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Cultural
Dialectic of
the Blues

Magic in the
Marketplace

TV and the
Triumph of
Culture

Beyond
Postmodernism?

"Miami Vice... the secret of its success? No earth tones. We want to feel electric!" Michael Mann NBC

"Roses are red, violets are blue, I'm schizophrenic and so am I." New York City, 1984

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Culture:
Theory and Research

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MAGIC IN THE MARKETPLACE:
AN EMPIRICAL TEST FOR COMMODITY FETISHISM*

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I. Prologue

There is a television advertisement for the Oldsmobile "Cutlass Ciera" in which a modestly dressed young couple stands before the automobile showroom window. As the narrator says, "Imagine yourself in an Oldsmobile Cutlass Ciera," the couple's reflected images, appearing on the metallic paint of the car, undergo magical transformations: in a series of scenes they are shown playing tennis at a club, getting into the car after the game, travelling through a neon-lighted city, being greeted and escorted by a doorman into a fancy hotel, dining by candlelight in an elegant restaurant. During the latter scenes the narrator comments: "No other car is a better reflection on you. Can you think of a better way to spend a night on the town?"

In a more recent television advertisement for a new brand of Goodyear automobile tire — the "Vector" — the product is shown in a series of interactions with human agents. The tire rolls by pedestrians and into a barbershop where it is greeted by name and its tread is examined; it continues down a snow-covered landscape and is saluted by passing skiers; it overtakes a cyclist in a sunny climate; and finally it rolls into an expensive house and is introduced by name by the butler to the master of the house.

II. Introduction

With typical acuity Marx noticed that there was something *peculiar* about an economy founded on commodity production. He remarked upon an odd propensity among social commentators of his day to regard the domain of material production as somehow being detached from direct human control, subsisting autonomously as it were, almost as if the economy possessed a "life of its own."

Marx thought he saw in this propensity a secular variant of religious thought. "There," he claims, "the products of the human brain appear as autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race." According to Marx there is an analogy between this age-old characteristic of religion and the way of thinking about the economy that had

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been developing since the eighteenth century. Just as it is in religion with "the products of the human brain ... (s)o it is in the world of commodities with the products of men's hands. I call this the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities, and is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities."[1]

This apparently innocuous observation went largely unnoticed for some time, because its own author made so little of it. Half a century later Lukács recognized its potential significance and by superimposing some Weberian themes onto Marx's text turned the undeveloped notion of commodity fetishism into the concept of reification, which became subsequently — through its adoption by the Frankfurt School — one of the mainstays of social criticism in the twentieth century.[2]

In fact in his notion of commodity fetishism Marx had identified nothing less than the single most important and persistent ideological form in capitalist society — namely, the representation of "the economy" as a quasi-autonomous realm of occurrences. This general representation evolved through a series of stages, usually as a defense mounted by vested interests against those who were protesting against degraded working conditions or gross inequities in the distribution of wealth. Typical were the contentions that there is a "natural" level for wages or that society should not "interfere" with the "law" of supply and demand or the roller-coaster ride of the business cycle.

More refined conceptions were introduced after government management of the economy received wide public support at the time of the Great Depression and the Second World War: Among Western democracies only the U.S.A. still has quixotic urges of more than passing moment to "get the government out of the economy." For the rest — including Canada — the quasi-autonomous status of the economy now is revealed by the sheer predominance of economic management issues in the sphere of public life. Nothing attracts greater attention on the political stage; and in addition most other concerns, for example environmental pollution or education, can be spoken of seriously only in the language of fiscal circumstances. It is almost as if society is held hostage by its economic structure.

Marx's great insight, although it remained undeveloped in his own writings, calls attention to this persistent theme and its importance for the evolution of "collective consciousness" in capitalist societies. It is the starting-point for both the social theory and the research projects outlined in this paper.

We interpret Marx's notion of commodity fetishism in its broadest sense as referring to any representation of economic activity, in any economy where commodity production predominates, that contains direct or indirect references to its allegedly "autonomous" character. Such representations commonly are found in statements about the relations between government, society, and the economy made by politicians, economists, writers and journalists, newspaper or electronic media commentators, business and corporation leaders, educators, and members of the public. Since we follow Marx, who says that this fetishism is "inseparable from the production of commodities," we would expect to discover its traces not only in capitalist societies but also in commodity-based socialist societies.

We have sought to track it not in public discourse about society and economy,

however, but in another realm: marketing and advertising, or more specifically, their portrayals of the relations between persons and products.

In this domain we pass over from the commodity-based economy considered as a mode of production to the type of consumption that it institutes. In so doing we part company with Marx; or rather — as we prefer to say — we seek to extend his conception, while remaining faithful to its logical structure. This is required because the significance of consumption has grown enormously in social life since the nineteenth century. Fetishism as an aspect of the commodity-based production process persists, albeit in forms quite different from those prevalent in Marx's day; to these have been added other representations of economic activity, rooted in the commodity-based consumption process, that have (as we shall try to show) a fetishistic cast.

If the production and consumption aspects of commodity fetishism turn out to have similar features, there are good reasons for the coincidence. For marketing and advertising strategies, beginning in the late-nineteenth century, had as their objective not only selling products, but also "selling the system:" What they usually refer to as "free enterprise" or the "business system". Marketing messages in every period, considered as a whole, have always carried explicit and implicit references to the larger context of the product pitch itself, and in any case they were based consciously on general conceptions about human behaviour and motivation. In addition, marketers at certain times had explicit political strategies of a general nature, for example, the absorption of the working classes into the consumer marketplace as a way of blocking the appeal of socialist rhetoric.[3]

As it entered the era of generalized mass production and consumption, towards the end of the nineteenth century, marketing faced the task of "binding" products to culturally-approved formats for the satisfaction of wants. To employ technical terminology, marketing seeks to construct a field of mediations between persons (as consumers) and things (as commodities). It does so by selecting persuasive or motivational elements from the available stock of acceptable cultural representations. A straightforward case is an illustration of a product being used by a person. Even the simplest illustration can be full of social cues: If the product is tobacco and the date is 1910, then the user must be a white Caucasian male; if the date is 1930 and the product is a pill promising to women relief from menstrual cramps, then the ad can only allude cautiously to both the problem and its "solution."

During the course of the twentieth century the cultural barriers surrounding the modes of representation that marketing uses to depict the relations between persons and things gradually were eroded. The highly restrictive (indeed repressive) formats imposed on marketing and advertising in earlier times were supplanted by an increasingly freer play with both message formats and media technologies.

Our summary chart, "Four Phases of Marketing-Advertising Strategy," offers a brief overview of these developments.[4] In Phase I (approx. 1900-1925) marketing seeks to sell goods by reinforcing traditional cultural values (the family structure, roles of father and mother) and by linking the useful qualities of goods to judgements and choices that uphold such values and roles. In Phase II (approx. 1925-1945) advertising messages replace rational discourse about uses increasingly

with "symbolic" attributes (e.g., status) and abstract qualities (freshness, goodness); the rhetorical forms of the messages themselves depend strongly on arbitrary inferences and irrational appeals. In Phase III (approx. 1945-1965) consumers as persons emerge at centre stage, and products work magical transformations in their lives; the portrayal of these themes is aided by television's ability to show the relations between persons and products "in action." In Phase IV (1965-present), which we call the "lifestyle" phase, background settings are the key elements, and as they change quickly in reaction to social events they provide ever-shifting, fluid contextual settings for representations of the relations between persons and things that are highly ambiguous in terms of message content.

Anyone acquainted with contemporary advertising knows that in its creations "the products of men's hands . . . appear as autonomous figures with a life of their own, which enter into relations both with each other and with the human race." Marx's words do not refer to such creations, which were unknown in his day; but they are a "logical" extension of the fetishism he identified, for they are an outcome of further developmental stages in the commodity-based economic system that links his era to ours.

Our working hypothesis, therefore, is that commodity fetishism is still present

Four Phases of Marketing-Advertising Strategy

Marketing Strategy (M. Curti) (5)	Rational	Non-rational	Behavioural Science	Segmentation
Inferred from Advertising	Utility	Product Symbols	Personification	Lifestyle
Period	1900 10 20	1930 40	1950 60	1970 80
Elements in Ads	product price use	product qualities symbolic attributes	product qualities person prototype	product activity Person-Context
Metaphoric- Emotive Structure	quality, useful, informative	status, family, health, white magic social authority	glamour, romance, sensuality black magic self-trans- formation	leisure, health, groups friendship
Cultural Processes	Reinforcement of Traditional Values: product is abstracted from process of production, presented as pure use-value.	Emergence of mass Consumption: products are embodiments of attributes, configured in social judge- ment.	Repressive Desublimation: products are personified, satisfaction is judged in interpersonal terms.	Totemism: product is emblem of group-related consumption practice.

in our society, and that it is grounded in both production and consumption aspects of commodity-based economies.

In the light of this hypothesis we have devised an empirical test for commodity fetishism in one aspect of society's consumption practices, namely advertising. The methodology, data sample, and results are given later. At this point we wish to mention briefly an issue to which we will return in our conclusions. For us — as, we believe, for Marx — "the fetishism of commodities" is a descriptive-analytic phrase that pinpoints accurately and comprehensively a key feature of societies that have commodity-based economies. Without a doubt the phrase itself immediately conjures up the suggestion that some aspects of such societies are *systematically misrepresented in social consciousness*; in other words, that some essential, "real," or "true" aspect of economic activity appears in a "disguise" or in a mysterious form. It is easy — perhaps too easy — to jump to the conclusion that we have here a full-blown theory of false consciousness.

Some caution is advised. In the first place, Marx himself provided little guidance on this point. His clearest statement runs as follows: "It (the commodity-form) is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things." He does not say who (precisely) is affected by this misperception, nor to what degree, or exactly what form it takes; neither does he explain to what extent, if any, such misperceptions are counterbalanced by insight, gained in other life-experiences, into the "true" nature of commodity production. Thus even if Marx intended to provide here a theory of false (class) consciousness, it is a quite rudimentary theory indeed.

In the second place, extending the notion of commodity fetishism to the economy's consumption aspect, as we have done, does not automatically license it as such a theory. An observation that, in marketing, representations of the relations between persons and objects take on "fantastic forms" (to use Marx's phrase) is not itself evidence for the existence of false consciousness in a social group. We wish to state at the outset that we do not claim to have provided any evidence of this sort. We have conclusions of a different kind to draw at the end of this paper.

III. Background

In 1978 two of the present authors ventured the opinion that "the familiar concepts used in the radical critique of market society — especially the notion of commodity fetishism — have had a purely rhetorical function, because so little attempt has been made to give them some empirical content."[6] We and our co-author finally are ready to essay it.

The advertising research project reported on in 1978 — for the first time, so far as we are aware — the three recurring, compositional elements in twentieth century advertising: product, person, and setting. In a sample of contemporary Canadian magazine and television advertisements some significant features were revealed, especially types of imagery (user, product, and corporate image) and presentational styles or formats (product qualities, presenter, and lifestyle).

Thereafter a decision was taken to broaden the time dimension of the sample,

while also confining it to magazine ads alone, with the result that one of the first samples covering long historical periods was assembled.[7] S. Kline gave a synopsis of the results from a preliminary analysis of that data in 1983 (footnote 4), including the chart presented above. Much more remains to be done with this data.

When the final version of the protocol to be used in analyzing the sample was designed in late 1980, a decision was made to "operationalize" the concept of commodity fetishism; so far as we know, this had not been attempted before. In this paper we are reporting the results. In the meantime S. Jhally developed a revised version of the protocol for use on a different sample, namely contemporary television advertising; although the categories differ somewhat, there is enough similarity to provide a fruitful comparison between the resulting sets of data.[8]

IV. Commodity Fetishism: Operationalization

In modern thought the concept of fetishism has been employed by modern anthropology and psychoanalysis as well as by Marxian theory. Nineteenth century anthropological literature described the religious practices of early societies (primarily in Africa) in these terms. Here material objects could capture natural forces, heal and cure sickness, bring happiness to their possessor, be used for defensive purposes to ward off evil consequences, induce romantic/erotic affection; and in addition they could be viewed as possessing animate life in and of themselves. Then in the twentieth century Freudian psychoanalytic theory used fetishism as a clinical term to describe those situations where the sexual act is impossible to complete except in the presence of a particular, non-sexual object. Here the function of the fetish is the capacity to change social relations, to make social relations possible, or to create the conditions for the possible consummation of social (sexual) relations.

In the last-mentioned function the object is transposed from being merely an adjunct of social relations to playing a central role, so that it defines the essence of the social relations of which it is a part. In the psychoanalytic model the fetish does not take the place of the love object; rather, it is a substitute for the mother's lost phallus, which eases the castration anxiety of the male and makes it possible for him to accept the (non-phallic) reality of the female sex partner. The object itself does not *do* anything: Its vital function is constituted solely by its *meaning*.[9]

In operationalizing the concept of fetishism we have created analytical categories that portray the different relationships of people and products, presented in advertising, in terms of the connotations of fetishism to be found in the anthropological and psychoanalytic literature.

OPERATIONALIZATION 1: Magazine Advertising

The operationalization of fetishism is part of a broader study of advertising messages. The coding protocol devised by S. Kline and W. Leiss for the content analysis of magazine advertisements also includes the following domains: proportions of the ad devoted to text, product, persons, and settings; themes in the text; identifying the users of the products; describing the settings used and the activities shown; specifying interpersonal relations, social structure, and lifestyle; kinds of

persuasive appeal, in terms of both rhetorical form and style; predominant values; and domains of satisfaction. The operationalization of fetishism, however, is a part of the measurement of *textual themes* only.

Categories of Fetishism: Group A

1. Personification of product: analogy of product with human qualities, description of product in human terms ('the sexy young fragrance').
2. Job done efficiently, quickly, effortlessly, rationally, scientifically; long-lasting effectiveness (user's relation to the completed task, results of use).
3. Describes the finished state, results, characteristics of end-state (shining, clean, smooth ride, radiant).
4. White Magic: control exerted by product's power over natural forces or elements; captures, channels, makes available natural forces for use (brings back the sunlight, leaves it smelling of lemon, world belongs to Charlie, suddenly it's Spring-time).
5. Black Magic: control exerted by product's power over other people: allurement, influence, social standing, liking, social judgement.
6. Self-transformation: product has power to change self, reduce anxiety, change personal effectiveness, become like ideal other, become member of group or class.
7. Description of an emotional satisfaction or personal relationship to the product *directly* (you'll love the new Corvair, a good friend).
8. Description of an emotional reaction or satisfaction or product based upon *use* (never disappoints, always satisfies, you'll love the reliability).

Each of these was treated as a separate category that could be marked either present or absent. An historical sampling strategy was developed; in addition, the procedure derived a quota-based sample that attempted to control for a number of factors, particularly product type and magazine type, as well as the year and season of publication. The sample was selected from the Canadian magazines *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* (the former male-oriented and the latter female-oriented) over the period 1911-1970, and it consisted of 1800 ads.

OPERATIONALIZATION 2: Television Advertising
The protocol devised for magazine advertising was used as the starting point for a revised coding protocol for the content analysis of television advertising. Once again, the operationalization of fetishism was part of a broader study of advertising messages that deals with many of the issues addressed in the earlier study. However, because the TV ad is a dynamic message that usually lasts and changes during a period of only 30 seconds, the later protocol was substantially different.

For the operationalization of fetishism in particular a number of alterations had to be made to the categories. For instance, the Job efficient/Finished state categories were slightly modified, and the Black Magic variable was expanded into two different categories (6 and 8). The most significant modification, however, was the creation of a category to measure the role of the product in the "lifestyle imagery" ads (9). It was necessary to add this category for the television ad because in it the product is presented "symbolically," or visually, rather than textually.

Categories of Fetishism: Group B

1. Personification of product: human qualities attributed to product.
2. Describes finished state/job done efficiently: the object performs a task without effect on human emotions or relations.
3. Emotional response based on product *directly*: emotional reaction is the effect of mere possession or sighting of the object, irrespective of its use.
4. Emotional response based on product *use*: use of the product elicits emotional reaction.
5. Self-transformation: the product changes the physical constitution of people, e.g., either making them more attractive or curing them of sickness.
6. Black Magic: Consequences not of use/consequences of use — changes relations: use of the product changes social relations, such that before its use relations were incomplete and with its use they are complete.
7. Job done efficiently: Consequences not of use/consequences of use — difference between products where social relations are *not* involved: the product performs better than another without effect on social relations.
8. Black Magic: effects of product *use* mediate relations; while the product may not be present in the social scene depicted directly, it is only its use that makes the scene possible. If the product had not been used, the relations depicted would not be possible or would be incomplete.
9. Product mediates relations with others: the product does not *do* anything — its mere presence defines the scene as such. Without it the scene would still be possible, but it would be incomplete, less satisfying, and less meaningful.
10. White Magic: Product captures natural forces.

Each of these is treated as a separate variable and is either present or absent. These categories were coded in relation to the different mediums of audio voice-over, text, music, and audio-visual, and the results were collapsed into one category. The data was gathered by a random sample, stratified by product type, of 1000 ads drawn from two different time periods. 500 were drawn from sports programming

(male-oriented) and 500 were drawn from prime-time programming (female-oriented). The sampling time frame was October 1980 to September 1981.

V. Analysis of Data and Results

The examination of fetishism in advertising, as described in the preceding section, takes place along four dimensions: first, the concept of fetishism is treated historically; second, fetishism is examined in relation to audience segmentation, i.e., the nature of the person/object relationship as it is presented to different audiences; third, fetishism is examined according to use-type, in order to see how the type of product affects the person/object relationship; last, we examine the informational basis on which the different relationships presented are justified.

(A) Historical

The historical examination only deals with the magazine data since the TV sample is not historically based. In Graphs 1 and 2 the fetish categories are divided into two groups to clarify the presentation of historical developments. These groups correspond *roughly* to a "magical/rational" distinction. Four of the eight variables developed for the magazine study are grouped under the designation "magical fetishism": personification, black magic, white magic, self-transformation. Advertising content was coded in these categories for those instances where the product itself is shown as exerting or representing some kind of autonomous power vis-a-vis human agents, or as embodying such powers. In most instances of this type the nature and origins of these powers are mysterious. The remaining four variables are together called "rational fetishism." For although the ad content also shows here the effects of owning or using the product on human actions and emotions, these effects either are explained in the text, show familiar events, or are otherwise unambiguous so far as their source is concerned. Graph 1 includes the "magical" categories (personification, black magic, white magic, self-transformation), while Graph 2 deals with the "rational" categories (emotion direct, emotion indirect, job efficient, finished state). The data shows that there has been much change during this century in how the relations of persons and things have been portrayed by advertising.

At a general level the data shows that there has been an overall decline in the rational categories and an increase in the magical categories. The movement of the two groups is in opposite directions. The most significant rise has been for the category of self-transformation.

(B) Audience Segmentation

Graphs 1 and 2, however, are slightly misleading with respect to the categories of white magic, black magic, and self-transformation, because the data for *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine* is aggregated. The matter of market and audience segmentation is a crucial one in the study of advertising, and it has been seriously overlooked by many writers interested in the social role of advertising. Daniel Pope summarizes its importance well:

GRAPH 1
'Magical' Fetishism By Decade

Self-Transformation
Black Magic
White Magic
Personification

DECADE

percentage advertisements
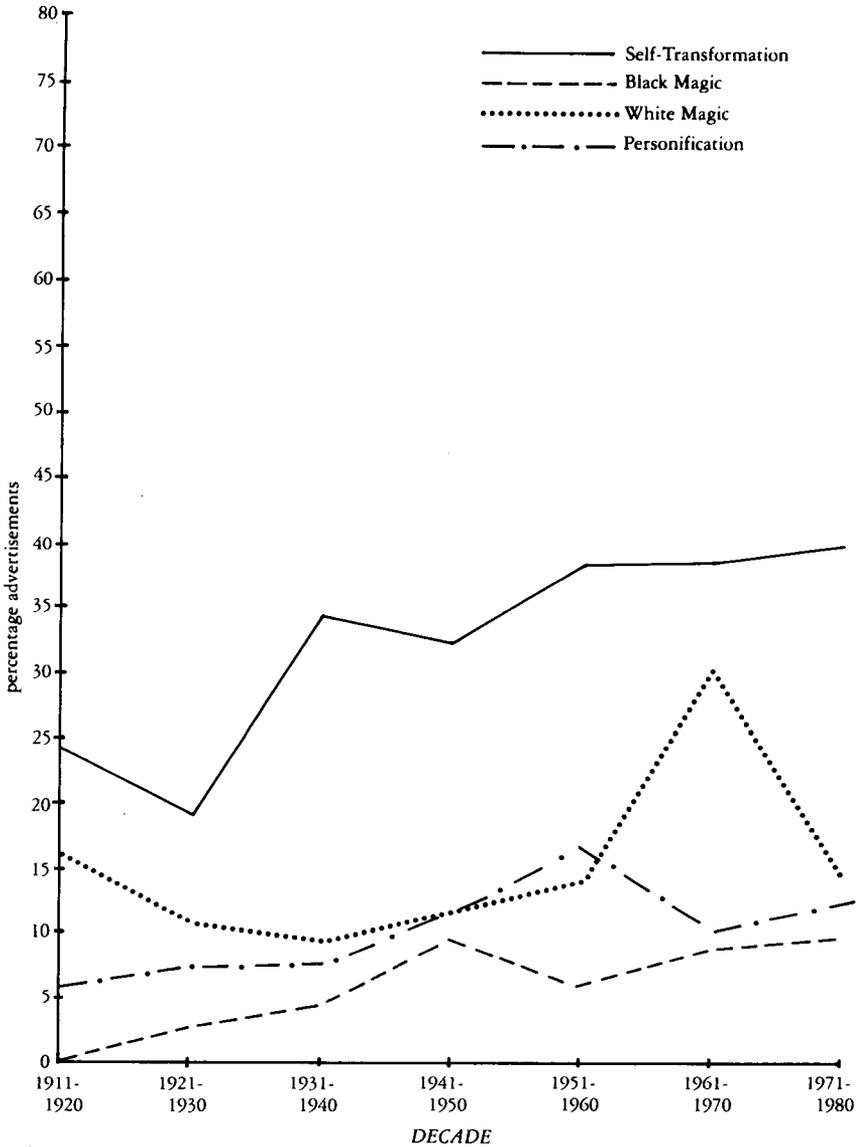
GRAPH 2
'Rational' Fetishism By Decade
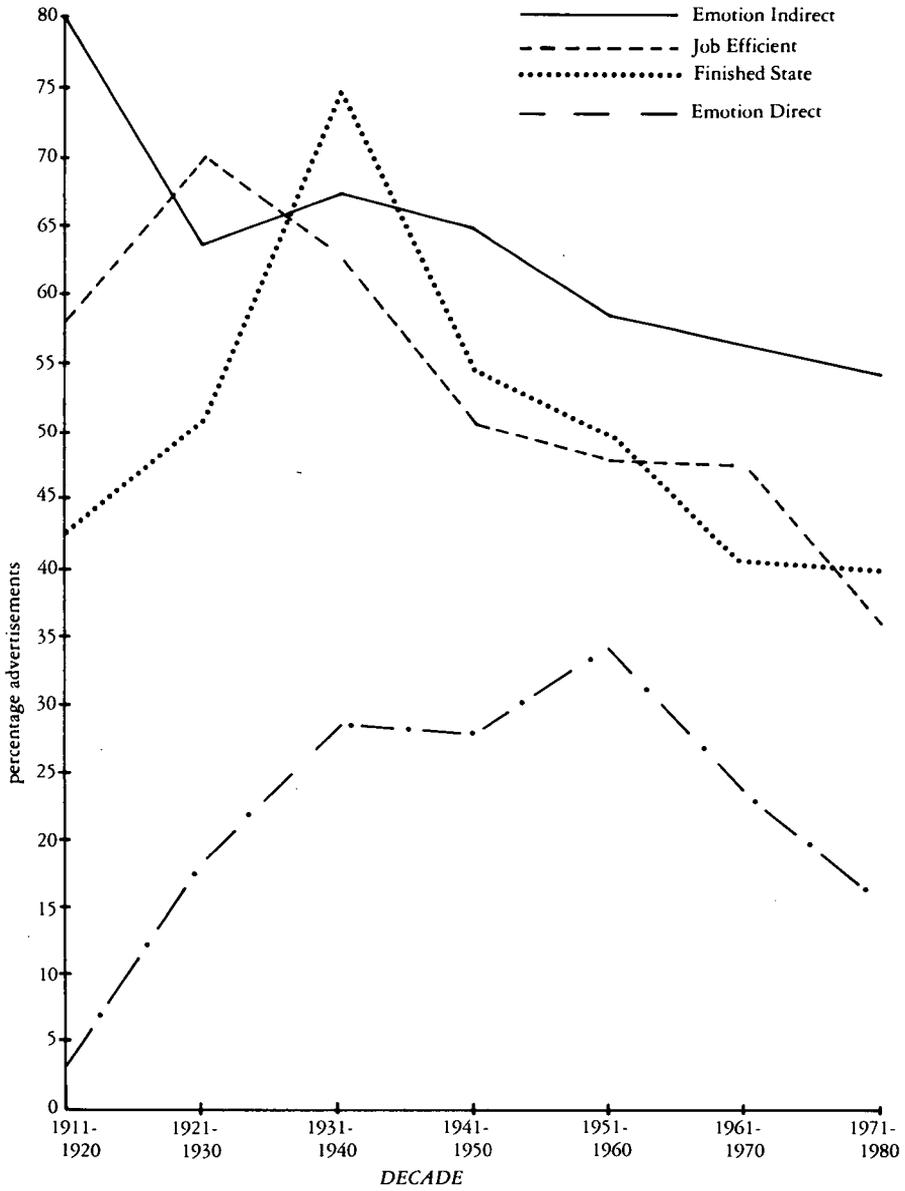
> The advent and ascendency of market segmentation as a principle of national advertisers may well be the most far reaching development in national advertising in recent decades. In the last generation it has affected the structure and conduct of the advertising agency business, the standards and principles of advertising professionals and the form and content of the advertisements themselves.

The relationship between the products advertised and the audience composition of a magazine is a crucial factor in modern advertising. The advertiser attempts to appropriate a *market* segment (social relations of product use by brand and type) through an *audience* segment (social composition of readership). Michael Ray describes the role of advertising within the marketing mix as producing "communication campaigns in marketing that get to the right people with the right message at the right time."[10]

When audience segmentation is brought into the historical analysis as a significant variable, then some interesting differences emerge (Graph 3). There are noteworthy differences between the two magazines for all three fetish categories presented. The messages aimed at the female audience (*Chatelaine*) stress the three themes much more than those directed at the male audience (*Maclean's*). For many periods the categories move in opposite directions.

