station makes an important contribution in our desperate search for a suitable cultural praxis. This is ironic, since technology greatly assisted in our alienation. We automatically respond to reflected images like new friends/objects to be quickly scanned. Elder, however, has

designed his film to move at points faster than any speedreader. *Lamentations* can scan the spectator. Both reader and text reverse positions unpredictably, making for a visual outward bound of Nature's stochastos. The viewer is thus (re)taught meta-literacy — a way of reading with double vision for both sense and meaning. This kind of reading is only possible, however, to viewers if we allow ourselves to become vulnerable to an experience which confronts all of the senses with a very powerful dream.

As was true of Artaud, Elder is not afraid to document what he sees to be generations of terror and grace. He has divined that the world is now dead, getting ready to begin again. Being slipped away the more we tried to grasp hold. Individuation and greed have anaesthetized us; fear and boredom keep us asleep. *Lamentations* jogs the memory, writing time as recollection and intuition. By seeing this poetic film diary, we inscribe ourselves not in a linearly truncated historical document, but in a crystal-like film environment, (re)creating many resonant shades of our experience simultaneously.

> For behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind.
> And now, go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book that it may be for the time to come as a witness forever.[18]

Notes

1. A. Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*. Trans., M.C. Richards. NY: Evergreen/Grove Press, 1958 (fourteenth edition, no date), p. 99.
2. All of the following quotations attributed to Elder are taken from commentary he has written appearing in a subtitle format throughout the film *Lamentations*. Toronto: Lightworks, 1985.
3. J. Baudrillard, *Simulations*. Trans., P. Foss, P. Patton and P. Beitchman. NY: Semiotext(e), 1983, p. 38.
4. J. Baudrillard, *Op. Cit.*, p. 54.
5. J. Baudrillard, *Op. Cit.*, *passim*.
6. "A people without history is not redeemed from time, for history is a pattern of timeless moments." From T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," *The Four Quartets*. NY: Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971, p. 58. Elder quotes from the Four Quartets at various points in his film.
7. Bruce Elder, *Lamentations*.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*
10. A. Artaud, *Op. Cit.*, p. 96.
11. Bruce Elder, *Lamentations*.
12. A. Artaud, *Op. Cit.*, p. 98.
13. "Man [sic] does not render efficacious grace efficacious, but he can render sufficient grace sterile

or undeveloped into efficacious grace." From J. Maritain, *St. Thomas and the Problem of Evil.* Milwaukee: Marquette UP, 1942, p. 38.

14. Sengstan, *Hsin Hsin Ming.* Trans., R.B. Clarke. Virginia: Universal, nd.
15. Isaiah, 59:1-2, *Common Bible Rsv.*
16. A. Artaud, *Op. Cit.*, pp. 84-5.
17. T.S. Eliot, "East Coker," *Op. Cit.*, p. 28.
18. Isaiah, 65:17; 30:8, CB RSV.

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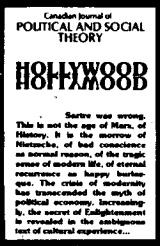

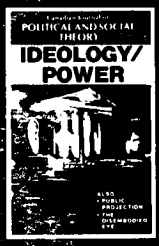

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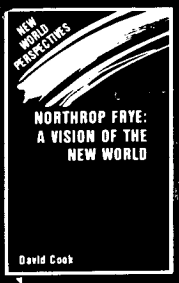

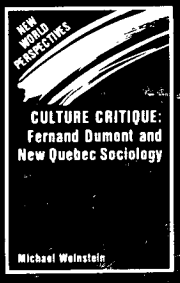

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