The non-historical cross-tabulation of fetishism by audience segmentation for the magazine data is presented in Table 1.

The vital importance of audience segmentation for an understanding of commercial messages is reflected also in the data analysis of contemporary TV advertising (Table 2).

For television, taking the total data set as a composite, the most frequent categories are emotional response based on product use (32.4%) and product mediating relations with others (21%). The next two most important categories are the product producing physical changes in people (16.8%) and showing a job efficiently accomplished (15%). All other categories appear in under 10% of ads.

Table 1: Fetish by Magazine (Audience) Column Percent

Fetish	*Magazine*	
	Chatelaine	*Maclean's*
Personification	10.8	9.8
Job Efficiency	44.1	59.7
Finished State	54.1	50.8
White Magic	19.9	8.6
Black Magic	12.7	1.0
Self-Transformation	38.6	27.5
Emotion — Direct	16.7	25.5
Emotion — Indirect	61.5	61.6
TOTALS (*number*)	(433)	(633)

GRAPH 3
'Magical' Fetishism By Magazine By Decade

DECADE

13
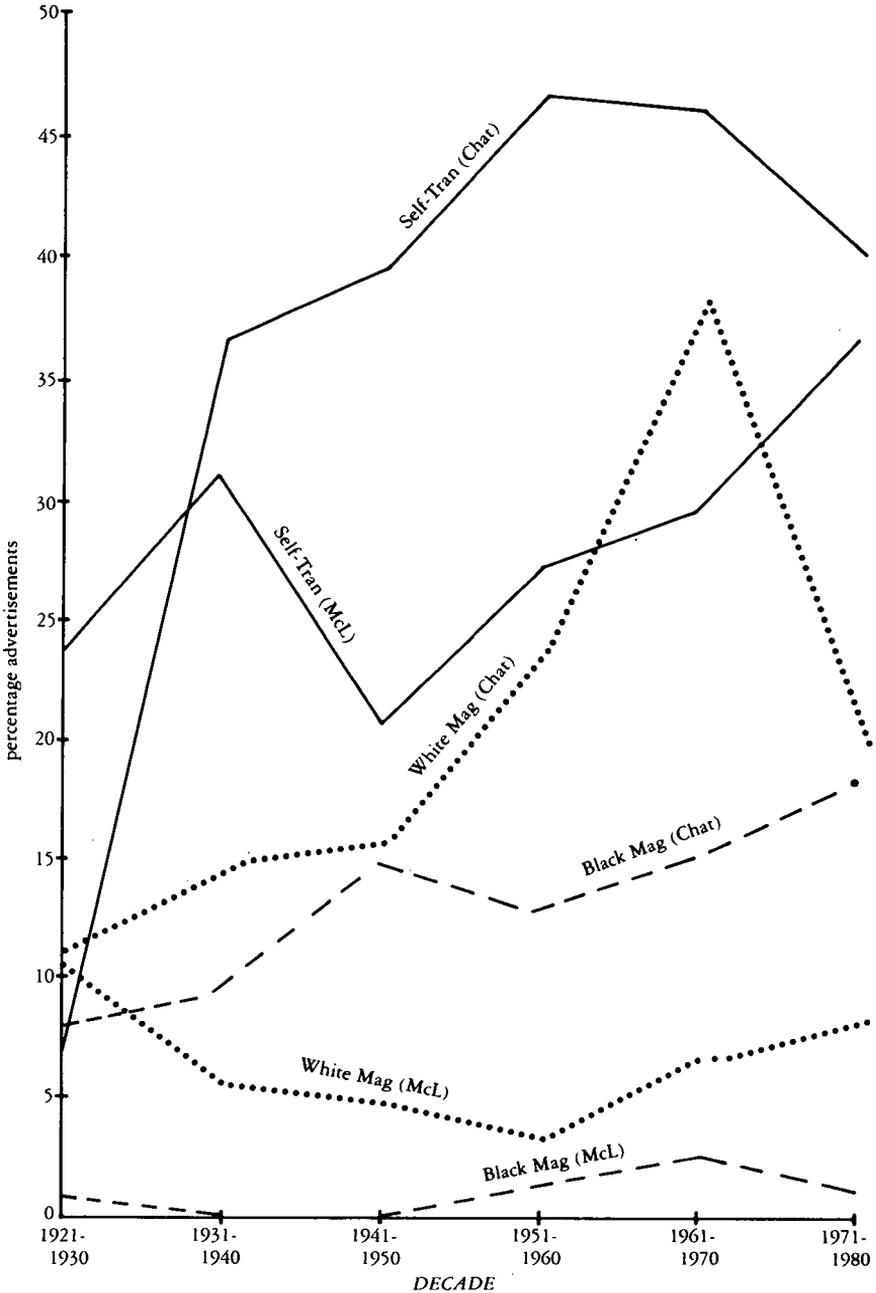
Table 2: Fetishism by Period

	%	PT	ST
1. Personification	5.7	6.0	5.4
2. Job Efficient	15.0	8.9	21.2
3. Emotion — Direct	6.9	8.3	5.6
4. Emotion — Indirect	32.4	39.3	25.9
5. Self-Transformation	16.8	24.8	9.0
6. Black Magic	4.6	4.0	5.2
7. Job Efficient	7.3	10.7	4.0
8. Effects Mediate Relations	8.4	10.3	6.4
9. Mediates Relations	21.0	13.3	28.9
10. White Magic	7.4	9.3	5.6
TOTALS (*number*)			
(1000)		(500)	(500)

Once period (audience) is introduced, significant differences emerge between the two groups. For a female audience the two most important categories are the elicitation of an emotional response based upon product use (39%) and product as producing physical changes in persons (24%). For a male audience the three most important categories are product mediating relations with others (28.9%), emotional response to product use (25.9%), and job being efficiently performed (21.2%).

The data shows that the relation of people to things is presented in different ways to different types of audiences. In prime-time advertising the commodity is used in a more "magical" way to affect humans directly, while in sports-time advertising it plays a role which is rational, magical, and indicative of images of desired lifestyles. The codes that advertisers use to present in stylized form the relations between persons and things are differentiated sharply according to audience type.

(C) Product Type

There is already some evidence that various product types construe differently the relationship between persons and commodities.[11] Tables 3 and 4 present the cross-tabulation of fetishism with use-type for magazine and television advertising respectively.

For contemporary TV advertising, alcohol is primarily associated with the product-mediating relations (lifestyle advertising). Food, clothing, pets, and leisure technology bring emotional gratification. Transportation focusses on the utility of the product as well as on emotional gratification. Household is concerned with utility, while personal care and drugs deal with physical changes induced by the product.

Our discussion of fetishism in advertising must recognize that there is more than one relationship of persons to products. Psychological, physical, and social dimensions are all present and vary in importance between audiences and use-types.

Table 3: Fetish by Use-Type (Column %)

Fetish	Use-Type							
	#1 Smoking	#2 Alcohol	#3 Food	#4 Clothing	#5 Trans-portation	#6 Personal Care	#7 Corporate	
Personification	11.0	20.0	10.6	6.0	12.7	7.9	11.1	
Job Efficiency	17.1	13.9	56.2	35.6	67.1	73.9	66.4	
Finished State	42.8	32.2	48.1	60.6	53.6	66.7	34.6	
White Magic	10.5	6.3	11.5	8.7	5.6	22.1	22.0	
Black Magic	9.7	12.6	1.9	6.4	3.9	7.9	4.0	
Self-Transformation	33.3	28.0	24.8	40.2	15.0	54.1	15.4	
Emotion — Direct	27.0	33.3	26.5	23.4	30.0	13.3	6.1	
Emotion — Indirect	59.4	35.2	69.2	54.2	64.4	77.2	36.7	
TOTALS %	10.2	5.2	21.2	15.8	15.4	21.4	10.8	100.8
No.	(109)	(55)	(226)	(168)	(164)	(229)	(115)	(1066)

Table 4: Use-Type by Fetishism (Raw Numbers)

	Fetishism									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Alcohol	1	0	5	35	0	11	2	1	111	9
2. Food	7	1	7	79	8	8	10	4	48	12
3. Clothing	3	1	4	17	1	2	5	4	6	2
4. Transportation	19	50	23	37	0	1	11	2	13	8
5. Personal Care	15	29	14	61	102	19	22	60	7	18
6. Household	6	40	4	35	1	3	23	2	7	9
7. Drugs	1	3	8	6	46	0	0	6	4	0
8. Pets	0	0	2	8	0	0	0	0	1	2
9. Leisure Tech	0	21	1	30	0	1	0	4	12	11
10. Other	0	5	1	16	0	1	0	1	1	3

Indeed there are often multiple relations of people and products in a single advertisement: For instance, in the television sample 392 ads had more than one coding for the fetish categories. Our studies show that particular forms of fetishism that arise at a particular time do not disappear, but rather are then segregated as a mode of representation for particular products or audience segments: The self-transformation ad is used predominantly in cosmetic ads aimed at a female audience, while the lifestyle ads are particularly noticeable in alcohol and cigarette advertising. The point here is that it is difficult to speak of a single relationship to objects, at least as depicted in advertising. In the contemporary marketplace the product/person relation is articulated psychologically, physically, and socially. Some goods seem to serve primarily for display and social judgement, some for personal enhancement, some for locating us in the nexus of group relations, and some just for simple utility in everyday routines.

(D) Origins and Production

As we know, the central idea in Marx's conception of commodity fetishism is that commodities appear as "autonomous figures endowed with a life of their own" which interact with each other and the human world. The "direct" measurement of this autonomy seems to indicate that it is present in, but not a significant feature of, contemporary advertising: For the magazine data, "personification" occurs in 10.3% of ads while in TV advertising the figure is 5.7%. However, this is a narrow way of measuring autonomy; a more important issue is whether the process and relations of production appear as part of the *meaning* of commodities in the marketplace. Other variables in both protocols were designed to measure this aspect of advertising messages. For the magazine study two categories were developed to identify this at the textual level only:

1. Description/Account of process of production of product (craftsmanship, care, efficiency, by robots, etc.).
2. Account of social relations of production, depiction of producer or institution of particular type, allusion to ownership or management, support for the "climate" of enterprise, free market, free enterprise, competition.

Table 5 is the cross-tabulation of fetishism with these two variables.

Table 5

	Row %	
	Process	Social Relations
1. Personification	29.0	15.6
2. Job Efficient	41.3	15.5
3. Finished State	36.9	8.5
4. White Magic	26.6	13.5
5. Black Magic	10.6	7.3
6. Self-Transformation	19.6	5.9
7. Emotional — Direct	38.5	7.8
8. Emotional — Indirect	34.5	9.9

Advertising does not give much information about the social relations of producing commodities. The process of production category is more ambiguous. It is marked present in 35.2% of the sample. However, 24.1% of the codings for this category fall into the high-priced product type "Transportation," while another 18% fall into the product type "Corporate," which not surprisingly stresses this aspect in the ideological legitimation of its productive role. Furthermore, the historical analysis shows its declining importance in the development of advertising messages (Graph 4). For the last decade measured, 1971-80, "process of production" is reduced to 22.2% of ads and is largely concentrated in the use-types of transportation and corporate.

GRAPH 4
Production Information By Decade
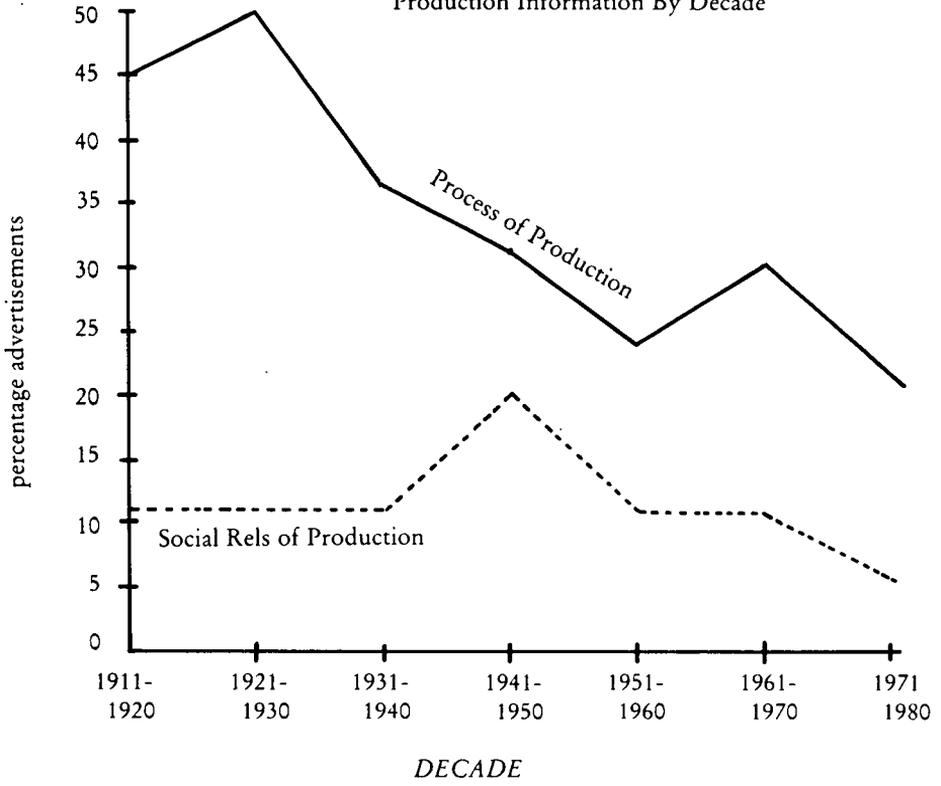
There is no such ambiguity in the TV data for this point. One category was constructed to measure *any* indication of the history and production of the product. Table 6 is the cross-tabulation of this category with fetishism.

Table 6

	Raw Numbers Production/History
1. Personification	6
2. Job Efficient	8
3. Emotion — Direct	7
4. Emotion — Indirect	13
5. Self-Transformation	0
6. Black Magic	0
7. Job Efficient	0
8. Effects Mediate Relations	0
9. Mediates Relations	0
10. White Magic	0

Only 5.3% of the total sample mentioned anything at all about the product or the history of the product. The coding here was extremely generous and even the skimpiest information (e.g., "America's king of beers since 1883") justified its inclusion within this category. TV advertising tells us very little about how products are produced.

If, following Marx, we say that commodity fetishism is present when goods are seen as autonomous, as entering into relations with each other, and as appearing in "fantastic forms" in their relations with humans, then we can conclude from the data analysis that fetishism is an aspect of *both* production and consumption. Commodities appear in the marketplace as miraculous products of an invisible process of production and then enter into competing relations with each other, jostling for position to satisfy the unique and changing needs of the consumer. In some instances, products explicitly take on animate features. In addition, the object world interacts with the human world at the most fundamental of levels: It performs magical feats of transformation and bewitchment, brings instant happiness and gratification, captures the forces of nature, and holds within itself the essence of important social relationships (in fact, it substitutes for those relations). In the interaction of humans and products as portrayed in advertising we can identify not only the fetishism described by Marx, but also the fetishism described in anthropology and psychoanalysis.

CONCLUSIONS: FETISHISM

According to Marx commodity fetishism is a "disguise": Relations among persons appear as relations among things. But Marx was referring to the abstract representations in the economic ideology of his day, such as the concepts of capital

and labour, which concealed the fact that the engines of material progress were simultaneously the perpetrators of degradation and social disruption on a massive scale. Today the world of commodity production has become a true magic show. How wonderfully apt Adam Smith's "invisible hand" metaphor seems now — albeit in a sense radically different from what its originator had in mind. The modern sense of this phrase is portrayed well in the series of television ads by Coca-Cola, which show multi-racial, multi-cultural groups singing sweetly together: Totemism, or the *magical representation of the social collectivity.*

How was the stage for this show erected? First the ground had to be cleared, so to speak, ground that had been occupied by traditional forms of social collectivity rooted in premodern economic conditions. In all such forms social groupings were constituted in the unity of production and consumption activities: production for direct use, for the most part, with limited local and extended market exchanges, in family, village, manor, or urban district settings. The groupings themselves were affected most strongly by regional, religious, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and other such determinations. And the objects that served these production and consumption forms were rooted in, and in turn reflected, these determinations: the distinctive dress and cuisine of ethnic groups, the tightly-controlled associations of skilled craftsmen, the special kinds of things provided for feasts and celebrations.

The market-industrial system undermined these traditional forms of social collectivity without replacing them, in its early phases, with anything except the abstract rhetoric of material and technological "progress." Towards the end of the nineteenth century a more gripping, but also more dangerous and mutually destructive, rhetoric of collective identity came to the fore: national patriotism. At the same time, however, the foundations were laid for a far more stable form of social harmony: mass production and consumption, facilitated in the twentieth century by a rapidly-evolving marketing and advertising system.

Where the division of labour, mass migrations from rural to urban settings, technological change, and the erosion of traditional cultures had rent the fabric of social collectivities, there mass marketing began to feel its way, gradually stitching together an entirely different kind of human association. The objects that had constituted the older forms of production and consumption, and that were embedded in social relations, were replaced by others that for some time were recommended purely by virtue of their "abstract" qualities: their utility, incorporation of technological progress, efficiency, and low cost.

Gradually over the course of the twentieth century marketing and advertising strategies have sought, more and more explicitly, to fill the void left by the destruction of traditional collectivities, by creating a sense of social solidarity oriented around messages about things, or more precisely, messages about the relations between persons and things. Whereas the new system of commodity production had emptied the social world of the elements that formerly had bound together the activities of social groups, the new system of mass marketing and mass consumption based on it has sought to refill that domain with its own form and content.

The distinctive social form it embodies is the notion that individuals are free to situate themselves in a fluid set of temporary associations that are distinguished

from each other by "styles" of appearance, behaviour, and types of activities. The distinctive content is the notion that these associations, based purely on the "elective affinity" of their members, are oriented strongly around products and messages about products.

The developed form of commodity fetishism in its consumption aspect, therefore, is the magical representation of the social collectivity. It is magical because the product stands in a quite indeterminate relation to the personal activities, interactions, and self-transformations that are portrayed in the advertising message. In much national television advertising there is no sensible, "causal" relation at all; rather, the product is simply associated with a highly-stylized set of visual images. The product, in other words, simply *represents* a social collectivity as such, which is defined by its style and activities as a distinct social grouping vis-a-vis others: the devotees of punk music and rock video, the beer-drinking sports fan, the fitness and healthy living crowd. These groupings are constituted as a social series by the different products with which they are associated.

CONCLUSIONS: FALSE CONSCIOUSNESS

We have suggested that the newer consumption aspect of commodity fetishism arises on the foundation of the production aspect first identified by Marx. They share the following characteristics: (1) economic activities appear as if they were autonomous, having a "life of their own"; (2) and there is a tendency towards a systematic misrepresentation of collective goods, so that general needs can be recognized as legitimate only if they are expressed in such a way that they can be satisfied through marketed products.

Do the "fantastic forms" through which social relations appear as market-oriented relations, however, actually *cause* individuals to misrepresent to themselves the nature of their own needs? We said earlier that our study was not designed to answer such a question. In other words, our study of the way in which commodity fetishism in its consumption aspect actually appears in advertisements cannot determine by itself the effects of fetishism, if any, on attitudes and behaviour.

The two aspects (production and consumption) do not exist in isolation from each other, and therefore a more complete study would be required in order to address the question posed above. It is possible, however, that no direct evidence of attitudinal or behavioural influence could be assembled in a convincing manner, given the inherent complexity of human motivation. On the other hand, direct evidence may not even be required, depending on the type of inquiry that is proposed. For there may be a way of determining through indirect evidence, at least in approximate form, the impact of commodity fetishism on social consciousness. We will essay only a brief sketch of this approach here.

Indirect evidence for the significance of commodity fetishism may be correlated with the degree to which some basic human needs, and the social policies designed to address them, are constrained within the limits of market-oriented or "economistic" categories. Our hypothesis is that, if such a constraint operates strongly with reference to one or more highly-significant human needs, then there is

indirect evidence that commodity fetishism has a significant impact on social consciousness.

Health care provides a good test case. Health concerns always rank very high in statements by persons about priority in needs; and it is generally conceded that no person, regardless of ability to pay, should be denied access to certain minimum provisions of medical facilities. But beyond this point debate arises, with respect to levels of entitlement, individual responsibility, and sources of revenue for providing care; on the other side, about types of care and facilities, determination of treatment costs, and incomes of medical professionals in relation to other occupations. In many countries, in Canada for example, the cost of health care and appropriate ways of allocating it have become major issues in social policy and political debate.

For the most part the debate has been cast quite narrowly, and the constraints on debate and policy are largely those fashioned by a market-oriented understanding of health care needs. The nature of these constraints are that health care is viewed predominantly as the repair of damage to individuals, rather than — first and foremost — as the promotion of health-enhancing styles and conditions of life. In the former approach, provision of services (doctors) and goods (drugs) is made under market or quasi-market conditions, for doctors have been able to render meaningless the ostensible social control over their fee schedules. And the social debate is confined almost exclusively to the purely financial aspects of the problem, namely how to allocate additional revenues to the health care system, how much individuals can be made to pay, and so forth. Meanwhile the predominance of health concerns in public sector funding generally has tended to reduce the relative shares formerly devoted to other concerns such as education and welfare.

On the other hand, the other approach — the promotion of health-enhancing styles and conditions of life — would require public debate to address directly the issue of collective responsibility for important needs, and thus to address directly the nature of the social collectivity itself. Only in the most superficial sense is the individual's attitude towards health issues a private matter, for all of the activities that result in enormous fiscal consequences for the health care system — such as abuse of tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs; automobile casualties; poor diet — have a very large "lifestyle" component, i.e., they are influenced strongly by social group behaviour. In addition, environmental hazards — air and water pollution, unsafe workplaces — cannot be addressed satisfactorily because society cannot find adequate ways of dealing with such problems at their source, but rather must rest content with attempting to repair the resulting damages to health. Finally, the fiscal burdens of health care result in part directly from the income demands made by doctors; but only an incomes policy, seeking explicitly to forge a general social consensus on an appropriate range of remuneration for various skills, can deal adequately with escalating fee demands.

To be sure, the "social" as well as the market-oriented approach to health care would be required to address the matter of allocating resources among competing needs. In reality the two approaches do not represent an "either-or" situation, for of course a market approach is simply one way of allocating resources. What is at

issue here is the nature of public debate: whether the "human" and the "fiscal" aspects of the debate, to use crude labels, exist in productive tension, so that society makes progress towards more enlightened practices; or whether, as at present, our discussion of vital needs is yoked too tightly to a product-centered discourse.

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Notes

1. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, tr. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1976), p. 165.

2. For a fuller discussion of this transformation see W. Leiss, "Things Come Alive: Economy and Technology as Modes of Social Representation in Modern Society," in *Representations*, ed. C. Belisle and B. Schiele (Paris: Editions du C.N.R.S., 1984), pp. 40-65.

3. Stuart Ewen, *Captains of Consciousness* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976).

4. S. Kline, "Images of Well-Being: Market Segments in a Study of Canadian Magazine Ads, 1910-1980", paper presented at the annual meetings of the CCA/ACC, Vancouver, B.C., June 1983, Chart #1 (with modifications) and commentary.

5. Merle Curti, "The Changing Concept of 'Human Nature' in the Literature of American Advertising," *Business History Review*, XLI (1967), pp. 336-355.

6. S. Kline and W. Leiss, "Advertising, Needs, and 'Commodity Fetishism'," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, 2 (1978), pp. 5-30.

7. Approximately 1800 randomly-selected ads from *Maclean's* (1910-1980) and *Chatelaine* (1928-1980). At the same time, and completely independently, Prof. Richard Pollay and his collaborators at the Faculty of Commerce, University of British Columbia, were assembling an historically-oriented database from U.S. magazine advertisements. Pollary and his collaborators have published many articles and reports analyzing this data, and many more are in progress. We have benefitted greatly from ongoing exchanges with them. See, for example, R.W. Pollay, "The Communication of Culture: American Advertising and the Structure of Values", paper presented at the CAA/ACC meetings, Vancouver, B.C., June 1983.

8. S. Jhally, "The Codes of Advertising: Fetishism and the Context of Meaning in Modern Society," Ph.D. thesis, Department of Communication, Simon Fraser University, 1984.

9. See Jhally, *op. cit.*, chapters 4-5 for a fuller discussion.

10. Daniel Pope, *The Making of Modern Advertising* (New York: Basic Books, 1982), p. 265; Michael Ray, *Advertising and Communication Management* (Prentice-Hall, 1982), p. 482.

11. See Kline and Leiss, "Advertising, Needs, and 'Commodity Fetishism'," and R.W. Pollay, "The Communication of Culture: American Advertising and the Structure of Values."

THE CULTURAL DIALECTIC OF THE BLUES

LARRY PORTIS

Near the very end of Jean-Paul Sartre's *La Nausée*, we are left with Antoine Roquentin, an "alienated," guilt-ridden history professor, whose powers of observation and introspection had become so sharp that life seemed devoid of all meaning. Then, suddenly, without warning in the last few pages, Roquentin incongruously discovers existential affirmation, a life-force independent of, and resistent to his own morbid prescience and cartesian ratiocination. From a scratchy record on the jukebox of a café in provincial Bouville ("Mudville"), comes the voice of a "Negresse" singing "Some of These Days." In a satoric flash, Roquentin sees a "Jew" sweating in a muggy room on the twentieth floor of a New York apartment building. The man is sitting at a piano and his brain is dulled by the summer heat and the alcohol that he intermittently swallows. He wants to sleep but he must finish noting the tune he plays over and over: "Some of these days, you'll miss me honey." Roquentin listens to the singer's timeless rendition of the song, imagines its composition, and realizes that the production of art is the only way to gain immortality — to escape the "viscosity" of existence. He decides to give up his historical research and write a novel:

> This idea upsets me all of a sudden, because I no longer believed
> myself capable of such emotion. I feel something which timidly
> touches me, and I don't dare move for fear it will go away.
> Something that I had lost: a kind of joy.
> The Negresse sings. Can, therefore, her existence be justified?
> Just a little bit? I feel incredibly intimidated.[1]

In this way, Sartre acknowledged the apparent regenerative power that music derived from Afro-American sources has exerted on Western consciousness.

However, the social and political implications of the fusion of white-European and Afro-American musical cultures are no more clear today than they were when Sartre wrote his optimistic novel. On the one hand, doubts about the liberating potential of popular music have been reinforced by theorists like Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse who have emphasized that the maintenance of an *appearance* of liberation is, in fact, an essential means of socio-cultural repression in capitalist society. Given the resiliency and adaptability of the capitalist system, any creative negation of capitalist culture is immediately stripped of its critical character by the process of commercialization. Such cultural production survives, consequently, only as articles of consumption, thus contributing to a generalized commodity fetishism that is the very antithesis of cultural liberation. On the other hand, over the past

thirty years many individuals in the capitalist West have experienced certain phases of the transformation of popular music as moments crucial to their development as thinkers critical of society. The fact that relatively recent musical syntheses such as rock and roll, rock and reggae have been associated with various movements of cultural revolt, and have possibly helped to raise the general level of socio-political understanding, points to a need to re-evaluate elements of critical theory that seemingly deny any liberating potential to popular music in a capitalist society. For example, it is perhaps overly schematic to construct typological polarities such as "kitsch" vs. "avant-garde" and "profit" vs. "culture." Theodor Adorno's bias in favor of what he clearly considered socially transcendent forms of aesthetic expression is understandable given the historical conditions which existed in Germany during his intellectually formative years, but it restricts rather than facilitates the study of popular culture and consciousness.[2]

It is not enough to say, as Adorno does, that jazz is essentially "a dance music which has held sway for thirty years and has now given in completely to the demands of the market."[3] Although all forms of music derived from Afro-American sources have certainly "given in" to the demands of the market, such music has shown that it can extend the boundaries of social empathy and even of political consciousness. Adorno's characterization of the consumption of popular music as the simple maximization of sensory pleasure, an impulse he felt to be in contrast with the ability of "good music" to extend enlightenment must, therefore, be at least qualified. It is not as easy as Adorno intimates to distinguish "the feeling for which a work of art stands" from the "feeling which it excites."[4] The dialectic between aesthetic appreciation and social movement does not respect abstract categories, and the question of the socio-political implications of cultural "vitality" remains an open one. As Adorno himself noted, all music continues to be inspired by "collective practices of cult and dance," and these pre-industrial influences can in no way be written off as mere points of departure: "Rather this historical source remains the unique sensory subjective impulse of music, even if it has long since broken with every collective practice."[5] In order to extend our understanding of the socio-political dynamics of cultural transformation, it is necessary to establish the historical specificity of particular aesthetic forms. Given its central place within the development of popular music in the twentieth century, and its essential ambiguity with respect to liberation and social oppression, the blues lends itself importantly to such an analysis.*

The cultural dialectic of the blues is the product of concrete historical circumstances, which need to be taken into consideration if it is to be fully understood. To begin with, it is characterized by the adaptation of an entire population to a new social and cultural environment. The blues developed as a result of the American black population's appropriation of a new language, a new technology and an alien political system. But if the blues can be interpreted in terms of the influence of white-European culture on the Afro-American mentality, it is also true to say that this new cultural synthesis almost immediately began to influence white modes of cultural expression. Thus, an aesthetic reciprocity between white and black cultures is an important dimension of this dialectic. A further factor to be borne in mind is the growth of the "music industry" throughout the twentieth century and the

"commodification" of what had been primarily a non-market oriented mode of musical expression. The market process accelerated the fusion of white and black musical cultures, often contributing to a heightened group identity with social and political ramifications. The civil rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s and the expressions of protest on the part of American youth during the same period are related to this process. To speak of the cultural dialectic of the blues, therefore, is to speak of the cultural consequences of race relations in the United States and at the same time to evoke the cultural effects of the commodification of art and popular expression peculiar to capitalist society.

There is, however, a danger of lapsing into a sort of mechanical determinism when considering the role of the blues in more general socio-cultural changes. For one thing, we must put aside the idea that the blues was a purely traditional folk music which has only recently been exploited by white musicians and composers. In fact, even at its point of origin the blues was a product of cultural synthesis. What white people perceived as "Negro folk music" was an intricate fusion of African elements with those derived from European sources. However, the blues was not a simple combination of African sensibilities and concerns and a relatively rational European musical structure; it was rather the expression of new experiences by using and adapting the available means. The substitution, to take just one example, of the guitar and its harmonic potential for the relatively simple (in terms of their construction) stringed instruments used in West Africa was a logical appropriation of the available means of musical production which could not help but contribute to a fusion of musical traditions. The rich literature which has emerged in recent decades concerning the African roots of black culture in America is important inasmuch as it has reflected or contributed to a more positive cultural identity for American black people, but it is only one aspect of the overall cultural transformation that blues music has represented. The sentiments and emotions expressed in the blues and other types of Afro-American music were dictated by specific conditions of existence. Whether the chiliastic "other worldliness" of gospel music, the stoicism and qualified resignation of the work-gang songs, or the lyricized complaining of the blues, Afro-American music has been a single creative rsponse to the oppressiveness of captivity, terror and humiliation. This orientation has not excluded humor, whimsy and joy from Afro-American musical expression, but it is responsible for the recurrent themes in blues music as well as the peculiar musical tone that, in the end, *is* the blues. The calculated use of seventh and ninth notes and the slurring of notes are all too obviously designed to "touch" the generalized undercurrent of frustration that black people in America could not escape, regardless of what form these sentiments took. The "pathos" of the blues, and of jazz, is its quintessence.[7]

Musical technique and social sensibility is at the aesthetic core of the blues, although critical analysis has, unfortunately, tended to focus on blues lyrics. Such a purely textual analysis of the blues can be misleading inasmuch as it can lead to the projection of preconceived notions of "what black people must have been expressing" given the difficult conditions of their existence. This tendency to celebrate black creative consciousness has received its most subtle and thus interesting treatment from Paul Garon, who has emphasized the objectively critical

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substance of a marginal culture which calls into question the less dynamic art of a white, bourgeois society. In the terms of this analysis the blues are an exceptionally rich and potentially explosive example of a primordial, romantic urge to challenge the aesthetic conventions of a social order based on rational calculation, the suppression of overt social conflict, and hypocritical self-satisfaction. Blues is thus important evidence of the human will to revolt, a will that has achieved its most conscious and organized expression in the surrealist movement. "The blues singer," Garon explains, "like the surrealist poet or painter, often with an incredible array of the most startling images, and with a candour that is often stunning, creates works concerned with the most basic human desires and needs. Poetry is generally the result when bourgeois/Christian morality is defeated by desire."[8] This analysis rejects the idea that the blues is a "primitive" mode of cultural expression, and stresses the richness of imagination, symbolism and conscious manipulation of poetic images and everyday points of reference that enable the artist to communicate the most profound human emotions.

However, a truly dialectical consideration of the blues as art and socio-cultural expression must avoid investing them with the romantic concerns of white bohemia. It is true that the blues was expressive of an extreme socio-cultural marginalization, in spite of the fact that it began to influence white musicial expression very early in the twentieth century, but there remains a problem when we consider whether the blues was an organic expression of a people for itself or a revolt against the cultural and social domination of a master class. It was obviously both. And yet, a methodological and conceptual problem remains because it is all too easy either to reduce the blues to the simple status of being part of a folk culture or to impute to them exaggerated preternatural powers of observation and expression. This is a problem related, on the one hand, to the western intellectual's psychological-emotional difficulty when confronted with modes of expression that appear "non-rational", and, on the other hand, the difficulty inherent in "explaining" creativity.

One cannot reduce the blues to a set of rationally ordered literary formulas. In the bourgeois worldview, which the western intellectual cannot completely escape or transcend, explanation invariably returns to a tendency to categorize observable phenomena by artificially separating its imagined elements into specific areas. Musical expression is, however, particularly resistant to such rational categorization not only because of the alchemical difficulty of transmuting one medium into another, but also because of the unconscious foundations of aesthetic sensibility which tend to limit one's receptivity to the nuances of another culture's creative expression. The distinction between "high" and "popular" culture in capitalist societies is based most often on class perspectives; when racial and ethnic differences are added to the equation, an even greater amount of incomprehension and condescension can be expected.

While some whites manifest a disdain for the blues similar to that of Adorno for jazz, others have exhibited an uncritical glorification of them. There are *aficionados* of the blues who have "passed to the other side" in order to justify their rejection of the bland and reactionary culture of the white bourgeoisie. Thus, black culture is often adulated because of its apparent lack of the refined "sophistication"

appreciated by upper class whites. Such an appreciation renders analysis more difficult because it places a priority on maintaining the idea that the blues is a relatively pure form of folk expression that exists in contradistinction to the culture of bourgeois society. This idea inhibits a proper understanding of how the blues has actually contributed to the transformation of the dominant white culture. The history of the blues is not the story of how blacks in America created a form of musical expression that acted only as a catharsis in response to social and racial oppression, it is rather the story of how a social-outgroup was able to adapt to the dominant society and culture by transforming the available means of musical production in the course of a continuing dialectic of reciprocal assimilation and creative cultural mutation.

In understanding this process of cultural mutation that the blues has always represented, we have to reject the idea of the blues' purity as organic folk expression; the blues was never the expression of a "traditional" society. Regardless of the origins of the blues in the work and gospel music created by African slaves, it is difficult to say that the blues truly existed before the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries when it took on an identifiable character, primarily by virtue of its commercial potential. "That blues began as folk expression goes without saying. Nor have the original folk-type blues musicians ever gone out of existence. But in point of historical fact, once W.C. Handy had arranged, scored and published *The Memphis Blues* (1912), the *St. Louis Blues* and *Yellow Dog Blues* (1914) and *Beale Street Blues* (1916), it was no longer possible to restrict blues music to the category of folk expression."[9] Blues was a commercialized form of musical expression that had its star performers, its touring circuits, its legions of hopeful young artists, its fans, groupies and financial exploiters.

Nevertheless, there exists a tendency to think of blues artists as down-and-out victims of a cruel and unappreciative society who, when they did not meet tragic ends, finished in obscurity. Two things must be kept in mind in the interest of avoiding this romanticized image of the blues musician. Firstly, most musicians, regardless of their color, are underpaid, unappreciated, in contact with marginal and disreputable social milieux, and ultimately forgotten by their erstwhile public. Secondly, a large number of the blues musicians of the 1920s and 1930s, who are often thought of as unsung heroes sacrificed to their "traditional" desire to express a folk culture and scorned and discriminated against by white people, were in fact recording artists with the status of minor stars for a significant portion of their potential audience — the black population. If, for example, Bessie Smith is thought of as a pathetic woman forced to sing lascivious songs in bars until she died in an automobile accident in the mid-1930s, our historical understanding of the place of blues music in modern cultural transformation is certainly deficient. Bessie Smith was working theatres as early as 1912 and "was already a vaudeville prima donna with a considerable following before her first records were released. By the end of 1923 her popularity was that of a superstar."[10] The black artists that white fans have considered as exponents of a "traditional folk culture" were in fact professional performers interested in selling a product. As such, blues musicians and singers represented the margins of the entertainment industry in a capitalist economy whose technological advances — the phonograph, the radio, the cinema

— had created a greatly expanded and potentially lucrative market for an increasingly sophisticated product.[11] Blind Lemon Jefferson, Big Bill Broonzy, Robert Johnson, and legions of other performers fashioned their art from both their individual experiences and the collective existence of black people; they were also professional "songsters", willing and able to adapt their styles, and their lyrics, to whatever circumstances demanded. Music was their livelihood. They were obliged to deal with managers and record producers, and they worried about the distribution of their product as much as any would-be recording star does today.[12] Listening, for example, to Blind Willie McTell explain his recording career to John Lomax, recording for the Folk Music archives of the Library of Congress in 1940, is a lesson in how to set-up a curriculum vitae.

As part of a rapidly evolving commercial culture, blues music immediately began to influence white musicians and to absorb, in its turn, new elements from the white musical culture. Throughout the twentieth century there has been a slow and elaborate cross-fertilization between black and white musical cultures. This reciprocity has especially been observed between the culture of blacks and that of poor, Southern rural whites. Between the hillbilly and blue grass music derived from the British Isles and the country blues, there are points of contact that represent more than mere borrowing. By the time we arrive at Jimmy Rodgers (the "Singing Brakeman") and Big Bill Broonzy in the late 1920s, both cultures are heavily indebted to one another; and American "folk" music, although still racially distinguishable, is well on the way to becoming an amalgam variegated primarily along ethnic and regional lines. The great popularity of jazz in the 1920s and after carried this fusion of musical cultures to more privileged social classes. By the late 1940s, at the very latest, "race" music was ceasing to exist.

Within the blues idiom, there are now a multitude of styles which are obviously related to regional white influences of an ethnic or cultural nature: the jazz-tinged blues of southern California, the big band style of the Kansas City area, the "Cajun" blues of Louisiana, the dramatic "delta blues" of the deep South, the throbbing industrial sounds produced in northern centers like Chicago and Detroit. To a significant extent, this diversity reflects different living and working conditions, but the cultural peculiarities of the local white population form an ineluctable part of the black environment and are invariably integrated into black cultural production.

Technological developments have combined with socio-cultural factors to encourage the assimilation of blues by the white public. In particular, the innovation of the electrically amplified urban blues in the late 1940s — with its more aggressive musical attitude — found a high degree of acceptance among young whites. The latent aggression, the peculiar "attack" of the electric guitar, or the piercing, shrill tension of the amplified harmonica working on the surface of a steadily rumbling, "walking" bass line has had a special appeal for the post-World War II generations of white youth in the Western world. It is tension, the latent aggression of pent-up emotion, that particularly characterizes urban blues. For example, in an arrangement as simple as that of Elmore James' amplified version of Robert Johnson's *Dust my Broom*, the simple "shuffle" rhythm performed on the bass strings of the guitar is a counterpoint to a violent semi-staccato "lead-fill"

performed on the treble strongs. The lead-fill is, in effect, a sudden outburst of aggression. The initial shock of this contrst between regular passivity and violent attack is heightened into a general state of tension by the expectation of the next explosion. The creation of this atmosphere of anxiety and latent rebellion can justifiably be thought of as the musical representation of the existential conditions of black life and culture. Without excessively pushing this analysis, we can say that the "shuffle" rhythm corresponds all too well to the facade of self-effacing humility that black people have to assume in a racist society in order to cover up fear, resentments and anger; the contrasting lead-fill represents a release of the resultant tensions.

To argue that the blues has been a commercial product to a greater degree than is generally admitted, does not diminish its importance as a form of creative expression peculiar to black people; it merely poses a fundamental question with respect to creativity in a capitalist society: what is the relationship between honest self-expression and a desire for pecuniary gain and/or social acceptance? It is in the context of this question that the peculiarity of music as a mode of expression/ representation is revealed. Because of its potential to be rapidly commodified, musical inspiration in a market-oriented society is suspect at the very moment of its conception, and the existence of an ontological chasm between performer and audience has logically become a cultural characteristic of capitalist societies. Questions concerning the motivations underlying such creative inspiration do not arise in "traditional" societies where the possibilities for the commercial exploitation of individual talent are minimal, and where the musical culture can be said to be relatively "organic" — an integral and essential component of a ritualized collective life.

It is not surprising, therefore, that it is in "developing" societies that all the traditional rhythms and musical devices characteristic of the previous, more stable, social structures are adapted quickly to modern technology. In these "developing" societies, where cultural institutions disintegrate and where urban proletariats develop very quickly, conditions exist for the rapid and intense fusion of traditional music with capitalist production and marketing techniques. The recent examples of Jamaica and Nigeria stand out in this regard. One sees, for example, in the film, *The Harder They Come*, how such a cultural fusion can simultaneously express the condition of the collectivity and serve the strictly pecuniary interests of a capitalist class. In this case, the explicit "message" being transmitted by reggae music often calls for liberation from the very forces which allow that message to be transmitted. The situation of the blues in the 1920s and 1930s is analogous to the recent development of musical synthesis in "developing" societies, where undoubted "folk" expression of a sincere and disinterested nature is subjected to a commercial culture that pushes the music towards a rapid evolution. Such is, in fact, the dialectic of contemporary popular culture, where a blues-derived music — rock and roll — continues to exhibit the two poles of real social expression and the most crass attempts to manipulate consumer behavior.

Like any other product in capitalist society, the blues has been shaped by commercial considerations such as the need to satisfy perceived consumer trends and the related necessity for the performer to conform to an existing text or musical

arrangement. Creativity in the context of these demands is itself a fortuitous combination of expertise, intuition and luck. Blues musicians in the 1920s and 1930s traveled well-worn circuits and struggled to win recognition, simultaneously resisting and conforming to market forces, just as musicians do today. Then, as now, successes must be understood against the background of the legions of musicians, composers, and performers who never hit the bigtime. This musical reserve army effectively keeps salaries down and allows agents, producers and distributors to maintain a stranglehold on the artists. "Creativity" is a raw material which must be carefully restrained, "tailored" to the market, and administered to the public in measured doses — never too much or too little at a time. Demand must be kept high by the repression of individual and collective creative forces. It is this repression of creativity which characterizes cultural life in capitalist societies; it is a repression which is fully characteristic of the capitalist polity in that it is just as potentially liberating as it is frustrating and alienating.

Capitalist marketing techniques possess an objective capacity for the adaptation of virtually any initially critical cultural product. Even more importantly, the techniques of musical reproduction in capitalist society require specific social relations of production which insure that no individual artist can succeed in communicating with his or her audience on any other basis than that of mutual mystification. The elevation of the performer to "star" status — the fetishization of the performer who, in fact, becomes the product — "massifies" the audience in the same measure that the artists achieve a sort of mythical status. Regardless of the fact that the artist tends to become a mere tool of production in the entertainment industry, and thus subject to a process of alienation similar to that experienced in other proletarianized segments of the work force, this same artist is held up to his or her audience as evidence of the fluidity and openness of the social structure. The myth of the self-made man is nowhere so strong at the present time as in the music industry. We see this tendency in all aspects of commercial music — B.B. King is the "king" of the blues, Elvis Presley was the "king" of rock and roll, the Rolling Stones are "the greatest rock and roll band in the world" and so on and so on.

More than mere hucksterism, this Barnum and Bailey approach to the marketing of musical performers is part of the emergence of a specific stage in the development of capitalist culture. As Adorno pointed out in his discussion of the advent of the symphony conductor as a new focus of aesthetic attention, the elevation of an individual personality to "superstar" status is designed by capitalist marketing "to establish the lost communication between work and public through the sovereignty of its 'concept' by exorcizing the configuration of the work in a type of enlargement or bigger-than-life image. This image might, of course, be unsuited to the work; nonetheless, it guarantees the effect upon the public."[13] Corporate control of production and marketing requires both a large pool of reserve labor and an easily manipulated mass of consumers. The resort to extreme psychological conditioning in the maintenance of the labor force and the consuming public has been, therefore, an historically logical development which has both increased the possibilities of social and commercial exploitation and created a highly volatile socio-cultural environment.

In fact, the market can be explosive, unpredictable, liable to escape the control

which promoters and advertisers exert over it. When the market-public tacitly joins forces with artist-performers or, rather, when the carefully maintained distinction between artist and public suddenly breaks down, limitations and repression are reduced accordingly. There is, during such moments, a release of pent-up creative energy, a flooding of poetic self-expression that temporarily inundates the market and produces chaos within the commercial milieu and even within the hierarchy of capitalist enterprise as it relates to the "music industry." During the post-war era there have been two such moments of major organizational dysfunction with the musical culture industry: during the years 1954-56 and 1966-68. Both occasions represented a spontaneous rejection of commercial product, to the point where marketing programmers suddenly lost touch with consumer trends; and both occasions involved a new fusion of blues and white popular music.

The emergence of rock and roll, which is the first and most important of these historical moments, deserves special consideration, for although rock and roll is often thought to be a mere adaptation of blues to white modes of representation, the reality is far more complex. Two points must be stressed in this regard. First, rock and roll was not, in fact, created by white people. It was, rather, part of a trend within the development of Afro-American music — rhythm and blues — which transformed the "boogie" (i.e. a greatly accelerated 12-bar blues, with eight notes to the bar) into a predominately vocal style reinforced by more elaborate orchestration. This trend — well-advanced by the end of the 1930s — was given even more impetus from 1940 on by the use of amplified instruments. Second, if post-1954 rock and roll was indeed characterized by the adaptation of blues songs and blues chord-progression to an up-tempo, white repertoire, such adaptation constituted a natural assimilation of Afro-American influences by a new generation of young, white musicians and singers who, for various historical reasons,[14] were increasingly receptive to black culture.

By 1954, when white recording artists began to cover black material in a massive way, rock and roll had already come to dominate the music industry.[15] What really happened in that year, when white acts like Bill Haley and the Comets and Elvis Presley burst on the scene, was less the creation of a new form than a shift in white musical sensibility that amounted to a rejection of the standard product offered the public by the major recording companies and the czars of show business.

This shift in musical tastes was accompanied by the appearance of a plethora of small, independent recording companies which simultaneously encouraged the development of new "market trends" and attempted to profit from them. "These small independent companies — mongrel labels, they were classed within the industry — were the breeding grounds of rock 'n' roll. None of them had any real ethnic or esthetic identity. They all released whatever they thought might sell."[16] Once their "mongrelized" product of blues, rhythm and blues, country and bebop began to sell to the masses of "baby boom" youth in the middle 1950s, capitalist interests reacted confusedly. "The major companies were paying now for their sins. Looking askance for too long at rock 'n' roll, thinking that it was a passing trend ... they began to see exactly how much money they had been missing out on since the late forties. All the best-selling rock 'n' roll hits, all the biggest artists, had belonged to those mongrel labels."

"As 1955 began, the major labels tried desparately to cash in on rock 'n' roll. Since

they really did not understand what rock 'n' roll was, the maladroit rushing of their greed was ridiculous to behold."[17] The major companies ludicrously (and unprofitably) compelled established crooners like Tony Bennett to jive-up their singing styles in imitation of authentic rock and roll performers. Such a marketing strategy was, of course, inadequate given the sudden predominance of aesthetic criteria defined in opposition to those promoted by the major recording companies. The only real solution for these powerful companies was to bring the new artists under contract and then refine the product in such a way as to make it acceptable to the greatest number of potential consumers. As a result, rock and roll quickly lost the rawness and intensity that characterized it when it was first exposed to a mass, multi-racial public. By 1957, the industry had not only adapted to the new sensibility, it had gained control over it, and the "mongrel labels" were either absorbed into the large ones or they tended to fall back into obscurity.

However, the few years during which Afro-American musical influences made direct and uncontrolled contact with a white mainstream audience were enough to mark a whole generation of post-war youth. Eventually, they prepared the way for an even more significant fusion of Afro-American and white music. This process involved the ideological formation of a generation, a mutation of consciousness that led to the "counter-cultural" and "protest" movements of the 1960s and after. In 1971, Peter Guralnick explained how the commodification of rock and roll had led him to discover the blues. Speaking in particular of the 1954-56 period, he remarked: "The great thing about it, in the beginning at least, was that there seemed to be no one in control. It was *our* music in more than just name . . . because it was for the most part beneath the contempt of those who were marketing it."[18] The feeling was fleeting. Rock and roll was brought under control suddenly and brutally. Guralnick's generation experienced the effects as a rupture with the past and even a betrayal of out-group solidarity — a seminal, negative experience with the "establishment" and those who "sold out" to it: "What we did at the age of fifteen was to retreat into the past. The past year or two."[19] In search of compensation, Guralnick and his peers turned to "folk music", and discovered the blues.

By 1958, the recordings of Elvis Presley and others had given way to polished products using full orchestration and other techniques designed to increase the mass appeal of rock and roll by defusing the vital rebelliousness that tended to polarize the public. At the same time, the so-called "payola" investigations into alleged corruption between record companies and radio disk jockeys reduced the threat that the mongrel labels posed to the major companies. The payola "scandal" was used, on the one hand, to demonstrate the corrupting influence of rock and roll and, on the other hand, to impose oligarchical control over the promotion of music industry products: "Program directors were put in to supervise the deejays, who became increasingly anonymous: playlists were drawn up by these directors and the deejays could only play records which appeared on their stations' lists; direct payments were replaced by the elaborate conventions of plugging as record companies began to employ even more intensely their professional radio salesmen, the pluggers, to persuade program directors to playlist their wares, to gamble on their success. The big companies regained their promotional advantage. . . ."[20] The consequent debilitation of rock and roll was such that, for several years, American

popular music seemed to be an increasingly sterile commodity. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, therefore, white youth in North America turned away from "pop music" towards "folk music" and rapidly discovered the Afro-American musical culture — the blues in particular — that had produced rock and roll in the first instance.

The emergence of "rock" music — the second major post-war phase of the infusion of blues into mainstream music — came in the 1960s, as the generation which had been exposed to rock and roll in their early adolescence began to either take an intellectual interest in the phenomenon or to reproduce the music themselves. An undercurrent of aesthetic and cultural exploration began to mount as legions of young, white musicians began to emulate blues artists. By 1964-65, the "British invasion" of the Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Animals, etc. revealed that an even younger generation was receptive to a blues-derived or blues-influenced music that was quite different from that which marketing planners considered to be the ideal product.

By 1966, these factors had contributed to an explosion of creativity which presented the corporate order with a new set of problems. Although the role of small, independent recording companies was not as great during this second wave of musical creativity, musicians who tended to let counter-cultural propensities and socio-political ideals determine their business dealings forced a certain reorientation and even reorganisation of the music industry. The major recording companies were not only forced to deal with new companies such as Warner Reprise, Kama Sutra, Buddah, Motown and Electra, but the artists themselves often demanded much more control over "product" than they had ever been accorded in the past. It was not until the early 1970s that the major companies regained a firm grip on all phases of production within the industry.

The periodic appropriation of Afro-American music has thus revealed the essential instability of market forces in capitalist society. In both the rock and roll explosion of the mid-1950s and the rock music phenomenon of the late-1960s, the wild scramble to exploit new tastes revealed that the public had succeeded briefly in imposing its own aesthetic criteria on the industry as a whole. The overall phenomenon can be understood, on the one hand, as a failure of the popular music industry to study properly the market, and consequently as a failure to reinvest in the capital-reproductive capacity of the industry and, thus, as a structural weakness inherent in the industry itself. On the other hand, the periodic crises of the music industry can be seen as the result of sporadic popular revolts, as spontaneous reactions of a culturally oppressed population, as attempts to negate an artificially "packaged" culture by participating in the generation of new forms of popular expression.

Although it is certain that, beyond its immediate impact, any conscious attempt to use the medium of commercial music to modify the consciousness of listeners is bound to fail, the generation and cooptation of anti-capitalist cultural formations nevertheless imply a series of critical moments in cultural development itself — moments of "sudden illumination"[21] that can clarify social forces and political power relationships. Regardless of the cooptive capacity of capitalist production and marketing, "It is incorrect to believe that no actual need lies at the basis of the

consumption of music — as though all musical life were nothing but some type of resounding cultural backdrop, erected by bourgeois society for the concealment of its own true purposes. . . ."[22] In the short run, the critical expression of such needs as moments of relative social demystification can indeed lend itself to an utopian *illusion* of accelerated historical development; but, in the long run, it can also open the way to a profound process of critical thought. Reflection upon lived experiences can result in enlightenment, more informed commitment and, eventually, more considered social action. The fusion of Afro-American music with white-European music has periodically produced the kinds of sparks that have led to moments of sudden illumination, regardless of the productive and commercial processes that moved as quickly as possible to dampen them.

The blues was, to adapt Adorno's formulation, "A music internally suited to the function" of the black population within the objective confines of capitalist production and social relations. The various moments of its fusion with white musical forms represented a critical appropriation of the negativity of black music in relation to the dominant culture. By its very nature, this mutual appropriation of culture was progressive and reactionary at the same time. The fusion of black and white music represented a different kind of liberation for blacks and whites. Ultimately, it represented a new kind of cultural domination for both racial groups.

The cooptive process inherent in capitalist production and marketing techniques was successful in neutralizing "the acuteness of the attack and the coherence of every technical formulation" of the blues.[23] At the present time the blues is not exerting a particulary critical influence on popular music in the United States. A significant proportion of the black population has rejected the blues as being too reminiscent of their ghettoization, while the creative vitality that it once lent to white commercial music is largely spent. The influence of Afro-American music is stronger than ever, but its socially critical content has been effectively neutralized.

Since the 1960s, it has been increasingly necessary to analyze the transformation of capitalist culture in terms of national cross-fertilizations and mutual inspirations. The dialectic of cultural revolt and repression has expanded its global parameters in the measure that capitalism has penetrated and subjugated non-capitalist economies and social structures. The effects of this continuing mutation of aesthetic and social consciousness will undoubtedly give rise to new forms of cultural synthesis. The past decade has demonstrated that fusions such as reggae, salsa and commercialized rhythms from all parts of Africa are able, like the blues, to focus social consciousness, to create new fields of commercial exploitation and to contribute to the continuing dialectic of cultural hegemony and revolt.

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THE BLUES

Notes

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *La Nausée* (Paris, 1938), p. 247.

2. James Marsh says this of Adorno's analysis in general. James L. Marsh, "Adorno's Critique of Stravinsky," *New German Critique* no. 28, Winter, 1983.

3. Theodor W. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music*)New York, 1973), p. 171. See also: Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (New York, 1976), pp. 13-14.

4. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music, op. cit.*, p. 12.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

*   In this essay, I do not privilege popular music as a liberative dimension of popular culture. In spite of the tendency of a market economy to enforce the acceptance of artificially devised aesthetic critera, there exists a counter-tendency in virtually every area of human activity: the spontaneous invention of new cultural forms which simultaneously require socio-political cooptation and invite commercial exploitation. In this context, one could mention such recent examples as the hot rod or custom car cult of the 1940s and 1950s and the sartorial innovations of the whole post-war period. The importance of such popularly generated culture in the formation of group identities susceptible to politicization has never been lost on social scientists and guardians of public morality.

6. Lawrence W. Levine stresses both of these points: "The precise time and manner of the emergence of the blues are lost in the irrecoverable past." ". . . blues was the most typically American music Afro-Americans had yet created and represented a major degree of acculturation to the individualized ethos of the larger society." Lawrence W. Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* (New York, 1977), p. 221.

7. The "slide" or "bottleneck" technique in blues guitar playing can add considerably to the emotional force of the blues. Often, words in the vocalization are arbitrarily substituted for by notes, and vice-versa. The result is that the performer can "cry" the word or "declare" it at will, thus effectively changing the figurative sense and the emotional context.

8. Paul Garon, *Blues & the Poetic Spirit* (New York, 1975), p. 67. For a detailed critique of Garon's book, and a fine discussion of blues in general, see: Carl Boggs, "The Blues Tradition: from Poetic Revolt to Cultural Impasse." *Socialist Review* 8 (2), March-April, 1978, pp. 115-134.

9. Albert Murray, *Stomping the Blues* (New York, 1976), p. 70. Levine agrees with Murray: "Certainly early examples of the blues existed in the last half of the nineteenth century and possibly even during slavery, but it was not until the twentieth century that it became one of the dominant forms of black song." Levine, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

10. Murray, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

11. On the importance of the recording industry in the evolution of the blues, see: Levine, *op. cit.*, pp. 225-226 and LeRoi Jones, *Blues People, Negro Music in White America* (New York, 1963), pp. 98-103.

12. Or, as Roosevelt Sykes (1906-83) sang it:
    "Music is my business,
    Well, I'm not ashamed (2x)
    Now music is not a game,
    But Mr. Piano is my name."   *Forty-four Blues*

13. Theodor W. Adorno, "On the Social Situation of Music," *Telos* no. 35, Spring, 1978, p. 150.

14. Massive demographic shifts during the 1940s tended to create a more mobile and urbanized society in which there was greater inter-cultural contact between the races.

15. According to Nick Tosches, the blues singer Trixie Smith may have been the first to *record* the expression "rock and roll", in her song "My Daddy Rocks Me (with one steady roll)" (1922), while in 1934 the Boswell sisters actually sang a song entitled "Rock and Roll". Over the next

twenty years, and especially after 1940, the word "rock" was increasingly used as either a verb or a noun in song titles and lyrics, advertising copy, critical reviews and record company names. See Nick Tosches, *Unsung Heroes of Rock 'n' Roll* (New York, 1984), p. 7.

16.   *Ibid.*, p. 5.

17.   *Ibid.*, p. 8.

18.   Peter Guralnick, *Feel Like Going Home* (New York, 1971), p. 16.

19.   *Ibid.*, p. 20.

20.   Simon Frith, *Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure, and the Politics of Rock 'n' Roll* (New York, 1981), p. 119.

21.   This is Adorno's expression in description of the initial effect of the work of Weill and Brecht. Adorno, "On the Social Situation of Music," *op. cit.*, p. 144.

22.   *Ibid.*, p. 154.

23.   *Ibid.*, p. 145.

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TELEVISION AND THE TRIUMPH OF CULTURE: THREE THESES

ARTHUR KROKER

Mediascape

This essay is about what the West German film director, Wim Wenders, has described in *Chambre 666* as the "anti-matter of cinema" — television. I will present, and defend, a theoretical strategy for interpreting television as the Real World — the excremental vision *par excellence* — of a postmodern culture, society and economy in radical decline. In much the same way that video art teases to the surface the inner semiurgical laws of motion of television as simulacrum, this essay examines television for what it really is — a mediascape! It's TV then, not just as a technical object which we can hold apart from ourselves, but as a full technical ensemble, a social apparatus, which implodes into society as the emblematic cultural form of a relational power, which works as a simulacrum of electronic images recomposing everything into the semiurgical world of advertising and power, which links a processed world based on the exteriorisation of the senses with the interiorisation of simulated desire in the form of programmed need-dispositions, and which is just that point where Nietzsche's prophetic vision of twentieth-century experience as a "hospital room" finds its moment of truth in the fact that when technique *is* us, when TV is the real world of postmodernism, then the horizon finally closes and freedom becomes synonymous with the deepest deprivals of the fully realized technological society.

But, of course, if we can speak now of power and TV, this just might mean, as Foucault has intimated, that the disappearing locus of power has probably already slipped away from TV as the real world, and taken up residence now in that digital paradise, that perfectly postmodern because technologically signifying world, of the computer.

TV or Not TV

I would like, then, to examine three theses concerning television, the death of society, and the triumph of an empty, signifying culture. Specifically, I begin with two great refusals of conventional interpretations of television: a refusal of the *positivist subordination* of television to a representational logic or, what's the same, to TV as a "mirror of society"; and a refusal of the *Marxian subordination* of television to a cultural reflex of the commodity-form or, what's the same, to an electronic reproduction of ideological interests. Against this double-subordination of TV to a reflex of society or ideology (against what amounts to a *modernist*

reduction of television to a xerox copy of culture, society and economy), I want to argue just the opposite.

TV is, in a very literal sense, the real world, not of modern but of *postmodern* culture, society and economy — of society typified by the dynamic momentum of the spirit of technicisme triumphant and of real popular culture driven onwards by the ecstacy and decay of the obscene spectacle — and that everything which escapes the real world of TV, everything which is not videated as its identity-principle, everything which is not processed through TV as the technical apparatus of relational power *par excellence*, is peripheral to the main tendencies of the contemporary century.

In postmodernist culture, it's not TV as a mirror of society, but just the reverse: *it's society as a mirror of television.* And it's not TV as a reflex of the commodity-form, but the commodity-form in its most advanced, and exhausted, expression living finally (as Marx prophecied) as a pure image-system, as a spectral television image. As the wall posters everywhere around Montréal these days tell us, the major philosophical question is: *TV or Not TV.* Or, if you prefer a small variation, it's TV or the Museum.

Indeed, there was a report recently released by the *West German Ministry of Internal Affairs* on the subject of the "effects of new information and communication techniques on the arts and culture"[1] which said without any sense of irony:

> According to experts, museums and galleries will not be threatened by any proliferation of television programs and the increasing spread of new information and communication techniques. They may even profit from this, because the museum, with its "still" pictures and exhibits, will become even more attractive as a relief from television. Museums have a so-called escape-function because they offer a refuge from an increasingly technical world. Television and the museums will not compete with each other in the future; on the contrary, they complement each other.[2]

Television now is the real world of a postmodern culture whose *ideology* is entertainment and the society of the obscene spectacle;[4] whose *culture* is driven onwards by the universalization of the commodity-form; whose politics gravitate around the *lifestyle issues* of the new middle class; whose major form of *social cohesion* is provided by the pseudo-solidarities (pseudo-mediations) of electronic television images (not Durkheim's "collective representations", but Sartre's "serial culture"); whose *public* is the dark, silent mass of viewers who, as Jean Baudrillard says, are never permitted to speak and a media elite which is allowed to speak "but which has nothing to say";[5] and where that which is bought and sold in a society where class has disappeared into mass and mass has dissolved into the new black-hole of the "blip" is something purely psychological: *empty, abstract quanta of audience attention*, the rise and fall of which is measured incessantly by overnight statistical polling.

But why go to the theorists? TV advertisers and programmers are much better.

Speaking about *Miami Vice*, the head of series programming at NBC said recently in an interview in the *New York Times*: "There's a buzz out there about the show" ('out there' is the dense, black shadow of that missing social matter — the audience). "In the way it's shot, where it's shot, the kind of people it has, *Miami Vice* conveys a certain dreamlike quality, yet a certain humanity." Michael Mann, the producer of the show, is much more direct: "The secret of its success. No earth tones. We want to feel electric, and whenever we can we use pastels that vibrate."

A recent ad in *Variety* magazine, the bible of TV advertisers, said it all. It's an ad for TV Brazil and it shows a picture of the world with dots everywhere on it, from India to Australia to Eastern Europe and North America, everywhere, in fact, where TV Brazil productions are shown. The caption is about McLuhan and it says simply: "Maybe *this* is what he meant by the global village?"

Three Theses

My general theorisation is, therefore, that TV is the real world of postmodern culture which has *entertainment* as its ideology, the *spectacle* as the emblematic sign of the commodity-form, *lifestyle advertising* as its popular psychology, pure, empty *seriality* as the bond which unites the simulacrum of the audience, *electronic images* as its most dynamic, and only, form of social cohesion, *elite media politics* as its ideological formula, the buying and selling of *abstracted attention* as the locus of its marketplace rationale, *cynicism* as its dominant cultural sign, and the diffusion of a *network of relational power* as its real product.

My *specific* theorisations about TV as the real world of postmodernism take the form of three key theses:

Thesis 1: TV as Serial Culture
Television is the emblematic cultural expression of what Jean-Paul Sartre has described as "serial culture". The specific context for Sartre's description of "serial culture" is an extended passage in *The Critique of Dialectical Reason* in which he reflects on the philosophical implications of mass media generally, and on radio broadcasting specifically.[6] Sartre's media analysis is crucial because it represents the beginnings of a serious existential critique of the media, from radio to television, and because in his highly nuanced discussion of radio broadcasting Sartre provides some entirely insightful, although grisly, clues as to the fate of society under the sign of the mediascape. For Sartre, the pervasive effect of mass media, and of radio broadcasting specifically, was to impose *serial structures* on the population. Sartre can say that the voice is "vertiginous" for everyone just because the mass media produce "seriality" as their cultural form.[7] And what's "serial culture" for Sartre? It's a "mode of being", Sartre says, "beings outside themselves in the passive unity of the object" —[8] which has:

- "absence" as the mode of connection between audience members
- "alterity" or "exterior separation" as its negative principle of unity

- "impotence" as the political bond of the (media) market
- the destruction of "reciprocity" as its aim
- the reduction of the audience to the passive unity of the "practico-inert" (inertia) as its result
- and the "three moment" dialectic: triumph (when you know that you're smarter than the media elite); "impotent indignation" (when you realize that the audience is never permitted to speak, while the media elite are allowed to speak but have nothing to say); and fascination (as you study your entrappment as Other in the serial unity of the TV audience, which is the "pure, abstract formula" of the mass media today).[9]

The TV audience is Sartre's serial culture *par excellence*. The audience is constituted on the basis of "its relation to the object and its reaction to it"; the audience is nothing more than a "serial unity" ("beings outside themselves in the passive unity of the object"); membership in the TV audience is always only on the basis of "alterity" or "exterior separation"; impotence or the "three moment" dialectic is the iron law of the hierarchical power of television; "abstract sociality" is the false sociality of a TV audience which as an empty, serial unity is experienced as a negative totality; the image is "vertiginous" for everyone; and the overall cultural effect of television is to do exactly what Sartre prophecied:

> The practico-inert object (that's TV) not only produces a unity of individuals outside themselves in inorganic matter, but it also determines their isolation and, insofar as they're separate, assures communication through alterity.[10]

In just the same way that the gigantic red star of the supernova burns most brilliantly when it is already most exhausted and imploding towards that dark density of a new black-hole, TV today can be so hyper-spectacular and so desperate in its visual effects because, as Sartre has hinted, its real existence is "inertia" and it is always already on the decline towards the realm of the "practico-inert". What's TV then? It's Sartre's "serial culture" in electronic form, from the "viewer as absence" and "alterity" as TV's basic principle (McLuhan's "exteriorisation" of the central nervous system) to the TV audience as that "serial unity" or "negative totality", the truth of whose existence as *pure inertia* (Sartre's being in the *mud* of the practico-inert) can be caught if you glance between the laser canons of colour TV as they blast you and catch the black patches, the dead darkness to infinity, which is the pure inertial state which television struggles so desperately to hide. And that darkness to infinity between the hysterical explosions of the laser beam? That's Sartre's "serial culture" as the sign of contemporary society: just when the image becomes "vertiginous" for everyone; when the viewer is reduced to "absence"; and when vacant and grisly "alterity" is the only bond that unites that negative totality — the "audience".

Thesis 2: Television as a Postmodern Technology

Television, just because it's an emblematic expression of Sartre's "serial culture" in electronic form, is also a perfect model of the processed world of postmodern technology. And why not? TV exists, in fact, just at that rupture-point in human history between the decline of the now-passé age of sociology and the upsurge of the new world of communications (just between the eclipse of normalized society and the emergence of radical semiurgy as the language of the "structural" society). TV is at the border-line of a great paradigm-shift between the "death of society" (modernism with its representational logic) and the "triumph of an empty, signifying culture" (the "structural paradigm" of postmodernism). In the Real World of television, it's:

- Sign *not* Norm
- Signification *not* Socialisation[11]
- Exteriorisation of the Mind (McLuhan's processed world) *not* (Weber's) Reification
- (Baudrillard's) "simulacrum" *not* institutional discourse
- Radical semiurgy *not* (Foucault's) Normalization
- Simulation *not* Rationalisation
- An empire of voyeurs held together by up-scale titillation effects (from the valorisation of corpses to the crisis jolts of bad news and more bad news) and blasted by the explosions of the laser beam into the pulverized state of Sartre's "serial beings" and *not* the old and boring "structure of roles" held together by the "internalization of need-dispositions".
- Power as seduction *not* (primarly) power as coercion
- Videation not institutionalisation
- Not society (that's disappeared and who cares) but the triumph of the culture of signification

If TV is the processed world triumphant, this just means that it functions to transform the old world of society under the sign of the *ideology of technicisme.* By technicisme I mean that ideology, dominant in contemporary consumer culture, which holds (as William Leiss has noted) to the historical inevitability and ethical desirability of the technical mastery of social and non-social nature. The outstanding fact about the TV "network", viewed as one dynamic expression of the spreading outwards of the fully realized technological society, is that it screens off any sense of technology as *deprival.* Like a *trompe l'oeil,* television functions as "spectacle" to divert the eye from the radical impoverishment of life in technological society. Indeed, television screens of any sense of technology as deprival by means of three strategic colonizations, or subversions, of the old world of society.

1. The Subversion of Sociality: TV functions by substituting the negative totality of the audience with its pseudo-mediations by electronic images for genuine sociality, and for the possibility of authentic human solidarities. It's electronic communication as the anti-matter of the social! Indeed, who can escape now being

constituted by the coercive rhetoric of TV and by its nomination of fictional audiences. We are either rhetorically defined Canadians as we are *technocratically* composed as an audience by the self-announced "electronic bridge" of the CBC; or we are the electronically constituted audience of Nietzsche's "last men" who just want their consumer comforts and blink as we celebrate the breakdown of American institutions. In *St. Elsewhere*, everything is held together by hi-tech and the joke: nurses kill doctors; the medical staff resent their patients for dying; and patients are forced to console doctors and nurses alike in their distress over the inability of medical technology to overcome mortality. In *Dynasty*, it is the object-consciousness and dream-like state of the cynical culture of advanced capitalism itself which is celebrated. And, in *Family Feud*, we celebrate normativity or statistical polling ("survey says"): the very instruments for the measurement of that missing social matter in the new universe of electronic communications — the audience — which exists anyway in the TV universe as a dark and unknown nebula.

The TV audience may be, today, the most pervasive type of social community, but if this is so then it is a very special type of community: an *anti-community* or a *social anti-matter* — electronically composed, rhetorically constituted, an electronic mall which privileges the psychological position of the voyeur (a society of the disembodied eye) and the cultural position of *us* as tourists in the society of the spectacle.

2. The Psychological Subversion: In the real world of television, technology is perfectly interiorized: it comes *within* the self. There is now such a phenomenon as the *TV self*, and it builds directly on Sartre's sense of "serial being". The TV self is not just a pair of flashing eyeballs existing in Andy Warhol's languid and hyper-cynical state of "bored but hyper." The TV self is the electronic individual *par excellence* who gets everything there is to get from the simulacrum of the media: a market-identity as a consumer in the society of the spectacle; a galaxy of hyper-fibrillated moods (the poles of ressentiment and manic buoyancy are the psychological horizon of the TV family); traumatized serial being (television blasts away everything which cannot be reduced to the technological limitations of "good visuals" or, as Sartre has said, to "otherness"). Just like in David Cronenberg's classic film, *Videodrone*, television functions by implanting a simulated, electronically monitored, and technocratically controlled identity in the flesh. Television technology makes the decisive connection between the simulacrum and biology by creating a social nerve connection between spectacular visuals, the news as crisis interventions (image-fibrillation) and the psychological mood of its rhetorically constituted audience. TV colonizes individual psychology best by being a "mood setter".

3. The Technological Colonization: The outstanding fact about TV as the real world is that it is a perfect, even privileged, model of how human experience in the twentieth-century is actually transformed to fit the instrumental imperatives of technological society. Marx might have had his "factory" as a social laboratory for studying the exploitation of "abstract labour"; Hobbes might have written with the

ping-pong universe of classical, Newtonian physics in mind (in the old world of modernist physics it's all action-reaction with things only causally related at a distance); but we have television as a privileged model of how we are reworked by the technological sensorium as it implodes the space and time of lived human experience to the electronic poles of the "screen and the network" (Baudrillard). Television is the real experience of the ideology and culture of technicisme.

1. The dominant *cultural formation* is the psychological voyeur and the audience linked together by images created by media elites, but this only in the form of electronic stimuli formulated in response to the incessant polling of the dark nebula of that missing social matter — the TV audience.

2. *Hyper-simulation* is the (disappearing) essence of technically-mediated experience: staged communications, fabricated events, packaged audiences held hostage to the big trend line of *crisis moods* induced by media elites for an audience which does not exist in any *social* form, but only in the abstract form of digital blips on overnight rating simulacrums.

3. The *language of signification* and its surrealistic reversals is the basic codex of the real world of television culture. Cars *are* horses; computers *are* galaxies, tombstones or heartbeats; beer *is* friendship. This is just to say though that Barthes' theorisation of the *crossing* of the syntagm of metaphor and metonymy as the grammatical attitude of postmodern culture is now the standard language of television.

4. TV is *information society* to the hyper, just though where information means the liquidation of the social, the exterminism of memory (in the sense of human remembrance as aesthetic judgement), and the substitution of the simulacrum of a deterritorialized and dehistoricized image-system for actual historical contexts.

What is the perfect example of television's technological colonisation of the space of the social imaginary? It is that wonderful channel on Montréal television which consists of a screen split among 17 images, constantly flickering with dialogue fading in and out, and with the only thematic mediation consisting of a voice-over across the galaxy of disappearing images. That split-screen with its disembodied voice and its pulsating, flickering images *is* the emblematic sign of contemporary (signifying) culture. It is also the social space of serial being in a perfectly serialized culture: background radiation the presence of which only indicates the disappearance of the old world of (normative and representational) society into the new universe of (semiurgical and relational) communications.

Thesis 3: Entertainment as the Dominant Ideology of TV Culture
Television is the *consumption* machine of late capitalism in the twentieth-century

which parallels the *production* machine of primitive capitalism in the seventeenth-century. Television functions as *the* simulacrum of consumption in three major ways:

1. In *The Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord remarked that the "spectacle is capital to such a degree of accumulation that it becomes an image."[12] That's TV: it is the break-point where capital in its final and most advanced form as a spectral image begins to disappear into itself and becomes that which it always was: an empty and nihilistic sign-system of pure mediation and pure exchange which, having no energy of its own, adopts a scorched earth policy towards the missing social matter of society. Like a gigantic funeral pyre, capital, in its present and most exhausted expression as an image, can shine so brilliantly because it sucks in like oxygen any living element in culture, society or economy: from the ingression of the primitive energy of early rock n' roll into Japanese car commercials, and the psychological detritus of anal titillation in jean advertisements to Diana Ross' simulated orgasm in a field of muscle (which is anyway just the American version of Carol Pope's (*Rough Trade*) simulated crotch-play in *High School Confidential* that, in the proper Canadian way, plays at the edge of exhibitionism and seduction).

2. Entertainment is the *ideolect* of television as a consumption machine. What is the essence of entertainment or promotional culture? It is just this: the "serial unity" of vicarious otherness which, Sartre predicted, would be the essential cultural text of society in radical decline.

In a recent debate on the state of television, published by *Harper's* magazine, (and which begins with the wonderful lines: "Disparaging television has long been a favorite national pastime — second only in popularity to watching it"),[13] Rick Du Brow, television editor of the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, said that TV, which has always been more of a "social force" than an art form, is "part of the natural flow of life."[14]

> When you go to the theater, or to a movie, something is presented *to* you by the creator. But in television there's a very important creator who isn't critical to the other forms — the viewer. . . . With the vast number of buttons he can press at home, the TV viewer (Sartre's "absence") creates his own program schedule — a spectacle that reflects his private tastes and personal history. . . . Today, each viewer can create his own TV life.[15]

Du Brow's "creator" — the "viewer creating his own TV life" — is something like Marshall McLuhan's wired heads as the circuit egos of the processed world of electronic technology. In McLuhan's terms, life in the simulacrum of the media-scape consists of a big reversal: the simulacrum of the image-system goes inside; consciousness is ablated. In the sightscape of television, just like before it in the soundscape of radio, the media function as a gigantic (and exteriorised) electronic

nervous system, amplifying technologically our every sense, and playing sensory functions back to us in the processed form of *mutant* images and sounds. TV life? That's television as a mutant society: the mediascape playing back to us our *own* distress as a simulated and hyper-real sign of life.

And why not? At the end of his life, Michel Foucault finally admitted that power functions today, not under the obsolescent signs of death, transgression, confessionality and the *saeculum* of blood, but under the sign of life. For Foucault, power could be most seductive just when it spoke in the name of life, just when it was most therapeutic and not confessional. Following Foucault, I would just add that power in the new age of the mediascape is most seductive, and thus most dangerous, when it speaks in the name of life to the hyper — TV life. And television is most grisly in its colonisation of individual consciousness, most untheorised as a vast system of relational power, and most fascinating as the emblematic form of the death of society and the triumph of signifying culture just when it is most *entertaining*. And it is most entertaining when it is a vast electronic simulation, a sensory play-back organon, of *mood*: mood politics, mood news, mood drama, and even, if we take seriously the "happy-time announcers" of Los Angeles TV, *mood weather*. But, then, why be surprised? Heidegger always said that "mood" would be the locus of culture at the end of history, tracing a great ellipsis of decline, disintegration, and disaccumulation *par excellence*. TV life? That's the ideolect of entertainment as a great simulacrum of "mood": sometimes of the radically oscillating moods of that great *absence*, the viewer, which is programmed now to move between the poles of "panic anxiety" and "manic optimisim"; and always of the herd moods of that equally great electronic *fiction*, the audience.

3. *TV functions as a consumption machine (most of all) because it is a lifestyle medium.* In a superb article in a recent issue of *The Atlantic,* James Atlas argued the case that TV advertisers are no longer so concerned with the now-passé world of demographics (that's the ideolect of the social), but are instead intent on shaping advertising to fit the size of target VAL's.[16] And what are VAL's but the identification of target audiences by "values and lifestyles": the "super-achievers" (call them "yuppies" now, but Talcott Parsons described them long ago as "institutional liberals" — upscale technocrats with a minimal social self and a maximal consumer self who define freedom within the limits of mass organizations); the "belongers": the old class of middle North Americans who value, most of all in nostalgic form, the social qualities of friendship and community and at whom the fellowship hype of beer commercials is directed; and the new, rising class of middle Americans who value the friendship of the herd most of all, and at whom are targeted the belonginess hype of commercials for the *Pepsi Generation* or the promotional hype, under the sign of altruism, of *Live Aid* or *We are the World*; or, finally, the "emulators": what David Riesmann used to call "other-directed personalities": bewildered and in the absence of their own sense of self-identity, hyper-sensitive to the big trend lines of contemporary culture as defined by media elites.

The conclusion which might be derived from VAL's research, or from Arnold Mitchell's book, *The Nine American Lifestyles* is that class society has now disappeared into mass society, and that mass society has dissolved into the TV blip.

The notion of the serial self in electronic society as a TV blip, a digital neuron floating somewhere in the bigger circuitry of the screen and the network may appear vacuous, but that is only because that's exactly what the TV blip with a lifestyle is, and has to be, in the new relationship between television and the economic system. The political economy of TV has such a perfect circularity about it that its serial movement could not sustain anything more substantive, and anything less instrumentalist in the consumerist sense, than the '80s self as a blip with a lifestyle. From the viewpoint of an image-hungry audience, the product of television is, and obviously so, the spectacle of TV as a simulacrum of lifestyles. But from the perspective of TV advertisers and media programmers, the *real* product of television is the audience. So, what is TV? Is it the manipulation of society by a media elite using the spectacle as a "free lunch" to expand the depth and pace of universal commodity-exchange in the marketplace? Or is it the manipulation of the media elite by the audience, that electronic congerie of TV blips with nine lifestyles, using the bait of their own consumer gullibility as a lure to get what they want most: free and unfettered access to the open skies of serial culture? What's TV: *The Will to Power* or *Capital*? The high commodity society of neo-technical capitalism or just that moment which Nietzsche spoke about in the fateful words which began *The Will to Power*: "Nihilism is knocking on the door. Whence comes that most uncanniest of guests?" *Or is TV both?* "The spectacle to such a degree that it becomes an image" *and* a perfectly cynical exchange between media programmers operating under the economic imperative to generate the biggest possible audience of TV blips at the lowest possible price for sale to advertisers at the highest possible rate of profit; and an electronically composed public of serial beings which, smelling the funeral pyre of excremental culture all around it, decides of its own unfettered volition to celebrate its own exterminism by throwing its energies, where attention is the oxygen of TV life, to the black hole of television?

TV or Not TV? Well, you just have to listen to the stampeding of feet and the rustling of the flashing eyeballs as the TV blips, who constitute the growing majority of world culture, are worked over by the exploding laser beams to know the answer. And TV life? Well, that's technology now as a simulacrum of disease.

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Notes

1. In May 1985, *Exposition Vidéo*, a presentation and interpretative analysis of video in relation to television (and society) was held under the auspices of Vidéographe/G.R.A.A.V (conservateur: Jean Gagnon) in Montréal.

2. Werner B. Korte, *ABT-EMPIRICA*, research summary of a report prepared for the West German Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs on the "effects of new information and communication techniques on the arts and culture".

3. *Ibid*; p. 19.

4. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, Detroit: Black and Red, 1983, theses 29 and 30.

5.   Jean Baudrillard, "The Ecstacy of Communication" in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, an important collection of essays on postmodernist culture and society.

6.   Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Theory of Pracial Ensembles*(1) London: Verso/NLB, 1982, pp. 27-276.

7.   *Ibid*; pp. 275-295.

8.   *Ibid*; p. 271.

9.   *Ibid*; p. 274.

10. *Ibid*; p. 271.

11. For a brilliant account of the culture of signification, see Jean Baudrillard, *In the Shadow of the Silent Majorities*, trans. by Paul Foss, Paul Patton and John Johnston, *Semiotexte*, Foreign Agents Series: New York, 1983.

12. Debord, thesis 34.

13. "Television Looks at Itself: Proprietary Thoughts on the Future of Prime Time", *Harper's*, March 1985, pp. 39-49.

14. *Ibid*; p. 47.

15. *Ibid*.

16. James Atlas, "Beyond Demographics", *The Atlantic*, vol. 254, no. 4, pp. 49-58.

RADICAL EDUCATION AND TRANSFORMATIVE INTELLECTUALS

STANLEY ARONOWITZ and HENRY GIROUX

We are today in the midst of a new debate on the role of intellectuals in processes of social and historical structure and transformation. In the first place, far from viewing intellectuals as marginal figures capable of grasping the totality of social and political relations, recent writers have argued that they have become central to the reproduction of both production and social life. On the one hand, intellectuals have been transformed into a technical intelligentsia performing a wide variety of functions in late or advanced industrial societies. On the other hand, the traditional intellectual, possessed of critical knowledge, seems to have passed from the contemporary scene; we are all subject to the rationalizing and specializing character of modern organizations. The intellectual has been integrated in proportion as knowledge/information becomes a vital productive force, and ideological reproduction is central for the legitimation of late capitalist and state socialist societies.

One of the striking formulations of this phenomenon has been that of Pierre Bourdieu who has invented the category *cultural capital* to subsume a wide range of relations characteristic of the role of intellectuals in our societies. The key repository of cultural capital are the schools who confer such capital on students in differential degrees that determine, more or less, their life chances.[1]

The concept of cultural capital is a deliberate analogue to material capital; it signifies the transformation of social relations from a fundamental reliance on craft and mechanical knowledge, to knowledges, derived originally from traditional culture, that have become core scientific and ideological machinery for the reproduction of the prevailing order. Culture itself is a form of capital and those possessing it may be said to occupy crucial niches within, and not opposed, to the economic, political and ideological spheres that constitute advanced or late industrial societies.

To assert that knowledge/information are productive forces is by now commonplace; but to argue that those who possess such cultural capital constitute new historical actors is not. Within the last two decades, social theory has taken two routes away from the historical marxist idea of the proletariat as revolutionary agent and class itself as defined by production relations alone. Foucault, Derrida and others who follow the French turn away from essentialism and logocentrism have argued that the notion of the *subject* from which all historical transformation emanates is itself questionable. Either there are no subjects, only sites, or there are a multiplicity of subjects situated in particular places in the social structure, none of which holds, *a priori*, the "key" to social change. Foucault goes so far as to

privilege the command over knowledge as a crucial detonator of structuration. He stresses the *site of contestation* rather than referring to agency. Similarly, Jurgen Habermas while not adopting the epistemological critique of the so-called "post" structuralists, has proposed a theory of communicative action that locates the problematic of social transformation spatially rather than temporally, and focuses on linguistic and moral development.[2] For Habermas, concepts of historical agency have lost their validity because advanced industrial societies have achieved considerable rationality in the organization of economic relations. But, like Daniel Bell, he argues for a notion of "cultural" contradictions as the locus of crisis tendencies in these systems.[3]

In contrast, Alain Touraine[4] joins some German commentators especially Kluge and Negt in holding that the "actor" has not disappeared from the stage of history, but has been displaced to the new social movements, especially youth and women who in the late sixties and seventies constituted important oppositional forces. Touraine focusses on generational and gender features of these movements, but admits at the same time that such locations are by no means fixed. Conceivably, groups situated in other sites within the organization of social relations might emerge as historical actors depending on the specificity of economic, political and cultural relations.

However, the idea of "new" social movements does not vitiate the possibility of viewing intellectuals as emergent historical actors, if these movements are seen as displacements of the activity of possessors of cultural capital. The appearance of these movements can be explained in terms of the centrality of knowledge, specialized discourses and the existence of new discursive communities where information is exchanged and acquired. Perhaps Alvin Gouldner's literal appropriation of the notion of cultural capital is the most explicit statement of intellectuals as a new class whose centrality in the "dialectic of ideology and technology" makes them the most important actors in late capitalist and state socialist societies.[5]

Bourdieu formulated his theory of cultural capital in the course of examining the role of schools in reproducing late capitalist social relations. He found that schools had become crucial sites of economic, political and ideological reproduction and their role in conferring such capital constituted an important 'arbitrary' in the formation of the labor force and the ideological cohesion of the system of social relations.

There is a crucial conundrum in virtually all recent and older theories about intellectuals. Karl Mannheim's earlier effort to valorize intellectuals as an epistemologically privileged layer relied on the older concept of the traditional intellectual who was marginal to capitalist social relations. Similarly, Gouldner and Bell have acknowledged the integration of intellectuals and their transformation into technical personnel, managers and professionals, but have not drawn the conclusion from this insight. Perhaps the most forthright argument against intellectuals as a critical class emanates from Andre Gorz who, in the late 1970s, proclaimed his earlier idea of intellectuals as a new working class, that is, asserted the proletarianization of intellectuals as the clue to historical agency in the automated age, dead.[6] Gorz argued that if intellectuals are subject to the capitalist

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division of labor with its hierarchical and bureaucratic mode of organization, they cease to be intellectuals in the sense employed by earlier theorists, including Marx, Weber, Lenin and Mannheim. There simply are no sources of *class* opposition in late capitalism, only movements linked to sites.

Gorz's scepticism notwithstanding, we believe there are grounds for retaining the *hope* and the expectation for the formation of intellectuals in the classic meaning of the designation: a layer of people who despite their subordination to the organization of late capitalist relations, fight in those sites where cultural capital is formed for the transformation of the technical intelligensia into a new kind of intellectual.

Of course, there is no question of individuals transgressing the boundaries of cultural capital. The formation of intellectuals in the wider meaning of the term requires community building, setting the conditions for collective effort such as exists, at least potentially, in journals, organizations such as labor unions, and political parties or intentional associations. Further, those who aspire to create a public space within which takes place critical discourse about issues affecting collective life are obliged to name those sites within which intellectual formation takes places.

Obviously, the schools are prime sites where various types of intellectual and manual labor is "produced" through the organization of knowledge and pedagogy. While Bourdieu and the new sociology of education have produced an impressive body of theoretical and empirical research to demonstrate the subordination of schools to specific regimes of social and cultural domination as well as training for existing occupational hierarchies, and other writers have specified schools as sites of resistance not only to school authority but to social authority, the question of the role of teachers and of teaching has barely been explored within these frameworks. School authority has been linked to economic and political hegemony and student resistance to working class formation; there is ample literature treating of the question of the status of professionals and their training within the social and occupational order. But there is a tacit acceptance that teachers, especially in primary and secondary schools, are simply a part of the apparatus of domination. Their proletarianization through the removal of curricular decisions and pedagogical methods from their control is virtually ignored.

The core argument in this essay is that if schools are a crucial site for the production of intellectual labor, and the acquisition of cultural capital, and intellectuals are, potentially, new historical actors, then the treatment of teachers as intellectuals is at the center of the discussion of new social movements, new sites of contestation, and the contradictions of cultural capital.

Rethinking the Nature of the Intellectual

In what follows, we want to argue that one way to rethink and restructure the nature of teacher work is to view teachers as intellectuals. The category of intellectual is helpful in a number of ways. First, it provides a theoretical basis for examining teacher work as a form of intellectual labor, secondly, it clarifies the ideological and material conditions necessary for intellectual work; thirdly, it helps

to illuminate the various modes of intelligibility, ideologies, and interests that are produced and legitimated by teacher work.

By viewing teachers as intellectuals, we can illuminate and recover the rather general notion that all human activity involves some form of thinking. That is, no activity, regardless of how routinized it might become is abstracted from the functioning of the mind in some capacity. This is a crucial issue because by arguing that the use of the mind is a general part of all human activity, we dignify the human capacity for integrating thinking and practice, and in doing so highlight the core of what it means to view teachers as reflective practitioners. Within this discourse, teachers can be seen not merely as "performers professionally equipped to realize effectively any goals that may be set for them. Rather, [they should] be viewed as free men and women with a special dedication to the values of the intellect and the enhancement of the critical powers of the young."[7]

Furthermore, viewing teachers as intellectuals provides a strong citique of those ideologies that legitimate social practices that separate conceptualization, planning, and designing from the processes of implementation and execution. It is important to stress that teachers must take active responsibility for raising serious questions about what they teach, how they are to teach it, and what the larger goals are for which they are striving. This means that they must take a responsible role in shaping the purposes and conditions of schooling. Such a task is impossible within a division of labor where teachers have little influence over the ideological and economic conditions of their work. There is also a growing political and ideological tendency as expressed in the current debates on educational reform to remove teachers and students from their histories and cultural experiences in the name of pedagogical approaches that will make schooling more instrumental. These approaches generally mean that teachers and students alike are "situated" within curricula approaches and instructional management schemes that reduce their roles to either implementing or receiving the goals and objectives of publishers, outside experts, and others far removed from the specificities of daily classroom life. This issue becomes all the more important when seen as part of the growing objectification of human life in general. The concept of teacher as intellectual provides the theoretical posture to fight against this type of ideological and pedagogical imposition.

Moreover, the concept of intellectual provides the theoretical groundwork for interrogating the specific ideological and economic conditions under which intellectuals as a social group need to work in order to function as social actors. This last point takes on a normative and political dimension and seems especially relevant for teachers. For if we believe that the role of teaching cannot be reduced to merely training in the practical skills, but involves, instead, the education of a "class" of intellectuals vital to the development of a democratic society then the category of intellectual becomes a way of linking the purpose of teacher education and public schooling, to the very principles necessary for the development of a democratic order and society.

Neither teacher training institutions nor the public schools have viewed themselves historically as important sites for educating teachers as intellectuals. In part, this has been due to the pervasiveness of a growing technocratic rationality that

separates theory from practice and contributes to the development of modes of pedagogy that ignore teacher autonomy; it is also due to the predominance of theories and forms of school leadership and organization that gives teachers little control over the nature of their work. The latter not only shape the structure and experiences of what teachers do in schools, but also the way in which they are prepared in teacher training institutions. What is generally overriding in most teacher education programs is the emphasis on having prospective educators master pedagogical techniques that generally eschew questions of purpose and the discourse of critique and possibility.

We have argued that by viewing teachers as intellectuals we can begin to rethink and reformulate those historical traditions and conditions that have prevented schools and teachers from assuming their full potential as active, reflective scholars and practitioners. We want to both qualify this point and extend it further. We believe that it is imperative not only to view teachers as intellectuals, but also to contextualize in political and normative terms the concrete social functions they perform. In this way, we can be more specific about the different relationships that teachers have to both their work and to the society in which such work takes place.

Any attempt to reformulate the role of teachers as intellectuals has to also include the broader issue of how to view educational theory in general. It is imperative to view educational theory as a form of social theory because the discourse of educational theory can be understood and interrogated as representing forms of knowledge and social practice that legitimate and reproduce particular forms of social life. Educational theory in this case is not viewed as merely the application of objective scientific principles to the concrete study of schooling and learning. Instead, it is seen as an eminently political discourse that emerges from and characterizes an expression of struggle over what forms of authority, orders of representation, forms of moral regulation, and versions of the past and future should be legitimated, passed on, and debated within specific pedagogical sites. All forms of educational theory and discourse represent a form of ideology that has an intimate relation to questions of power. This is evident in the way such discourses arise out of the and structure the distinctions between high and low status knowledge, legitimate cultural forms that reproduce specific class, racial, and patriarchal interests, and help to sustain specific organizational patterns and classroom social relations.

Educational theory should also be seen as having a deep commitment to developing schools as sites that prepare students to participate in and struggle to develop democratic public spheres. This means that the value of educational theory and practice should be linked to providing the conditions for teachers and students to understand schools as public spheres dedicated to forms of self and social empowerment. It also means defining teacher work against the imperative to develop knowledge and skills that provide students with the tools they will need to be leaders rather than simply managers or skilled civil servants. Similarly, it means fighting against those ideological and material practices that reproduce privileges for the few and social and economic inequality for the many.

By politicizing the notion of schooling and revealing the ideological nature of

educational theory and practice, it becomes possible to be more specific in defining the meaning of the category of the intellectual and to interrogate the political and pedagogical function of the intellectual as a social category. There are two related but separate points by which to venture a definition of the intellectual. The more general definition is rooted in a quality of mind that is characterized as having a creative, critical and contemplative relationship to the world of ideas. Richard Hofstadter epitomizes this position in his distinction between the meaning of intellect and the meaning of intelligence. Intelligence, for him, is "an excellence of mind that is employed within a fairly narrow, immediate predicatable range; it is a manipulative, adjustive, infailingly practical quality. . . . Intellect, on the other hand is the critical, creative, and contemplative side of mind. Whereas intelligence seeks to grasp, manipulate, reorder, adjust, intellect examines, ponders, wonders, theorizes, criticizes, imagines."[8]

Paul Piccone provides a similar distinction but places it within a larger social context.

> . . . unless one fudges the definition of intellectuals in terms of purely formal and statistical educational criteria, it is fairly clear that what modern society produces is an army of alienated, privatized, and uncultured experts who are knowledgeable only within very narrowly defined areas. This technical intelligentsia, rather than intellectuals in the traditional sense of thinkers concerned with the totality, is growing by leaps and bounds to run the increasingly complex bureaucratic and industrial apparatus. Its rationality, however, is only instrumental in character, and thus suitable mainly to perform partial tasks rather than tackling substantial questions of social organization and political direction.[9]

Herb Kohl is more specific and provides a definition of the intellectual that relates it directly to teachers. He writes:

> An intellectual is someone who knows about his or her field, has a wide breadth of knowledge about other aspects of the world, who uses experience to develop theory and questions theory on the basis of further experience. An intellectual is also someone who has the courage to question authority and who refuses to act counter to his or her own experience and judgement.[10]

In our view all of these positions make distinctions that are important but fall into the problem of suggesting that intellectual inquiry is either the repository of specific groups of people or that the quality of intellectual inquiry is only operative within specific social functions. We do not suggest that the question of what qualities of mind constitute intellectual inquiry is not an important one. These positions are informative because they suggest that intellectual inquiry is characterized by someone who has a breadth of knowledge about the world, who views ideas

in more than instrumental terms, and who harbors a spirit of inquiry that is critical and oppositional, one that is true to its own impulses and judgments. But we want to make a distinction between those characteristics of intellectual inquiry as they exist in various degrees and proportions among different individuals *and* the social function of intellectual work itself. In his attempt to turn the issue of the nature and role of the intellectual into a political question, Antonio Gramsci provides a more helpful theoretical elaboration on this issue. For Gramsci, all men and women are intellectuals, but not all of them function in society as intellectuals. Gramsci is worth quoting at length on this issue.

> When one distinguishes between intellectuals and non-intellectuals, one is referring in reality only to the immediate social function of the professional category of the intellectuals, that is, one has in mind the direction in which their specific professional activity is weighted, whether towards intellectual elaboration or towards muscular-nervous effort. This means that, although one can speak of intellectuals, one cannot speak of non-intellectuals, because non-intellectuals do not exist. But even the relationship between efforts of intellectual-cerebral elaboration and muscular-nervous effort is not always the same, so that there are varying degrees of specific intellectual activity. There is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded: *homo faber* cannot be separated from *homo sapiens*. Each man (sic), finally, outside his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity, that is, he is a 'philosopher', an artist, a man of taste, he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought.[11]

For Gramsci, all people are intellectuals in that they think, mediate, and adhere to a specific view of the world. The point is that varying degrees of critical and common sense thought is endemic to what it means to be human. The significance of this insight is that it gives pedagogical activity an inherently political quality. For instance, Gramsci's view of political activity was deeply rooted in the task of raising the quality of thought of the working class. At the same time, by arguing that all people do not function in their social capacity as intellectuals, Gramsci provides the theoretical groundwork for analyzing the political role of those intellectuals who had to be considered in terms of the organizational and directive functions they performed in a given society.

In the broadest sense, Gramsci attempts to locate the political and social function of intellectuals through his analyses of the role of conservative and radical *organic* intellectuals. For Gramsci, conservative organic intellectuals provide the dominant class with forms of moral and intellectual leadership. As agents of the status quo, such intellectuals identify with the dominant relations of power and become the propagaters of its ideologies and values. This group represents a stratum of

intellectuals that gives ruling classes a homogeneity and awareness of their economic, political, and social interests. In the advanced industrial countries organic intellectuals can be found in all strata of society and include specialists in industrial organizations, professors in universities, journalists in the culture industry, and various levels of executives in middle management positions.[12]

Gramsci's categories illuminate the political nature of intellectual work within specific social functions. Moreoever, Gramsci's analysis helps to refute the idea that the nature of intellectual work is determined by one's class location. On the contrary, there is no immediate correspondence between class location and consciousness; but there is a correspondence between the social function of one intellectual's work and the particular relationship it has to modifying, challenging, or reproducing the dominant society. In other words, it is the *political nature* of intellectual work that is the issue at hand. This is a major theoretical advance over the ongoing debate among Marxists and others as to whether intellectuals constitute a specific class or culture.[13] Furthermore, by politicizing the nature of intellectual work, Gramsci strongly challenges dominant theoretical traditions that have decontexualized the role that intellectuals play in education and the large society. In other words, he criticizes those theorists who decontextualize the intellectual by suggesting that he or she exist independently of issues of class, culture, power, and politics. Inherent in such a view is the notion that the intellectual is obliged to engage in a value-free discourse, one that necessitates that he or she refuse to make a commitment to specific views of the world, refuse to take sides on different issues, or refuse to link knowledge with the fundamental principles of emancipation. Such a view reinforces the idea that intellectuals are free floating and detached in the sense that they perform a type of labor that is objective and apolitical.

Similarly, Gramsci's notion that intellectuals represent a social category and not a class raises interesting questions as to how educators might be viewed at different levels of schooling in terms of their politics, the nature of their discourse, and the pedagogical functions they perform. But Gramsci's terms need to be expanded in order to grasp the changing nature and social function of intellectuals in their capacities as educators. The categories around which we want to analyze the social function of educators as intellectuals are: a) transformative intellectuals, b) critical intellectuals, c) accommodating intellectuals, and d) hegemonic intellectuals. It is imperative to note that these are somewhat exaggerated, ideal-typical categories whose purpose is to bring into bold relief the cluster of integrated elements that point to the interests and tendencies to which they refer. Needless to say, there are teachers who move in and out and between these categories and defy being placed in any one of them; moreover, it is conceivable that teachers under different circumstances may opt out of one tendency and move into another category. Finally, these categories are irreducible to any one specific political doctrine. They indicate forms of ideology and social practice that could be taken up by any number of diverse political positions or world views.

Transformative Intellectuals

The category of transformative intellectuals connotes a fusion of critical discourse

with political practice. These teachers as intellectuals are by no means limited by the professional and academic discourses within which they are obliged to function but seek links with groups fighting to change the schools, to oppose their tendency towards authoritarian modes of teaching and administration. The transformative intellectual is not only aware of her/his position within social life but attempts to create a public sphere not only within which critical discourse occurs, but one that permits the widest participation of teachers, students, parents and others in educational policy. Further, the transformative intellectual operates in the emancipatory interest which includes their engagement in self-criticism as a way to improve their own pedagory and to signal their anti-authoritarian intention.

Central to the category is the task of making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogic. In the first instance, this means inserting education directly into the political sphere by arguing that schools represent both a struggle for meaning and a struggle over power relations. Thus, schooling becomes a central terrain where power and politics operate out of a relationship between individuals and groups who function in the sphere where cultural capital is in question. Within this view of schooling, critical reflection and action become part of a project to help students see themselves as social actors with claims over the conditions and outcomes of their own schooling, as well as opportunities to engage in reflexive understanding of their own situation within the system of social relations as well as schools.

In the second instance, making the political more pedagogical means utilizing forms of pedagogy which treat students as agents, problematizes knowledge, invokes dialogue, and makes knowledge meaningful so as to make it critical in order to make it emancipatory. In part, this suggests that transformative intellectuals take seriously the need to give students an active voice in their learning experiences, it means developing a critical vernacular that is attentive to problems experienced at the level of everyday life, particularly as these are related to pedagogical experiences connected to classroom practice. As such, the starting-point pedagogically for such intellectuals is not with the isolated student but with collective actors in their various cultural, class, racial, historical, and gendered settings, along with the particularity of their diverse problems, hopes, and dreams. It is at this point that the language of critique unites with the language of possibility. That is, transformative intellectuals must take seriously the need to come to grips with those ideological and material aspects of the dominant society that attempt to separate the issues of power and knowledge, which means working to create the ideological and material conditions in both schools and the larger society that give students the opportunity to become agents of civic courage. We mean citizens who have the knowledge and courage to stake seriously the need to make despair unconvincing and hope practical. In short, the language of critique unites with the language of possibility when it points to the conditions necessary for new forms of culture, alternative social practices, new modes of communication and a practical vision for the future.

Critical Intellectuals

Critical intellectuals are ideologically alternative to existing institutions and

modes of thought, but they do not see themselves as connected either to a specific social formation or as performing a general social function that is expressively political in nature. Their protests constitute a critical function, which they see as part of their professional status or obligation as intellectuals. In most cases, the posture of critical intellectuals is self-consciously apolitical, and they try to define their relationship to the rest of society as free-floating. As individuals they are critical of inequality and injustice, but they often refuse or are unable to move beyond their isolated posture to the terrain of collective solidarity and struggle. Often this retreat from politics is justified on the basis of arguments that posit the impossibility of politics for reasons as ideologically diverse as the claim that we live in a totally administered society, or that history is in the hands of a technology out of control, or the simple refusal to believe that human agencies exist that have any effect on history.

Of course, the most celebrated effort to establish the status of intellectuals as a "free floating" critical social layer was that of Karl Mannheim.[14] He argued that genuine intellectuals could not be situated in any particular social class even if, in their origins, they were in one of them. To the extent that the "man of knowledge" was engaged in the critical appropriation of "truth" he was free of the interests which, situated within a particular class, transformed knowledge into ideology. For Mannheim, any ideology was understood as inquiry subject to the contamination of social interest. It was by its nature partial knowledge. Mannheim wrestled with the Kantian question of how to achieve knowledge of the social totality and concluded that this could not be achieved within the framework of partisan research. When the intellectual is freed from particular interests, "he" can achieve distance required to grasp the truth.

Some recent attempts to continue this discourse about knowledge, such as those of Jurgen Habermas argue, from a somewhat different premises the same point.[15] Although we find much to commend Habermas's critique of Marxism's conception of the relation between knowledge and human interests, we do not share his faith in objective reason as the goal to which intellectual labor strives. Rather, we hold that the conception of rationality that believes in the possibility of separating science from ideology to be another form of ideology. Habermas wishes to free emancipatory human interests from the limits imposed by history on the capacity of social classes to make their particular interests universal. Yet by positing the autonomy of reason and the possibility of freeing knowledge from its ideological presuppositions, he has merely reasserted the ideology of modernity for which science as a value neutral discourse is possible and depends for its realization on such categories as undistorted communication, reflexive understanding and autocritique. Certainly we agree with the proposition that reflexive understanding and critical discourse are necessary to overcome the limitations imposed by the old common sense on human emancipation. Yet, this is not the same as arguing that intellectuals must remain on the margins, refusing to link with social movements whose world view condemns them to partial knowledge. The social role of the intellectual is precisely to become integral with those movements armed with emancipatory theoretical and practical knowledge. That the movements are bound to influence the intellectuals as much as be influenced by them is part of the contradictory, yet necessary result of the formation of the transformative intellectual.

We cannot here discuss in detail our assertion that the enlightenment conceptions of truth, objective reason, etc. are themselves part of the partial discourses of historical actors, situated in specific times and places. Suffice to remark here that science itself has become aware of the limits of its own aspiration for totalization, that the discovery of the ineluctability of difference is among the most important achievements of physics and biology in the 20th century. To claim as does Habermas that intersubjective understanding can clear away the tangled web of discourse is a retreat from Sartre's admonition that only the committed intellectual can arrive at assertions that serve human emancipation. In other words, critical intellectuals forget that emancipation cannot be delivered from the outside.

Accommodating Intellectuals

Accommodating intellectuals generally stand firm within an ideological posture and set of material practices that supports the dominant society and its ruling groups. Such intellectuals are generally not aware of this process in that they do not define themselves as self-conscious agents of the status quo, even though their politics further the interests of the dominant classes. This category of intellectuals also define themselves in terms that suggest that they are free floating, removed from the vagaries of class conflicts and partisan politics. But in spite of such rationalizations, they function primarily to produce and mediate uncritically ideas and social practices that serve to reproduce the status quo. These are the intellectuals who decry politics while simultaneously refusing to take risks. Another more subtle variation is the intellectual who disdains politics by proclaiming professionalism as a value system, one which often entails the spurious concept of scientific objectivity.

Hegemonic Intellectuals

Hegemonic intellectuals do more than surrender to forms of academic and political incorporation, or hide behind spurious claims to objectivism, they self-consciously define themselves through the forms of moral and intellectual leadership they provide for dominant groups and classes. This stratum of intellectuals provides various factions of the dominant classes with a homogeneity and awareness of their economic, political, and ethical functions. The interests that define the conditions as well as the nature of their work are tied to the preservation of the existing order. Such intellectuals are to be found on the consulting lists of major foundations, on the faculties of major universities as managers of the culture industry, and, in spirit, at least, in teaching positions at various levels of schooling.

For fear of these categories appearing to be too rigid, it is important to stress more specifically that the teachers who occupy them cannot be viewed merely from the perspective of the ideological interests they represent. For instance, as Erik Olin Wright has pointed out, the positions that teachers hold must also be analyzed in terms of the objective antagonisms they experience as intellectuals who occupy contradictory class locations.[16] That is, like workers they have to sell their labor power and have no control over the educational apparatus as a whole. On the other

hand, unlike workers they do have *some* control over the nature of their labor process, i.e., what to teach, how to teach, what kind of research to do, etc. Needless to say, the relative autonomy that teachers have at different levels of schooling differs, with those in some tiers of higher education, particularly the elite universities, having the most autonomy. Moreover, regardless of the ideological interests such teachers represent there is always the possibility for real tensions and antagonisms between their lack of control over the goals and purposes of schooling and the relative autonomy they enjoy. For example, in a time of economic crisis, teachers have been laid off, given increased course loads, denied tenure, and forced to implement administratively dictated pedagogies. It is within these tensions and objective contradictions that the possibilities exist for shifting alliances and movement among teachers from one category to the next.

The Discourse and Role of Educators As Transformative Intellectuals

In order to fight for schools as democratic spheres, it is imperative to understand the contradictory roles that transformative intellectuals occupy within the various levels of schooling. In the most immediate sense, the notion of transformative intellectual makes visible the paradoxical position that radical educators face in the public schools and in the universities. On the one hand, such intellectuals earn a living within institutions that play a fundamental role in producing the dominant culture. On the other hand, they define their political terrain by offering to students forms of alternative discourse and critical social practices whose interests are often at odds with the overall hegemonic role of the schools and the society it supports. The paradox is not easy to resolve, and often represents a struggle against incorporation by the university or school system which reward those educators willing to either remove critical scholarship from their teaching or to remove it from any relation to concrete political movements. At the university level, there is enormous pressure, for example, for radical educators to peddle their academic wares merely as viable commodities for academic journals and conferences. Under the banner of accountability, teachers at all levels of schooling are sometimes subtlety and sometimes not so subtlety pressured to respond to the issues, modes of research, discourse, and social practices deemed legitimate by the dominant culture. Erik Olin Wright is worth quoting on this issue:

> [Radical] theorists within . . . universities are under tremendous pressures to ask questions structured by bourgeois problems, bourgeois ideological and political practices. Such pressures are often extremely direct, taking the form of tenure criteria, blacklisting, harrassment, etc. But often the pressures are quite subtle, played out through the intellectual debates within professional conferences and journals. To publish in the proper journals one has to ask questions which those journals see as relevant, and such relevance is dictated not by the centrality of the questions to [radical social theory and practice], but to the dilemmas and problems within bourgeois social science.[17]

Rather than surrender to this form of academic and political incorporation, it is important for educators to make clear the theoretical elements that give meaning to the role of the transformative intellectual as well as to the type of critical educational theory in which such a role is grounded. One starting point would be to define the role of the transformative intellectual around what we have referred to earlier as the discourse of critique and the discourse of possibility.

By employing these discourses, transformative intellectuals can make clear the way in which power functions in schools in both a negative and positive way. Power is viewed in this instance as both a negative and positive force; its character is dialectical and its mode of operation is always more than simply repressive. In other words, domination is never so complete that power is experienced exclusively as a negative force. On the contrary, it means that power is the basis of all forms of behavior in which people resist, struggle, and fight for their image of a better world. What is essential is to understand how power is manifested in schools within the contradictory forms that it takes. One important pedagogical task that emerges from this perspective is to interrogate how knowledge, language and power come together within the formal and hidden curricula of schools so as to actively silence people.

Rather than viewing knowledge as objective, as merely something to transmit to students, teachers can demonstrate how it is constructed through a selected process of emphasis and exclusion. Such an interrogation could be analyzed around questions such as the following:

What counts as school knowledge?

How is such knowledge selected and organized?

What are the underlying interests that structure the form and content of school knowledge?

How is what counts as school knowledge transmitted?

How is access to such knowledge determined?

What cultural values and formations are legitimated by dominant forms of school knowledge?

What cultural formations are dis-organized and delegitmated by dominant forms of school knowledge?

There is also the central issue of making clear the role that language and power have at all levels of schooling. Language must be viewed as more than a tool for merely displaying thought; nor can it be reduced to issues that are technical and developmental in nature. In this case, transformative intellectuals can provide critical analyses of language as linguistic practices which embody forms of power and authority. If language itself is seen as a locus of meaning, it becomes possible to raise questions about the authority patterns that legitimate and utilize language in order to allocate resources and power to some groups while denying them to others. Central to this position is the notion that language practices can only be understood in terms of their articulation with the power relations that structure the wider society. In other words, language as both the subject and object of power represents, in part, an embattled epistemological terrain on which different social groups struggle over how reality is to be signified, reproduced, and resisted. Foucault captures this issue in the following comment:

> Education may well be . . . the instrument whereby every
> individual, in a society like our own, can gain access to any kind
> of discourse. But we all know that in its distribution, in what it
> permits and what it prevents, it follows the well-trodden battle
> lines of social conflict. Every education system is a political
> means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of
> discourse. . . . What is an educational system after all, if not the
> ritualization of the word; if not a qualification of some fixing
> roles for speakers; if not the distribution and an appropriation
> of discourse, with all its learning and its powers.[18]

The point here is that institutionally legitimated language practices introduce teachers and students to specific questions, specific ways of life, and are constitutive of specific social relations. By establishing a relationship between language and power, it is possible for teachers to interrogate specific language practices around the questions they raise, the incapacitating silences they harbor, and how the latter bear down on students in the form of impositions that disorganize and delegitimate certain experiences and ideas. Such a view of language points to more than the need for teachers and students alike to deconstruct its hidden codes and meanings, it also imperative for them to develop alternative rhetorical structures and discursive practices, which both challenge and affirm forms of thinking, speaking and acting that support a critical pedagogy.

The relationship between power, on the one hand, and knowledge and language, on the other, needs to be supplemented with an understanding of how power works on the structure of the personality and the body so as to promote certain forms of learning. More specifically, the latter points to how educators can address the issue of how learning takes place outside the realm of mediated consciousness and rationality. For instance, how is it possible to understand learning as a function of habit, as part of the fabric of ongoing social practices that become part of what might be called sedimented histories. Put another way, how is it possible for teachers to understand how learning is mediated and produced though the unconscious so as to promote among themselves and students, for instance, forms of behavior that represent an active refusal to listen, to hear, or to engage in activities that might threaten one's world view, or, in some cases, even to affirm one's own possibilities. Of course, this issue raises serious questions about how schools through various rituals, social practices, and rules become implicated in forms of domination that bear down on the body and psyche, that "penetrate" the body in order to locate it in a grid of technologies and practices that serve to anchor in it specific ideologies and values conducive to the larger society.

The other side of this view of learning, one that engages the discourse of possibility, is that if needs can be constructed they can be unmade and reconstructed in the interests of emancipatory concerns. For example, for teachers to simply explain the ideology of sexism in order to teach students about how it oppresses women and denigrates men may be meaningless if students have internalized such an ideology as part of the habits and structure of their psyche and personality. As a constellation of needs, sexism becomes a material force that has to be reflected

upon and reconstructed through new social practices and experiences lived concretely within non-sexist classroom relations. At stake here is the notion that if creativity and talent are largely a function of social conditions, it is important to unravel how ideology as both a set of ideas and a material practice in both the overt curriculum and in those aggressively engendered silences that make up the hidden curriculum either block or promote forms of critical teaching and learning.

All of these aspects of schooling suggest the need for teachers to be more critically attentive to the ideologies embedded in the hidden curriculum and how they work to shape different aspects of school life. North American educational theory has always posited a slavish attachment to that which could be seen and observed in classroom life; this emphasis on the literal has been a formidable obstacle preventing teachers and others from looking beyond the immediacy of classroom events to that which is unspoken and unseen so as to probe deeper into the meanings, values, and ideologies at work in all aspects of school life.[19]

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Notes

1. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Passeron, *Reproduction in Education and Society*, London and Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 1979.

2. Jurgen Habermas, *Communications and the Evolution of Society*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1979 and, more recently *A Theory of Communicative Action*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.

3. See especially Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1976.

4. Alain Touraine, *Le Retour D'Acteur*, Paris: Gallimard, 1983.

5. Alvin Gouldner, *The Future of Intellectuals and the Rise of the New Class*, New York: Seabury Press, 1979. This work introduces a concept of cultural capital quite distinct from that of Bourdieu. Gouldner's point of departure is a definition of capital as "produced objects" that are saleable (are commodities) and legitimated by the increased productivity they cause. According to Gouldner, the extent to which cultural goods correspond to this definition, they may also be considered capital. Thus, Gouldner tears cultural capital from its function in reproduction and, makes it, instead, an ineluctable part of the infrastructure of late capitalist societies. Hence, his idea of the "new" class as producers of cultural capital, but with an essential difference from the old classes, either the proletariat or the moneyed classes: its concern with autonomy for the sake of goods and services rather than either wages or profit.

6. Andre Gorz, "Technology, Technicians and the Class Struggle" in Andre Gorz, ed., *The Division of Labour*, London: Harvester Press, 1976.

7. Israel Scheffler, "University Scholarship and the Education of Teachers", *Teachers College Record*, 70:1 (1968), p. 11.

8. Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, New York: Random House, 1963.

9. Paul Piccone, "Symposium on the Role of the Intellectual in the 1980s", *Telos* No. 50 (Winter 1981-1982), 116.

10. Herbert Kohl, "Examining Closely What We Do", *Learning* (August 1983), p. 29.

11. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. Smith, New York: International Publishers, 1971.

12. For Gramsci, radical intellectuals also attempt to provide the moral and intellectual leadership of a specific class, in this case, the working class.

13. For an overview of this debate, see Carl Boggs, "Marxism and the Role of Intellectuals", *New Political Science* 1:(2/3) 1979, pp. 7-23.

14. The concept of the free-floating intellectual as used here is similar to that expressed by Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, New York: Harvest Book, 1936.

15. Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1968; *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.

16. Erik Olin Wright, "Intellectuals and the Working Class", *The Insurgent Sociologist*, 8:1 (Winter 1978), pp. 5-18.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Foucault, cited in Henry A. Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education* (South Hadley, Mass.: Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1983), p. 207.

19. *Ibid.*

FETISHISM AND PORNOGRAPHY: SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PORNOGRAPHIC EYE/I

GRAHAM KNIGHT and BERKELEY KAITE

It is common for feminist critiques of pornography to argue that its oppressive and sadistic character stems from its objectification of women by and for men. This position is problematic on a number of grounds. It assumes an equivalence between oppression and objectivity *per se*, and defines the latter as passivity. It takes pornography to be formally and sensuously homogeneous, a static, visual regime of representation varying only in the sexual and violent explicitness of its contents. And it takes for granted the psycho-analytics of perverse pleasure and desire into which pornography has insinuated itself in such a massive way: in its concern with the objectification of women it has generally taken the obverse process of male sexual subjectification as unproblematic. In this respect Geraldine Finn's (1985) analysis of the "pornographic eye/I" opens up a critical area to which it makes an important contribution.* At the same time, we would argue, her analysis remains uncritical in its assumption of the radical separation of subjects and objects. Her analysis does not distinguish fully enough between the voyeuristic and fetishistic, and the political implications of this vis-a-vis the internally contradictory and unstable mode of representation that pornography embodies. Her call for the unspecified de-sexualisation of representation stands in danger of implicitly reproducing the essentialist, binarist system of sexual different — 'either/or-ism' — in which patriarchal power consists.

The modern moment of patriarchal power is pornographic in the broadest sense: an obsessive representation of the body of woman as sexualised difference, structured by and for male looking. Pornography is a regime of sexualised representations that circulates in terms of being both explicit and illicit (cf. Coward, 1982; Stern, 1982). It inhabits both the centre and the peripheries of the eye of power which is now the generalised sign of a regime of visualised representation: sight, view, perspective, etc. are now the chief metaphors of understanding and meaning. More specifically, the sensuous economy of desire and pleasure is now based upon a popular imaginary whose character is heavily photographic — cinema, television, still photography. Photography has now become a crucial instrument in the specification — particularly anatomisation — of the sexual; it conjoins the scientific textbook and the pornography magazine in an imaginary regime of streamlined, flattened, two-dimensional evidence (Mort, 1980). For this reason, it is not unusual

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Editors' note: See *CJPST*, Volume IX, 1-2 (Winter/Spring), 1985.

that the struggles against pornography, from Right and Left, sexists and feminists, has been concerned foremost with photographic representation. Photography is now the quintessential method of representational production: its appeal to a 'natural' realism and fidelity, its effect of present absence, and, at least in the case of still photos, its capacity to freeze movement and flux for closer scrutiny endow it with a revelatory force (cf. Ellis, 1982). From the outset, the camera has been associated intimately with the eye of power (Sontag, 1977).

It is a revelatory force, however, that often threatens to overwhelm and supplant its object. Photographic realism is a cultural rather than natural code, but one that is able nonetheless to further the mystification of power and ideology as 'natural' in a seemingly effortless way. The photo effect of present absence, particularly strong in the case of still photography, generates an association with death and enervation (Coward, 1982). And the ability of still photography to freeze the mobile constructs something that otherwise was not as such. The capacity for close scrutiny that still photography promises is often an empty one: we seldom gaze at a photo for longer than a few seconds; we are more likely to glance at it in a transient and casual, rather than fixed and intensified, way. Moreover, a still photograph is rarely presented for our look without the accompaniment of words (a caption, a story) and other photographs (a sequence of related images, an imaginary textuality) which help to anchor meaning and manage the look's alienation (Burgin, 1982a, 1982). Looking at photography is not unproblematic or undifferentiated, and in this respect it is not altogether clear that there is just a single "pornographic eye" or that it translates unproblematically into a "pornographic I".

Feminist critique has argued that pornographic objectification reproduces male domination (if not in fact inciting male hatred of and violence toward women) through the operationalisation of three codes of photographic representation: fragmentation, submission, and availability (Coward, 1982). The code of fragmentation refers to the way close-up photography is used to 'reduce' the models' bodies — and by extension the body and person of women in general — to sexualised fragments, genitals, buttocks and breasts in particular, a practice that is seen to be 'de-humanising'. Submission refers to the way female models are positioned to connote their submission to male desire and pleasure. Women are posed in prone or supine positions on beds, couches, or the ground; when not returning the look directly to the reader, they avert their eyes coyly; and the written captions that accompany the photo sequences dwell obsessively on the model's desire to submit pleasurably to phallic power. This is compounded by the 'death' aspect of the photo effect, particularly in displays of women's bodies 'draped' over furniture or lying limp and lifeless on the ground. Availability refers to the way in which the models are portrayed as permanently and highly sexualised, as having no other character than their sexualised desire: the way in which they return the viewer's look in an inviting and/or alluring way, the body posed in a way that signifies a simulated if not parodic ever-readiness for sex.

The operation of these codes is not exclusive to pornography in the formal sense. They are at work in other forms of popular imaginary representation, such as advertising, whose function is the sexual fantasisation of commodity desire. In this

respect, it is more a case of their having become intensified in certain ways in popular pornography. Nor is their operation necessarily unproblematic. The critique of fragmentation implies, obversely, a naturalistic equation of the 'whole' person with the 'whole' body which is an equally ideological and powerful assumption. It relies upon a humanism that generally occludes recognition of its own historical and political conditions of possibility, and ultimately rests upon the dominant ideology of the body as the objective labour-power of the subjective will that inhabits it and controls the alienation of its capacities. As elements of a larger ideology, moreover, these codes cannot be assumed to function in a necessarily coherent and integrated way. Submission and availability, for example, may operate in such a way that the latter no longer complements but begins to overwhelm the former. Sexual availability may be signified in a way that connotes active sexual initiation, and threatens to overcome the objectified passivity implicit in the code of submission. The three codes, finally, are not exhaustive of the textual organisation of porno, nor are they fully determinant of how the photographs are read. This is also dependent on the sexualised subjectification of the reader, and the way looking is a differentiated activity whose effect is produced in the plays and counter-plays of power-in-ideology.

In his analysis of pleasurable looking — scopophilia/the scopic drive — Freud (1962) provides a way to analyze these contradictions in terms of the functions of the look as both objectification and identification (subjectification). The former consists in the submission of another as the object of a controlling and inquisitive gaze, the condition of which is the generation and maintenance of a separation between the looking subject and the object looked at. It is this function of looking that liberal and radical feminist critiques have largely concerned themselves with, equating objectification *per se* with oppression, degradation and de-humanisation. Identification, on the other hand, cuts across and threatens to reduce the separation of viewing subject and the object viewed. It is a process whereby aspects of the other are appropriated by the looking subject as conditions for the latter's modelling of the self. In this regard, the other becomes the mirror of self-desire, the instrument of the socialisation (through misrecognition) of the self under the sign of self perfection. Although the two processes — which in more generalised terms apply to our relationship to any form of representation, and the way meaning and sense are thereby produced — cut across one another, they also complement one another: some degree of each is necessary for the other to function. As such, their relationship in any particular instance may be unstable and mobile: the look may oscillate freely between them without achieving any permanent resolution.

Both functions, in psycho-analytic terms, are fundamentally sexual, objectification resulting in pleasure from the fantasized control of the other, identification in narcissism and auto-erotic pleasure. In this respect, they overlap with the *distinction* between voyeurism and fetishism, a distinction that has been the basis for theoretical elaboration of the question of male looking and female exhibitionism in recent textual critiques of pornography. These have been greatly influenced by Mulvey's (1975) re-working of Freud in her theorisation of the look in classical Hollywood cinema. Both modes are organised in terms of the threat to male dominance posed by female difference; both are concerned to manage that

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threat, but do so in quite different ways. Voyeurism organises the male look at the sexualised female image in a separated, sadistic way: woman is punished for her sexualised difference. It does this through narrative; it is a mode of looking that seeks narrative development and change in which woman's sexuality is given a certain range to disturb and disrupt, and then contained by returning her to a subservient role for closure. Fetishism, on the other hand, seeks to manage sexualised difference by collapsing the distance between viewer and viewed, by short-circuiting narrative development in an obsessive cycle of repetitious representations, by replacing distanced curiosity with immediate fascination, and by displacing woman' sexuality onto some fetish object (through metonymy or metaphor). Where voyeurism seeks to punish, fetishism seeks to disavow.

Mulvey's theorisation has been criticised on the grounds that it is asymmetrical: while voyeurism is seen to accentuate a sadistic objectification of woman, it remains unclear whether fetishism accentuates identification and narcissism, and how it relates, in turn, to the question of sexual and gender domination. This stems from an uncritical acceptance of the sexual/gender separation of male/looking as active and female/exhibiting as passive. Rodowick, for example, attempts to complement the separation by proposing that fetishism not only accentuates identification, but also masochistic desire, thus raising the question of how male looking could "signify both the exercise of power and submission to power" (1982: 7). This does not deny that male looking entails the reproduction of sexual and gender domination, but it does raise the possibility that this is achieved in a complex way riven with tensions and cross-currents that interrupt objectification, and collapse it into self-desire. The implication of this is that the textual organisation of the imaginary representation is not unidimensional in the way it structures the reading, but allows an oscillation between modes of looking, and complicates the separation and functioning of both.

The theorisation of "fetishistic scopophilia" is particularly pertinent to the critiques of pornography whose textual composition is heavily invested with fetishistic elements. This is especially so for 'softcore' pornography where the typical photographic text is organised in terms of a highly repetitious sequence of about six or seven poses of the same woman, or two women together, in a sexualised display. These fetishistic investments have recently become intensified as the photography has become more genitally explicit, as compared to the topless or nude pin-up of the 1950s and early 1960s. This increasing explicitness also involves an emphasis on the representation of sexual pleasure on the part of the models, as in the scenarios of masturbation, lesbianism, and heterosexual congress in which male as well as female models are present. This latter is increasingly common, not only in 'hardcore' pornography where the male is seen as explicitly phallic and penetrating, but also in 'softcore' where the representations are more literally simulated.

As Ellis (1980) has noted, these changes signify textually the growing importance of female sexual pleasure as a predominant fetish in addition to the object-fetishes that circulate more directly around the woman's sexualised body zones (underwear, shoes, etc.). More importantly, they signify the importance of the woman's face as the signifer of this pleasure, a face that combines the look with

object-fetishism (make-up, glossy lip-stick). The critique of pornographic fragmentation has generally overlooked this development with its emphasis upon close-up genital display, but it is the case that the pornographic woman is dually fragmented in her fetishised display, to both the genitals and the face — whether the latter is that of the look returned to the viewer in an inviting way (usually found in single model displays), or the averted look of pleasure (more common in couple or group displays). This mode of representation is not that of a pure object, but of the subject-object of the ideology of value: the willful subject who rationally objectifies her/his capacities (body) as labour-power, the subject whose self-objectification is the moment of its subjectivity, the object whose objectivity is never shown or seen entirely as the product of another.

Pornography dwells on its object's will and desire, and their activation in the service of absent pleasure. The willfulness of the fetishised look is the imaginary dimension of pornography's obsession with the complicity of the woman in the display of her sexualisation. It is complemented by the written captions or stories — written either in the anonymous third person, or the first person of the woman — that address themselves directly to the photography, and reassure the reader of the model's self-sexualisation in the service of her own pleasure and desire. Like bureaucracy, pornography entails a system of power that concerns itself endlessly with fostering, inducing, and encouraging the will, consent and participation of those on whom it is exercised. This obsession with the subjectivity of its object means, obversely, a silence about the objectivity of its subject: the will of the male, as viewer and model, is taken-for-granted as the universal desire to subject the woman to the power of phallic pleasure.

In a fundamental sense, then, pornography is about the objectification of its subject — phallic power. But this "phallic economy" (Baudrillard, 1976) operates under profoundly contradictory conditions where sexual difference is both necessary for and threatening to the reproduction of power. As in the political economy generally, phallic power grows in inverse proportion to its effectiveness. In psychoanalytic theory the fetish represents the male subject's disavowal of the contradiction between his knowledge of woman as lack of the phallus and his belief that this isn't the case (in defence of the threat of castration that difference presents) (cf. Freud, 1961). The fetish manages this contradiction, not by the direct repression of knowledge or belief, but by endowing belief with the security of a substitute signifier, and submitting the real thus to desire. For this reason, as Baudrillard (1976) stresses, the fetish operates preferably on the site — the woman's sexualised body — where the very threat of difference (phallic lack and the danger of castration that this poses) is inscribed. Disavowal differs from direct repression in that knowledge and belief remain to some extent co-present for the subject: on the one hand this enables difference to persist as the basis of power, on the other it assists in mitigating the threat that difference also poses. Yet, it is profoundly unstable in its effects: by endowing the woman with a substitute phallus, by the very practice of disavowing rather than directly repressing difference, the pornographic object, the fetishised figure of woman, is incorporated into, made into an extension of the looking subject.

It is in this respect that porno's heavily fetishistic investments signify its

narcissistic character. The look of desire returned to the viewer in an alluring way or of pleasure averted in an indifferent, aloof manner, the model's slim, erect, phallic body, the shininess of the bodies, props, and paper on which the images are printed, all signify a certain specular fascination which, as in the original myth of Narcissus, conflates representation with the real and another with the self. It is also in its narcissistic effect, however, that pornography becomes a 'tactile' medium, extending outside the exclusively fixed, visual mode of representation to which the objectivist critique normally consigns it. To be sure, the fetishistic character of pornography is initially striking in a specular way, but that specularity is, homologously, its tactility. The shine of pornography is at once its smoothness to the touch: self-touching, phallic self-celebration. Hence two common features of pornographic representations: women touch themselves and each other, particularly in a gesture of stroking or carress, whereas men do not; and, in the case of hardcore, close-ups dwell upon phallic *partial* penetration in which the woman's body appears as an extension or outgrowth of the phallus. The fetish no longer simply endows the woman's body with a substitute phallus, but rather transforms it into an extension of the phallus (Baudrillard, 1976). Pornography's objectification of women becomes, in this respect, its objectification of the phallus, the very moment of male sexual subjectification.

Pornography operates not on the basis of radically objectifying women, but on the ideology of doing so. It offers a promise that is thwarted not only because, as representation, it is an illusion in contradistinction to the real — "perpetuat(ing) an ideal of masculinity which cannot be realised in practice — i.e. with real women in the real world" (Finn, 1985:88) — but also because, as real representation, it is internally contradictory, incapable of realising its ideology within itself. Pornography's "ideal of masculinity" is a phallic economy whose power requires an objectivity of difference it cannot, at the same time, bear. Economy, phallic or political, that is governed by the law of value seeks to submit the particular, the ambivalent to the general, the equivalent. The effect of this, however, is to disrupt the separation of subjects and objects that it sets in motion. Objects, once produced, break away and circulate independently of the subjects that produced them. This is fetishism's other side: the capacity of objects to become detached from their conditions of production, to act as if they were subjects, and to reverse the process of objectification back upon those who supposedly control it and derive their power from it. Any fetishism of objects requires a fetishism for subjects, and vice versa.

Critiques of pornography that take objectification as the exercise of linear power generally overlook this inversion and its implications. But within it lies the punitive, sadistic character of porno. Male looking seeks to realise a pure, imaginary objectification of the female, but this is thwarted and contradicted. On the one hand the unstable separation of objectification and identification detaches the woman as actively, willfully self-sexualising. Her pleasure and desire are circulated in a way that passes from simulation to parody, from mock-up to mockery: her exaggerated posture and excessive speech inform the viewer not only that she is there to be looked at, but also that she knows she's a real illusion. For the viewer this makes her fascinating and contemptible. On the other, the fetishistic composition of the representation manages the gap between knowledge and belief but at the cost of

disavowing difference and accentuating a narcissistic identification with the look's object: the fetishised woman becomes woman as fetish, woman as phallus, woman as the object in which the subject's subjectivity consists.

What are the political implications of this? If pornography's viciousness is instated contradictorily within its representational form, and not simply in its radical contrast to a real that exists outside and negates it, then intervention cannot consist simply in the 'de-sexualisation' of representation if, by this, we mean an empiricist project to remove genital explictness etc. Such a politics is insufficiently radical to the extent that it remains within the exclusivist separation of representation and the real, objects and subjects, and confines itself to an 'either/or-ism' in which patriarchal power consists. What is pornographic about pornography is its complicity with the management of the instabilities of phallic economy, viz. its *fetishistic* character. A radical intervention in porno must address itself to opening up those instabilities, to de-fetishising sexual representation, and confronting men with the phallic economy of their pleasure and desire. When Finn states that porno tells us a lot about men's sexuality she assumes a privileged position of objective detachment which must then be made practical. For its viewers, pornography says nothing at all about their sexuality: its silence in this respect, its ability to take that sexuality for granted, is the very privilege that must be shattered. To liberate ourselves from the "austere monarchy of sex", sex must be made, quite literally, insignificant, removed from the 'semiocracy' that fetishism is all about; and to do that it must first be made to signify everything it can.

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AU-DELÀ DU POSTMODERNISME? NIETZSCHE/CHIRICO

> For what I have to do is terrible, in any sense of the word;
> I do not challenge individuals — I am challenging
> humanity as a whole with my accusation: whichever way
> the decision may go, *for* me or *against* me, in any case there
> attaches to my name a quantity of doom that is beyond
> telling.
>
> F. Nietzsche. *Selected Letters*

The Italian surrealist, Giorgio de Chirico, is the painter of postmodernism *par excellence.* Chirico's world begins just at that point where the grand récits of modernity disappear into their own perspectival simulation; and where power, operating under the sign of seduction, is like a black hole in the social nebula which sucks into its dense vortex the energies of living labour and embodied politics. Here, there is, in fact, no perspectival space from which spreads out the figurations of the real. Chirico is the artist of nihilism just because he (like an uncanny precursor of René Magritte and Max Ernst, and also of Foucault's semiology of *Ceci n'est pas une pipe*) understood the full consequences of Nietzsche's accusation that in a world in which conditions of existence are transposed into "predicates of being" it would be the human fate to live through a fantastic inversion and cancellation of the order of the real. Commodity into sign, history into semiurgy, concrete labour into abstract exchange, perspective into simulation: these mark the threshold of Chirico's artistic imagination as it dwells on the eclipse of history symbolized by Nietzsche's madness in the piazzas of Turin.

There is one painting, in particular, by Chirico which provides a privileged glimpse into the inner locus of the Nietzschean world and which, for that reason, represents a great rupture in western consciousness: making nihilism the limit and possibility of *historical* emancipation. Titled simply, *Landscape Painter,* this production is a brilliant satire on the representational theory of nature (the landscape coded, and thus imprisoned, on the canvas), and a fully tragic portrayal of (our) imprisonment in a dead empire of signs. Chirico is a vivisectionist of the "referential illusion" at work in modern experience to this extent: his paintings demonstrate with an uncompromising sense of critical vision the rupture in western experience occasioned by the sudden disappearance of the classical conceptions of power, truth, history, and nature as referential finalities, and by the metamorphosis of society into a geometry of signs. *Landscape Painter* exists just at that edge in the identitarian logic of western experience where nature (represented by the dead image-system of the pastoral landscape) passes over into its opposite: the geometric and thus fully spatialized sign-world of the mannequin. The great inducement behind the *representational* theory of nature (and, of course,

of all the referential finalities: sex, economy, reason, history) was simply this. In the perspectival space of difference and of non-identity which was the real meaning of the sign and its referent (language and ontology) there was to be discovered the essential locus of human freedom. The comforting, *because antinomic*, system of referential finalities also worked its effect by providing an order of signification which militated against our tragic knowledge of the radical disenchantment of modern society. It's just what Foucault has said in *The History of Sexuality* about the impossibility of a "cynical power":

> . . . power is tolerable only on the condition that it mask a considerable part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms. Would power be accepted if it were entirely cynical? For it, secrecy is not in the nature of an abuse; it is indispensable to its operation. Not only because power imposes secrecy on those whom it dominates, but because it is perhaps just as indispensable to the latter: would they accept it if they did not see it as a mere limit placed on their desire, leaving a measure of freedom — however slight — intact? Power as a pure limit set on freedom is, at least in our society, the general form of its acceptability.[1]


Giorgio de Chirico. *Landscape Painter*

And thus, for Chirico, what was also at stake in the theoretical agenda of the order of referential finalities was a determined *trompe l'oeil* which shifted (our) perspective from the nihilism of a "cynical power" as the essence of the modern project to the already obsolete belief in the emancipatory qualities of history, which as the locus of the real had to signify something, *anything. Landscape Painter* cancels out forever the comforting antinomies of history/emancipation; and says that if we are to be emancipated (from ourselves) it will be within, and then beyond, the logic of the sign. In this age of a fully "cynical power" and a "cynical history", the landscape which is the object of *Landscape Painter* is that of power and the sign.

Chirico is, then, the painter of Nietzsche's *The Will to Power*. In Nietzsche's famous, last postcard to Jacob Burkhardt, written just at the moment when he passed over into the silence of madness, he provided us with an important clue to the real terrorism of a sign-system, which being self-referential, tautological, and implosive, is also fully *solipsistic*. Nietzsche wrote: "The unpleasant thing, and one that nags at my modesty, is that at root every name in history is I". Nietzsche was, of course, the explorer of the new continent of the sign. His insight into the tragic sense of the sign was this: the wiping clean of the horizon of referential finalities makes of (us) the last inhabitants of a world which, based now only on "perspectival valuations", has about it only a dead will to truth, dead power, and a cynical history which do not exist except as a residue of symbolic effectors. For Nietzsche, "every name in history is I" just because he recognized, and this with horror, his imprisonment in the labyrinth of a sign-system which had about it the non-reality of a perspectival simulation. For Nietzsche, what drove on this fantastic reduction of society to the logic of the sign, what precipitated the implosion of the real into the semiology of a perspectival illusion, was just this secret: *the sign is power on its down-side, on its side of reversal, cancellation, and disaccumulation. The Will to Power* is the emblematic text which represents, at once, the locus and limit of the postmodernist imagination, or what is the same, the tragic theory of the sign which is everywhere now in intellectual and political discourse. And the source of the endless fascination of *The Will to Power*? Perhaps it's this: Nietzsche recognized that the sovereignty of the sign (he described sign-systems in the language of "perspectival valuations") meant the final reduction of society to the (abstract, semiological, and structural) language of willing. The fateful conjuncture of power/ sign as the locus of the real also meant that the dynamic language of willing was finally able to confess its secret. All along the "will to power" had never been anything more than a brilliant inferno for the liquidation of the "real" and for the processing of society into the dark and seductive empire of the sign.

If Nietzsche screams out a warning that the postmodernist (and thus nihilistic) imagination always begins with the world in reverse image (the real as the site of exterminism *par excellence*), then Chirico paints the landscape of power/sign. With Nietzsche, Chirico's vision begins just on the other side, the abstract and nihilating side, of a radical paradigm-shift which is, anyway, what postmodern experience is all about. *Landscape Painter*, like all of Chirico's tragic productions, from *Turin, Spring* (the decoupling of space and individual perspective) and *The Disquieting Muses* (a haunting satire on the classical episteme of history) to *Two Masks* (the liquidation of human identity) and *Mystery and Melancholy of a Street*

(the cancellation of the space of the social), is based on three decisive refusals of representational discourse. This painting is simultaneously: *a refusal of the referent of the historical* (Chirico privileges the spatial sense and exludes a sense of time); *a refusal of the reality-principle of the social* (there are no human presences, only an instant and melancholy metamorphosis into a universe of dead signs); and *a refusal of the dialectic* (here there is no suppressed region of truth-claims, only an eclectic and randomized system of objects situated in relations of spatial contiguity). What is, perhaps, most disquieting about Chirico's artistic productions is that in refusing the referential logic of the sign and its signifying finalities, he has ruptured the dialectical logic of western consciousness. There are no "poles" in *Landscape Painter*, and this for the reason that Chirico is tracing a great, and reverse, arc in the cycle of modern power — an arc in which power in the *form* of an empty sign-system becomes nothing more than a perspectival simulation *of itself*. It's just the *lack* of signification in *Landscape Painter* that is most noticeable; and which, indeed, parallels most closely the *absence* of (embodied) power in *The Will to Power*. Like Nietzsche before him, Chirico recognized the structural logic of the sign as the essence of the language of power. This is why, perhaps, Chirico was able to trace, and this so brilliantly, an accelerating semiological implosion (the geometry of the sign) in modern experience. His was a world populated by bionic
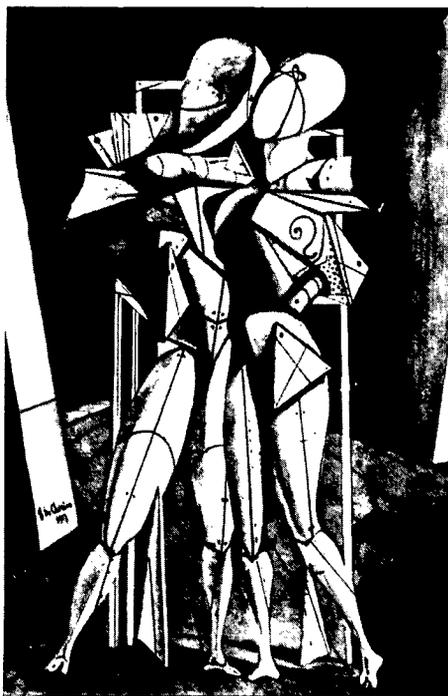
Giorgio de Chirico. *Hector and Andromache*

beings (*The Return of the Prodigal Son*), by objects floating free of their "natural" contexts (*The Song of Love*), by an almost menacing sense of silence as the background to the liquidation of the social (*The Enigma of Fate*), and by a complex hieroglyphics of the sign as the geometric, and thus perspectival, space within which we are now enclosed (*Hector and Andromache*). Chirico understood that the conjuncture of power/sign brought to the surface *the missing third term* in postmodernist theorisations of power: the "will to will" as the abstract, semiological unity imposed on an order of experience which was always only a system of mirroring-effects. For Chirico, it was just this hint of death in the language of the sign which was its great seduction; drawing out the political refusal of the "referential illusion", and making power interesting only when it reveals the reverse, hidden side of things: the side of mutilation, liquidation, and exterminism.

A.K.

Notes

1.   Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction*, (New York: Pantheon, 1978), p. 151.

WHAT IS POST-MODERNITY?

BARRY COOPER

One of the consequences of the quarrel of ancients and moderns during the course of the eighteenth century was to establish as sound doctrine the opinion that modernity is significantly distinct from other eras, notably that lived by the ancients. How that distinction is to be understood has occasioned great controversy. Very generally speaking, the antagonists may be divided into two camps not simply in terms of the position they take but in terms of the reasons they advance for taking it as well. The first reduces modernity to fragments of pre-modernity, which is held to be a more comprehensive experience that, approximately, may be called religious participation. The second reverses the procedure: religion is turned into an aspect or stage that has been surpassed and comprehended by modernity.

These two strategies illustrate the dialectical nature of interpretation as a whole. The moments or constituent elements of that dialectic are indicated in the title of Gadamer's famous book, *Truth and Method.* I have given an account elsewhere of what I take the task of interpretation to be and so will provide only a dogmatic summary here.[1]

The experience of wonder lies at the beginning of the task of interpretation. One asks: what is this? what does it mean? Characteristically, the answer takes the form either of clarification by the application of a systematic and self-justifying method or by an imaginative participation in the ambiguous presence of the reality experienced. The first approach, which, following Gadamer, we may conveniently call "science", understands its task to be demystification and disillusionment. If something is experienced as ambiguous, one's perspective must be changed and things will become clear. There are men of guile abroad in the world and it is necessary to suspect their works. Armed with a science that is immune to the deceptions to which ordinary human consciousness may fall victim, a purged scientific consciousness can reduce ambiguous, controversial appearances to their necessary basis. This is called scientific truth and, in principle, it appears as a clear and distinct discourse. Its great power is to unmask idols and expose false consciousness. A second approach, which Gadamer called hermeneutic,[2] calls for the unambiguous restoration of meaning by transforming what is given into a personal message. In this way misunderstanding gives way to disobedience. Through the act of interpretation, one experiences, because one is committed, a clear call or command. One knows the meaning of a question. Of course, the command may be disregarded but the meaning is not in doubt, because it is on the basis of an unambiguous experience of meaning that one obeys or not. If the analogy from sense experience in this instance is hearing, the analogy in the instance of science is sight.

Because interpretation is dialectical, if the scientific school of suspicion is followed far enough it turns out that science has already assumed a commitment for which its discourse cannot, in principle, account. Likewise, if one follows the school of obedience and trust far enough one is led to a re-articulation of the symbols of reality experienced in a discursive and non-meditative form. In other words, the scientific approach rests on a pre-scientific wager and vow that only hermeneutic experience can express. In a complementary way, the risk of deception and error, which is inherent in the experience of commitment and participation, can be guarded against only by having recourse to a discourse that is not committed in the same way to the reality experienced, which is to say, to science.

In the following essay, the dialectical nature of interpretation of the topic of modernity is illustrated by a consideration of selected themes from the work of two thinkers, Mircea Eliade and Alexandre Kojève. The first pursues a hermeneutic of reminiscence; the second one of reduction. Both involve both moments of the dialectic though, beginning in different places, they end up with different accounts of the present.

Eliade and alchemy

Mircea Eliade has discussed the mythology of modernity in several places though perhaps nowhere as strikingly as in his study of alchemy.[3] "Alchemists", he wrote, "in their desire to supersede Time, anticipated what is in fact the essence of the ideology of the modern world." That ideology is expressed "everywhere where the eschatalogical significance of labour, technology and the scientific exploration of Nature reveals itself" (*FC*, 173). Eliade has here provided a useful approximation of what the term modernity may be taken to signify, but one would like to know what is meant by the notion of superseding Time. To do so one must look more closely at his argument.

Sheer matter, the rocks, mountains and valleys of the earth, were central realities of the stone age. Central, too, was the belief that the earth was the source of generation, a mother. Streams, caves, and the galleries of mines were compared to the vagina of the earth-mother, which meant that everything inside was in a state of gestation. "In other words, the ores extracted from the mines are in some way *embryos*: they grow slowly as though in obedience to some temporal rhythm other than that of vegetable and animal organisms" (*FC*, 42). Their extraction amounted to abortion or a forcing of their birth before due time. Had they been allowed to develop according to the natural rhythms of geological time, they would have reached a state of perfection. The intervention of the miner superseded the rhythm of nature; the geological tempo was replaced by a living, human one. This spiritually bold and aggressive act required that the actors be ritually protected, that hidden veins be revealed by angels and demi-gods, that the ore be treated with respect, and so on. When conveyed to the furnace and the artisan, the dread holiness of the ore was intensified since here the most difficult and spiritually hazardous operations took place. "The furnaces are, as it were, a new matrix, an artificial uterus where the ore completes its gestation" (*FC*, 57). Smelting amounted to a cosmogonic recapitulation: the formless, primary, embryonic, chaotic matter was given form and shape and obstetric significance.

Ritual experience surrounding the practice of mining, metallurgical and agricultural techniques expressed the discovery "that man can intervene in the cosmic rhythm, that he can anticipate a natural outcome, precipitate a birth . . . man can take upon himself the work of Time" (*FC*, 75-8). This paleolithic or perhaps neolithic spiritual structure is preserved in pre-modern, western alchemy. If nothing impeded the gestation of embryological ores, they would eventually mature into gold, which was perfect, noble, immortal, supremely ripe and autonomous. On the other hand, alchemical intervention by means of the philosopher's egg or stone could transmute the embryo, eliminate the temporal interval between imperfect, immature, crude metal and gold. "The stone achieved transmutation almost instantaneously: it superseded Time" (*FC*, 78). What Eliade meant by the expression "superseding Time" then, was the replacement of what was believed to be a naturally teleological geological time with a time whose teleology was determined by the wilful acts of human beings.

More was involved than this. The alchemist, like the neolithic smith and his humble predecessor the paleolithic potter, was also a "master of fire"; like the shaman, yogi, and poet, he had attained a condition superior to ordinary humans and in consequence was dangerous and sacred. What made him so was technical prowess, his ability to imitate divine models and superhuman patrons. Alchemists were connoisseurs of secrets and their lore was transmitted by an occult tradition. The teaching of techniques and the granting of powers that were also mysteries expressed the sacredness of the cosmos.

Modern chemical science, of course, has nothing to do with this, for it operates in a desanctified cosmos. "Modern man is incapable of experiencing the sacred in his dealings with matter; at most he can achieve an aesthetic experience" (*FC*, 143). Pre-modern cosmological thinking was therefore richer or more complete than modern thinking. For the former, "the world is not only 'alive' but also 'open': an object is never simply itself (as is the case with modern consciousness), it is also a sign of, or a repository for, something else." But with the discovery of agriculture "all human culture, however strange and remote, was doomed to undergo the consequences of the historical events, which were taking place at the 'centre'." These consequences were part of "the historic fatality." The discovery of husbandry meant "that man was destined . . . to suffer the influences of all subsequent discoveries and innovations which agriculture made possible: domestication of animals, urban civilization, military organization, empire, imperialism, mass wars, etc. In other words, all mankind became involved in the activities of some of its members. Thus, from this time on — parallel with the rise of the first urban civilizations in the Near East — it is possible to speak of *history* in the full sense of the term, that is, of universal modifications effected by the creative will of certain societies (more precisely, of privileged elements in those societies)" (*FC*, 143-45). Accordingly, there exists a fundamental contrast between history and nature corresponding to the contrast between will and submission, between a sense of rebellion and of sacrality.

Eliade was deeply ambivalent about the consequences of the agricultural revolution. The new alchemists, unlike their pre-agricultural and nomadic predecessors, expressed their experience of matter not "in terms of 'vital' hierophanies as it was within the outlook of primitive man; it has acquired a spiritual dimension" (*FC*,

152). Their operations were both physical and spiritual, and the same words were used to describe both levels of activity: torture, death, and resurrection affected both the transmuted substance and the adept. Clearly there could be no resurrection, freedom, illumination or immortality without ascesis, torture, and death. "In modern terminology, initiatory death abolishes Creation and History and delivers us from all failures and 'sins'. It delivers us from the ravages inseparable from the human condition" (*FC*, 157). This is why the alchemist had to be virtuous, healthy, humble, patient, and chaste; his mind must be free and in harmony with his work; he must mediate, labour and pray; for, as one of them wrote, "our intention is not directed towards teaching anyone how to make gold but towards something much higher, namely how Nature may be seen and recognized as coming from God and God in Nature."[4] The acquisition of the philosopher's stone symbolized perfect knowledge of God.

Let us summarize Eliade's argument: as a result of the agricultural revolution, man assumed a responsibility towards nature that primitive man did not experience. Late pre-modern alchemy, which existed in spiritual continuity with agriculture, collaborated with God in a double perfection, of matter and of the alchemist. In taking on the responsibility for changing nature, man put himself in the place of natural cosmic Time: the furnace and crucible superseded the telluric matrix, and the retort rehearsed cosmogony. "The essential point is that their work, transmutation, involved, in one form or another, the elimination of Time" (*FC*, 171). Though they worked in conjunction with God, their work was tolerated rather than encouraged by Him since there was always an element of presumption in changing nature by human, even if liturgical, labour.

Precisely this reverential experience was what modern chemistry eliminated when it incorporated into its own discourse, and made use of, those empirically valid discoveries of the ancients. "We must not believe that the triumph of experimental science reduced to naught the dreams and ideals of the alchemist." On the contrary: the modern technological dogma that man's true mission is to transform and improve nature and become its master is "the authentic continuation of the alchemists dream. The visionary's myth of the perfection, or more accurately, of the redemption of Nature, survives, in camouflaged form, in the pathetic programme of the industrial societies whose aim is the total transmutation of Nature, its transformation into 'energy'" (*FC*, 172). What Eliade has done here is demystify "pathetic" modern technological activity by showing it to be the actualization of a fragmentary and incoherent alchemical dream. In contrast, the genuine alchemical experience was whole and sound because it expressed the reality of a sacred cosmos.

The premises of modern science and technology spelled the end to natural rituals and sacred revelations. "Scientific phenomena are only revealed at the cost of the disappearance of the hierophanies" (*FC*, 174). Unlike the ancient alchemist modern scientific technicians are unafraid of time. They do not protect themselves by regenerating or reenacting the cosmogony or by sanctifying it in liturgy. They face death without resurrection; there is no elixir of immortality, no post-mortem existence, and no indestructibility. These novel attitudes have been adopted because modern men do more than put themselves in the place of cosmic Time, as did the pre-modern alchemists; they take on the role of cosmic Time as well, not simply

with respect to nature but also with respect to themselves. Herein lies "the tragic grandeur of modern man" who has "recognized himself to be essentially, and sometimes even uniquely, a temporal being, taking his existence from Time and bound by actuality" (*FC*, 175). Having for so long dreamed of improving on nature, when "the fabulous perspectives opened out to him by his own discoveries" became actualities, "the temptation was too great to resist. . . . It was inconceivable that he should hesitate. . . . But the price had to be paid. Man could not stand in the place of Time without condemning himself implicitly to be identified with it, to do its work even when he no longer wished to" (*FC*, 176). The work of cosmic Time was replaced by the temporality of labour, an activity devoid of any liturgical glow. By this act man has also condemned himself to exhaustion, irreversibility and emptiness, which is translated "on the philosophical plane into the tragic awareness of the vanity of all human existence. Happily, passions, images, myths, games, distractions, dreams — not to mention religion, which does not belong to the proper spiritual horizon of modern man — are there to prevent this tragic consciousness from imposing itself on planes other than the philosophic" (*FC*, 177).

In light of the foregoing, Eliade remarked somewhat surprisingly in conclusion that "these considerations are no more a criticism of the modern world than they are a eulogy of other primitive or exotic societies." Nevertheless, "these considerations" have argued that "the secularization of work is like an open wound in the body of modern society," which may or may not be closed in the future. "Even a reconciliation with temporality remains a possibility, given a more correct conception of Time" (*FC*, 177-8). But surely Eliade believed that, if the wound were to be closed, it would not be by means of man's clever technical surgery but by Nature's healing hand. Surely a restoration of the experiences of cosmic Time would mean an end to human, wilful time, to "temporality". Surely Eliade *has* criticized the modern world for its pathetic programmes, its lack of hesitation before giving in to temptation, its emptiness; surely too he believed that passions, images, myths, games, distractions, dreams, not to mention religion, would effect the reconciliation by placing temporality, that is, man, in its proper and subordinate place with respect to sacred cosmic Time.

And yet one must not cheapen Eliade's argument by reducing it to a version of Hegel's unhappy consciousness. Let us say instead that he was as ambivalent about the modern technological revolution as he was about the agricultural revolution. "It is right," he said in the closing words of his study, "that the historiographic consciousness of Western man should be at one with the deeds and ideals of his very remote ancestors — even though modern man, heir to all these myths and dreams, has succeeded in realizing them only by breaking loose from their original significance" (*FC*, 178). It is right, that is, that Eliade can practice the science of comparative religion and undertake a philosophical, coherent discourse rather than simply practice religion and participate in a non-discursive hierophany.

Kojève and Wisdom

Eliade began by attempting to show that modernity could be understood best in light of the more comprehensive pre-modern experiences of cosmic reality, which

he called Time. That is, his initial approach was to employ a hermeneutic of reminiscence in order imaginatively to capture the pre-modern experience as a whole in light of which he could analyze modernity as a fragment. But he was led in the end to abandon this implicit practice of imaginative reconstitution in favour of his own scientific practice. In Kojève's interpretation of Hegel this procedure was reversed.[5] That is, he began with science or rather, with an account of wisdom, complete of systematic science, but also evoked a strenuous and prescriptive political practice.

Wisdom, the System of Science, is a discourse that accounts of everything, including itself and the one who speaks it. It is a comprehensive circle; in principle no experience is foreign to it, nothing cannot find an articulate place within its logical alphabet. If the System of Science is not, as Hegel said of Schelling, a dogmatic announcement "shot from a gun," it must have an introduction, as was indicated by the sub-title of Hegel's *Phenomenology*. There are, according to Kojève, four premises necessary to explain Hegel's System of Science that, when fully grasped, reveal reality, and reveal it without remainder. Thereby they are transformed into true introductory aspects of the Truth. The four premises are these: "First, the existence of the revelation of Given-Being [*Sein*; that is, Eliade's experience of Time or "eternal" Nature] by Speech; second, the existence of a Desire engendering an Action that *negates* and transforms Given-Being; third, the existence of *several* Desires, able to desire each other mutually; and fourth, the existence of *possibility* of difference between the Desires of (future) Masters and the desires of (future) Slaves" (*IH*, 171). The first premise accounts for the existence of "speaking animals" and the last three for the existence of properly human history.

The key to conceptual or true history is found in the pure concept of recognition, which is elaborated in the dialectic of Master and Slave. Once having grasped the implications of Chapter IV A of Hegel's *Phänomenologie*, Kojève argued, the entirety of the modern present can be comprehended. The most important aspect of the Master-Slave dialectic for our topic is that the proto-human Desire that makes itself into a Slave shows by that free and uncaused act (*IH*, 494-5) that it has a natural fear of death. This natural fear is the mode in which the Slave is in-formed of and by the negativity or nothingness that lies at the core of human existence. It is not a fear of this or that, but Terror, fear for the loss of one's entire natural or given being, which for this proto-human, proto-historical Desire is the loss of all. In Hegel's words, there occurs a "melting" or "absolute liquefaction of all stable support"[6] from which experience *all* action, *all* change, *all* history arises. Two kinds of change were significant: the Slave's forced labour changed the giveness of Nature by imposing human form upon it and second, the Slave created a series of discourses to make sense of what he is and does. By transforming Nature, the Slave came to recognize his own work there and to see that, with respect to Nature, he was autonomous.

This humanization of Nature, as Marx called it, which produced the agricultural and later technological revolutions so central to Eliade's understanding, was implicitly carried on under the threat of the Master's terror.[7] The Slave did not simply see his creation of a human, technically transformed world as "his" work;

he also saw in the Master all that he, the Slave, was not, namely a human being free of the (natural) necessity of labour. And labour would remain a *natural* necessity so long as the slave retained his natural fear of death. However that may be, the Slave was, in his own way, aware of the contradiction between his being the creator of the human world from Nature and the Master being the gratuitous benefactor (*IH*, 174-80). He expressed this contradiction in a series of incomplete religious and philosophical discourses that, in one form or another, postulated a transcendent reconciliation or supersession of his experienced contradiction. Insofar as that transcendent reconciliation was believed to take place in the Beyond, human consciousness here and now would be quiet and unhappy; if that reconciliation was believed to take place in the future, human consciousness, even if unhappy, would know what is to be done, namely to actualize the "ideal" which is to say, to overcome the contradiction of Master and Slave.

The religious Beyond, as Nietzsche said, besmirched this world, the only world there is.[8] Kojève would not have disagreed though he also explained that Christianity, the highest form of religious experience, was true as a symbolic anthropology. That is, it was not an account of the reality of actual history (*IH*, 145-6). Accordingly, one can detect a certain similarity in the descriptions of Kojève and Eliade. Both would agree that a central feature of modernity is the overcoming of Nature, of what is given, especially man's basic biological nature. The first to be overcome is his infantile desire to live in the midst of mother nature. Later came the desire to overcome the "sublimated" naturalism of religious ideology, and lastly the desire to overcome the "alienated" naturalism of juridical capitalist production (*IH*, 180-190). No ritual protection, to use Eliade's language, or ideology, to use Kojève's, mediates the modern (atheist) appropriation of Nature. Pollution is a technical problem requiring the application of more technique to clean it up, not a stain to be washed away by liturgical intervention. Death is death. There is no resurrection, no immortality, no Beyond. Indeed, it is a return to the beginning, to the original liquefaction of consciousness that initiated the *via dolorosa* of servile action and the development of servile consciousness. Finally Kojève and Eliade would agree that modern man *is* temporality: he is temporary (death is death) and he is temporal (nothing is sacred).

The difference between Eliade and Kojève is that whereas Eliade argued that human temporality and cosmic Time could perhaps be reconciled in the future if man were to understand Time properly, according to Kojève that reconciliation has already taken place. Moreover it did not entail the abandonment of philosophic, coherent discourse in favour of myth, games, distractions and dreams, not to mention religion. Nor was it tragic, empty or vain. The reconciliation, according to Kojève, is nothing more than the execution of the intent, announced in the Preface to the *Phänomenologie*, that philosophy give up the name love of Wisdom that it might become actual Wisdom.[9] All philosophers, that is, all people who seek to be fully self-conscious and satisfied and so to be able to give a coherent account of themselves and the world, are agreed on the definition of the Wise Man. He is the person who actually is what the philosophers desire to be (*IH*, 281). Of course, not everyone desires to be wise, which restricts any dispute to a discussion among those who do, namely the philosophers. Moreover, it would seem that some

philosophers, while agreed upon the definition of a Wise Man, denied that any person actually could be wise.

These philosophers, however, were in error. They did not simply deny the reality of Wisdom, of course; rather, they denied that it could be realized by human beings who were born and died "in" time. But they immediately added that another sort of being, who neither lived nor died as human beings did, and who was, therefore, "outside" of time, might very well be wise. Indeed most of these philosophers insisted that this being, called "God", was wise. "Outside" of human time, of Eliade's temporality, God was what he was, without change, identical with himself. "In" time (or *as* time) the philosopher and the world changed. Now, if truth was unchanging, one could say that these theistic philosophers aimed at revealing God, the unchanging one, by their discourse. Accordingly, Wisdom would not be self-knowledge but knowledge of God. But this meant that the differences between Kojève and Eliade were not, properly speaking, within philosophy so much as between philosophy and theology (*IH*, 284-85). That is, the contents of Eliade's "religion" and Kojève's "philosophy" were identical; only the form was different. This is why, for example, they agreed on what modernity meant even though they did not agree on the means by which the "wounds" would be closed.

There is a further disagreement. According to Kojève, the Wise Man's discourse excluded nothing, not even the experiences indicated by the myths, rituals and liturgies of the theologian. This meant that the discourse, the discursive practice, of Wisdom was comparable to the religious practice that "articulated" the devine presence, or in Eliade's language, that re-presented Time within (human) temporality. Now Wisdom, "all philosophers" agreed, was absolute Truth, identical always with itself, unchanging or eternal, even though revealed or discovered upon particular occasions. Thus, raising the matter of Truth or Wisdom also raised the problem of temporality, "or more particularly, the problem of the relationship between time [Eliade's temporality] and the eternal [Eliade's Time] or between time and the in-temporal" (*IH*, 336). The discourse that revealed Wisdom (or claimed to) Kojève called the Concept, and he provided an ingenious and amusing "Note on Eternity, Time and the Concept" in order to account for this relationship.

Kojève quoted two texts of Hegel, nearly identical in phrasing and quite identical in meaning: The Concept is Time.[10] By identifying the Concept and Time it was clear that there was no other Time than what Eliade meant by temporality. Kojève's "Time" was human time, the time that man lived and spoke about. The reconciliation consisted in understanding that. Such an understanding cannot be forced. There is no transition possible between the commitments of a religious person and those of Kojève's atheist Hegelian. "To be within one [set of commitments] is to decide against the other; to reject the one is to establish oneself in the other. The decision is absolutely unique; and it is as simple as possible: what is involved is to decide for one's self (that is, against God) or for God (that is, against oneself). And there is no 'reason' for the decision other than the decision itself" (*IH*, 293). But there is nothing new here: this necessity of self-choosing had been present from the start. In the primordial pardigmatic fight there was no way to deduce beforehand whether any one, or which, of the subjectively self-certain

proto-human animal Desires would chose to submit and become a Slave to the Desire of the other, who became Master.

The discourses of the theologians, and perhaps even the quasi-scientific discourse of comparative religion, aimed at revealing God. The discourses of the scientific and quasi-atheistic philosophers and eventually of the systematic and atheist Wise Man aimed at revealing the meaning of history. Paradigmatically this was expressed in the pure concept of recognition, the dialectic of Master and Slave, and the supersession of the contradiction of Master and Slave. Now, according to Kojève the pure concept of recognition has been actualized in the reality of history and superseded in the modern world, which is, accordingly, post-historical in the strict (Hegelian) sense of the term. The final historical act corresponded to the initial primordial fight, and consisted in Terror, the Terror of the French Revolution, which introduced into history the absolute plenitude of nothingness. "Terror," said Kojève, "renders particular consciousness disposed to admit of a State where they can be realized in a partial and limited way, but where they will be truly and really free" (*IH*, 143-44). The Terror of the Revolution was the complete revelation of nothingness without any ideological, religious or philosophical compensation promised in a Beyond for injustices suffered here below.

The State created from Terror was the Napoleonic Empire, a "total" and "definitive" reality. "For Hegel (1806) it is a *universal* and *homogeneous* State: it unites the whole of humanity together (at least that which counts historically) and 'suppresses' (*aufhebt*) in itself all 'specific differences' (*Besonderheit*): nations, social classes, families, (Christianity being itself also 'suppressed,' no further dualism between church and state). Thus wars and revolutions are henceforth impossible. That is, this State will no longer modify itself, will remain eternally identical with itself. Now Man is formed by the State where he lives. Man therefore will no longer change himself anymore. And Nature (without Negativity) is in every way 'completed' forever" (*IH*, 145). The universal and homogeneous State, and it alone, could satisfy all citizens. The last form of servile consciousness had been purged by the Terror, but it did not become a Master. Rather, it continued to labour, not out of fear of death at the hands of the Master, for it had surmounted that fear, and not for the Master either: it worked for itself and for the State. Moreover, there is no contradiction between its particularity and the universality of the State. "The human participating in this State understands himself and is understood completely; he lives in accord with himself. Thus he is completely satisfied (*befriedigt*), and he is so by the *mutual recognition of all*." The Napoleonic State did not just proclaim *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité*, it *realized* the recognition of each by all. "The Napoleonic State has an essentially new characteristic; the synthetic man is realized in it, the veritable *Bürger*, the true citizen, — synthesis of Master and Slave: the *soldier* who *labours* and the *labourer* who makes *war*. Man attains complete Satisfaction (*Befriedigung*) by that; that is, he realizes his individuality, the synthesis of the particular and the universal, being recognized universally in his irreplaceable and 'unique in the world' *particularity*" (*IH*, 113-114). It is important that the post-Revolutionary State be both universal and homogeneous: "On the one hand, thanks to its universality, I am there 'recognized' by *all* men who are all my equals. On the other hand, thanks to its homogeneity it

is truly *I* who am 'recognized,' and not my family, my social class, my nation ('I' in so far as I am 'representative' of a rich or illustrious family, a possessing or governing class, a puissant or civilized nation, etc." (*IH*, 146).

In some respects one must admit that the image of a universal and homogeneous State is a plausible description of the contemporary modern world. It is inconceivable, for example, that a serious modern political organization (including a conspiratorial secret one) would or could support a public order that denied *liberté* as the supreme political good, that denied *égalité* in order to uphold a pretended aristocracy of blood, culture, gender, or even intellect, that denied that all humanity was one great *fraternité*. Of course, one could point to "backward," "underdeveloped" or "traditional" areas, so that, properly speaking, the Napoleonic Empire was but the "germ" of the universal and homogeneous State (*IH*, 290). So far as the discourse that accounts for modernity is concerned, the continued existence of pre-modern remnants or avatars presents no theoretical difficulties: their self-understanding can be incorporated into the System of Science as one of its constituent elements. In terms of non-discursive practice, matters are more complex.

Human being, according to Kojève is a dialectically expanding self-consciousness that seeks to account for itself in discourse and so can attain satisfaction only by articulating the complete discourse called Wisdom. The satisfied Wise Man, that is, not only knows himself to be wise but also shows himself to be wise by producing a complete and comprehensive speech. There is, however, another "ideal" of Wisdom expressed in certain Hindu and Buddhist notions of dreamless sleep, *turiya*, Nirvana, and so on.[11] In general this "ideal" identifies Wisdom and complete silence rather than complete speech, the complete extinction of consciousness rather than complete self-consciousness. Such "ideals" are not harmless but are objectives capable of actualization, so what is involved, Kojève said, is a question of fact. Either it is a fact that man is self-consciousness (and his perfection lies in achieving complete self-consciousness) or he is not (and his perfection lies in the opposite direction). "Well, these are *facts* that are opposed to Hegel. And evidently, he has nothing to reply. He can at most oppose the *fact* of the conscious Wise man to the *facts* of the unconscious 'Wise' men. And if that fact did not exist . . .?" The conditional question contained its own implicit answer: change the conditions. One can only "refute" the fact of the unconscious "Wise" man the way one "refutes" any "fact or thing or beast: by destroying it physically" (*IH*, 179; cf. *IH*, 296 fn. 1). One of the implications of dialectically expanding Hegelian consciousness, then, is that it cannot leave the silent mystical yogis alone: it must wake them up and demand that they speak.[12] Indeed, it must terrorize them into speech so that they can be refuted or else kill them off in silence, with no more significance than slicing a head of cabbage or gulping a draught of water, as Hegel described the meaningless deaths of Robespierre's Terror.

Finally, Kojève has provided a glimpse of what post-historical politics are like. In principle, as was argued earlier, the universal and homogeneous State provided for the first time the conditions necessary and sufficient for the mutual recognition of each citizen by all the others. In actuality, however, only the first citizen realized the possibility held out to everyone: "only the Leader of the universal and

homogeneous state (Napoleon) is *really* 'satisfied' (recognized by all in his reality and his personal value). He alone is therefore truly free (more than all the Leaders before him who were always 'limited' by 'specific differences' of families, classes, nations). But all the citizens are fully 'satisfied' here because *each* can *become* this Leader whose personal ('particular') action is at the same time universal ('state') action; that is, the action of all. . . . Since heredity has been abolished, each can actualize his Desire for recognition: on condition of accepting the risk of death (element of Mastery) that implies competition (political struggle; this risk guarantees the 'seriousness' of the candidates) within the state, and on condition also of having previously taken part in the constructive activity of the Society, in the collective Labour that maintains the State in its reality (element of Servitude, of Service, that guarantees the 'competence' of the candidates). The 'satisfaction' of the citizen is thus a result of the synthesis, in himself, of the Master-warrior and the Slave-labourer. In addition, what is new in this State is that *all* are (on occasion) *warriors* (conscription) and *all* also take part in social *labour*. As for the Wise man (Hegel), he is content to *understand*: the State and its Leader, the Warrior-and-Labourer-Citizen, and lastly himself" (*IH*, 146). Kojève, one hardly need add, has understood Hegel's teaching as the model for modern political existence.[13]

I would like now to summarize Kojève's argument in light of the question, what is post-modernity? The achievement of Wisdom, understood as complete scientific discourse, is the act that most perfectly accomplished the modern project even as that project was understood by Eliade. The political condition was the Napoleonic Empire, the "germ" of the universal and homogeneous State; the remaining tasks to be carried out in obedience to the message contained in the achievement of Wisdom, tasks that are in no way innovative or "historical" actions, because they are simply executions of an already completed and comprehensive programme, are all devoted to the extension of that State throughout the globe. Just as with Eliade, who wished both to practice the modern scientific discourse called comparative religion *and* to practice pre-modern religious experience, even though the former tended to undermine the latter, there is an equivalent problem contained within the implications of Kojève's discourse.

Kojève's version of the contradiction implied in the dialectics of interpretation may be brought to light by raising the somewhat impolite question: "What is Kojève's commitment?" Leo Strauss, whom I believe perfectly understood the meaning of Kojève's discourse, commented: "is this not a hideous prospect: a state in which the last refuge of man's humanity is political assassination in the particularly sordid form of the palace revolution?" Indeed, he said, "it does not seem to be sound that Kojève encourages others by his speech to a course of action to which he himself would never stoop in deed."[14] One must agree that the demand to participate in a regime of palace revolutions and domestic terror is not very appealing.

What is post-modernity?

Both Kojève and Eliade agreed that modernity was a term adequate to describe most existing political regimes. Those which are not modern have been striving to

modernize or else; the political fate of the religious communities of Afghanistan and Iran, for example, which it is not yet fully sealed, has recently been to suffer the attention of the modern, modernizing empires of east and west. A, or perhaps the, crucial difference between modern and pre-modern political regimes is the attitude taken towards nature, that is, the cosmos, the divine, the gods, religion, God, and so on. Respective modern and pre-modern attitudes are expressed in discourses: the pious, evocative and participatory discourses of the religious orders, the scientific and demystifying discourses of the modern ones. The problem may be specified in its general form as follows: in the absence of scientific demystification, participatory discourse tends to dissolve into the imaginary evocation of subjectively certain experiences; in the absence of the evocations of reminiscence, scientific discourse tends to harden into the sterile technique of domination. In the particular form found in the exemplary texts considered here, it may be specified this way: Eliade wished to speak of sacred experiences that, when spoken of, had precisely their sacredness destroyed; Kojève wished to speak of a Wisdom that premodernity attributed only to gods, and by so doing implied the forcible silencing of everyone else.

What, then, is post-modernity? To be aware of what both Eliade and Kojève taught. To know where discourse leads. But if the reminiscence of religious experience inevitably leads to the destructive science of religion, and if the wilful mastery of religious experience leads to forced labour in the service of the universal and homogeneous State, what, then, is to be done? Is there a discursive practice that is neither a mindless, careless, celebration of uncontrolled fantasy nor the Wisdom of divine butchery? If there is, it would amount to an ironic discourse, a practice that undermined itself even while it was being spoken, that would require at the same time both the most careful attention, and thus the greatest suspicion, as well as utter trust, a surrender to the charmed flow of musical words, and an unwilled willingness to believe. This is what Nietzsche meant when, after describing our modern existence as consciousness of power, hubris, impiety, violation of nature and vivisection of the soul, he asked: "What do we care any longer for 'salvation' of the soul?" And he answered: "afterwards we cure ourselves."[15] If post-modernity is to mean anything, it is the practice of curing ourselves when we no longer have souls to be saved.

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Notes

1. "Reason and Interpretation in Contemporary Political Theory," *Polity* XI (1979), 387-99; "Hermeneutics and Political Science" in H.K. Betz, ed., *Recent Approaches to the Social Sciences*, vol. II, (Social Sciences Symposium Series, University of Calgary, 1979), 17-30; "Reduction, Reminiscence and the Search for Truth" in Peter J. Opitz and Gregor Sebba, eds., *The Philosophy of Order: Essays on History, Consciousness and Politics for Eric Voegelin on his 80th Birthday*, (Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1981), 79-90.

2. This usage is perhaps not the best, since the term hermeneutic is simply an English derivative of the Greek *hermeneuo*, I interpret, and "science" too is an interpretation.

3. *The Forge and the Crucible: The Origins and Structures of Alchemy*, tr. Stephen Corrin, (New York, Harper, 1962). Page references are given in parentheses in the text as *FC*.

4. George von Welling, quoted in R.D. Gray, *Goethe the Alchemist*, (Cambridge, C.U.P. 1952), 19.

5. Alexandre Kojève provided, as his English editor has said "one of the few important philosophical books of the twentieth century" based upon "six years devoted to nothing but reading a single book, line by line," Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. Certainly Kojève's detractors (one could hardly call them critics) have produced nothing comparable. But then again they are mostly busy little intellectuals from whom thought should not be expected anyhow. I have given a more adequate presentation of what I understand Kojève's discourse to mean in *The End of History: An Essay on Modern Hegelianism*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1984). References to his *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel*, 2nd ed., (Paris, Gallimard, 1947) are given in the text as *IH*. Consider also Tom Darby, "Nihilism, Politics and Technology," *CJPST*, V:3 (1981), 57-89, the comments of Susan Shell and Arthur Kroker, *ibid.*, 90-98, and Darby's own study, *The Feast: Meditations on Politics and Time*, (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1982).

6. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed., J. Hoffmeister, (Hamburg, Meiner Verlag, 1952), 148.

7. The fate of the Master in all this is not very interesting. His one and only act has been to overcome the natural fear of death. Henceforth he remained unchanged and unable to be educated: he would rather die than be a Slave, which appeared to be the only alternative. Yet, he was not a satisfied Desire since he did not get what he wanted from the primordial fight by which he and the Slave were created. He sought the mutual desire of another, which is to say, recognition; all he got was the servile activity of an "ensouled tool." Hence, the way of the Master is "tragic," an "existential impasse." He can serve only as an unchanging "catalyst" for the "chemical changes" effected by the Slave. In the end he must be negated non-dialectically, that is, simply killed (*IH*, 174 ff).

8. *Twilight of the Idols*, para. 34.

9. *Phänomenologie*, 12.

10. *Phänomenologie*, 27, 38.

11. For details of one aspect of this experience, see Mircea Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, tr. Willard R. Trask, (Princeton, P.U.P. 1969).

12. In a letter to his friend Georges Bataille, Kohève reported his reaction to *L'Expérience intérieure*. There he said that Bataille's book was mystical, an attempt to express silence verbally, "to speak without saying anything." But silence has no need to be explained and cannot be, since it would be transformed into speech. "Thus the circle is closed and you are unattackable: verbally. So, if you are not a bother, you will be left alone. If not — you will be suppressed, without encountering any resistance. For the internal experience [as Bataille had said] is the contrary to action. If you struggle — then the thing becomes serious (or could become so). But you would be acting, you would no longer be a 'contemplative.' The thing for which you struggle [i.e., the 'internal experience'] would, therefore, no longer exist. Too bad — for you." "Lettre à Georges Bataille" *Textures*, 6 (1961), 61-64.

13. See in particular his interview with Gilles Lapouge, *La Quinzaine littéraire*, 53 (1.VII.1968).

14. Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny*, revised ed., (Ithaca, Cornell U.P. 1963), 224, 205.

15. *Genealogy of Morals*, III:ix.

POST-MODERNISM AND THE END OF PHILOSOPHY

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The contemporary version of the "post-modernist" phenomenon has its origins in the doctrines of Nietzsche. One of the most striking manifestations of that phenomenon is the current debate about the end of philosophy. More sharply stated, the debate takes its bearings by the widespread agreement that the age of metaphysics (philosophy in the traditional sense) is over. According to this understanding of the term "metaphysics," the classical doctrine of two worlds, or of eternity and temporality, as represented by the orthodox interpretation of Platonism on the one hand, and the Judaeo-Christian tradition on the other, has been "overcome," or less melodramatically, has withered away. Modernity is consequently understood as the historical process of that overcoming or withering-away. It follows, however, that if the process is complete, then modernity has itself withered away, or suppressed itself. We therefore presumably stand, at the very least, upon the threshold of the post-modern epoch, or, to paraphrase Nietzsche, with one foot beyond the world of modernity. If this account of things is correct, two further conclusions may be drawn. The first is that our transitional situation allows us to understand the recently concluded modern epoch from "outside" or "beyond," and hence, presumably, more accurately than was previously the case. The second is that, poised as we are at the threshold of some new epoch, with, so to speak, one foot in the air, we are still free to decide the direction in which to move.

This little sketch of the present moment raises a number of questions. The first is whether the expression "post-modernist" has any discernible cognitive content. This in turn depends upon our understanding of modernity itself. For it is entirely possible that the experience (or rhetoric) of "post-modernism" is itself a character-istic phenomenon of modernity. The second question turns upon the sense of the expression "metaphysics." This notoriously ambiguous word has its philological origins in Aristotle, or rather in his editors, and may be nothing more than a librarian's term of classification ("the writings coming after, or placed next to, the writings on physics"). Even if this is false or inadequate, the fact remains that modern critics of metaphysics, or spokesmen for its demise, derive the sense of the term from Plato, and it is an open question whether they are entitled to do so. What is normally referred to by scholars as "Plato's theory of Ideas," the ostensible basis for the two-worlds doctrine, is not to be found in the Platonic dialogues. What we find instead is a variety of extremely ambiguous and inconsistent conversations, in the form of questions and answers, about the relation between forms and their instances, in more than one sense of the term "form." Post-metaphysicians pride themselves upon their hermeneutical subtlety, and their capacity to hear the

unspoken and deeper dimension underneath the spoken or superficial stratum of the written text. Yet they are singularly unable to exercise this hermeneutical skill in the case of the Platonic dialogues. Their interpretation of the "two-worlds" doctrine is as superficial and hence philosophically inaccurate as that of the most unimaginative philologist. A third question might be raised concerning the accuracy of Nietzsche's interpretation of Christianity, an interpretation which, as I have suggested, is today extremely influential among post-modernists. Is Christianity intelligible as a taking of vengeance against, and hence a devaluing of, the created world? Do we do justice to the Christian doctrine of love by understanding it as the will to power? Fourth: if "metaphysics" has not been overcome until the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth century, what is the difference between antiquity and modernity? Fifth: if we do indeed stand outside the modern epoch, perhaps, as so detached (or partially detached) we understand modernity *less well*, rather than better, than its "surpassed" residents. Finally, is it not true that those who stand with one foot in the air run a grave risk of falling on their faces?

No doubt this list of questions could be extended, but it is a fair representation of the difficulties raised by contemporary discussions of post-modernity. The avid post-modernist might perhaps object that my questions are themselves outmoded consequences of modernity, or even of metaphysics, or of the former, scientifically articulated will to power which valued clarity, rationality, and common sense. I believe that there is a very simple reply to objections of this sort. The advocates of post-modernism themselves distinguish in their practice between criticism and refutation of metaphysics and modernity on the one hand, and the articulation (if that is the right word) of post-modernist "texts" on the other. When attempting to persuade us that philosophy is at an end, the post-modernists talk, or attempt to talk, *our* language. Only after we are persuaded do we ourselves begin to chant post-modernese. In this essay, I am concerned with one question: is the thesis of the end of philosophy, and so of modernity, sound? I shall have no interest at all in the ostensible ontological profundities of the Marquis De Sade, the presumed superiority of difference to sameness, or other preferred topics of the post-modern school(s). In other words, I shall accept the thesis, for the purpose of discussion, that we are at the threshold of a new age, and that, with one foot beyond modernity (whatever the dangers ensuing from the fact that this foot is hanging in mid-air), or the previous manifestations of modernity, we can discuss intelligently what is to be done. I shall not accept without argument the thesis that the new age we attend is post-modern, however. On the contrary, it is my view, and the view which I shall here defend, that there is no valid distinction between the modern and the post-modern, but that the actual distinction lies between the ancient and the modern.

A crucial preliminary point needs to be made. I am not a spokesman for antiquity or an advocate of a return to the past. This form of inverted historicism holds no appeal for me. A criticism of this or that aspect of modernity is not equivalent to a rejection of modernity. The decisive consideration is this: the rejection of modernity is a typically modern phenomenon. The ancients did not comment on the merits or defects of the moderns. It is modern man who dwells perpetually

within epochal contrasts, whether in the form of longing for the past or dreaming of the future, flitting from one historical period to another on the wings of imagination. The apparent exception to this remark is in my opinion a sign of its soundness. I am thinking here of doctrines of commitment, resolve, and genuineness as manifested in a project. These doctrines advocate a termination of nostalgia or dreaming, and a "settling down" within the fundamental circumstances of one's own time. But they, too, grant the transcience of commitments and projects, or their epochal, historical nature. On the one hand, commitment to a project is a simulacrum of eternity, or an admission that man cannot exist as a radically historical being. On the other hand, it is a self-conscious attempt to *forget* the truth about radical finitude, an attempt which can be undertaken only by someone who recognises, or believes himself to recognise, that the truth of historicity is nihilism.

Modernity arises as a "project," namely, as the conscious rejection (by a few remarkable individuals) of antiquity. The subsequent rejection of modernity is then simply a re-enactment of the institution of modernity. To say this is not in itself to condemn the spirit of modernity. Perhaps human beings are so constituted that "starting afresh" is necessary and salutary for them. Whether or not this is so, I want to suggest that there are two, and exactly two, fundamental human situations, represented only from the modern perspective by the quarrel between the ancients and moderns. Once we leave the ancient or classical epoch, there is no return, except by a forgetfulness induced by something like the eternal return of the same. We cannot induce forgetfulness of this sort by an existential resolve. Let me illustrate this by a brief consideration of the thesis, associated with Heidegger, that technology is the current manifestation of the will to power. What possibilities are available to us with respect to technology? First, we may use it, consciously or inadvertantly, to destroy ourselves. Whereas this will lead to an "escape" from modernity, it is not an entrance into the post- or the pre-modern epoch. Second, we may continue in our attempts to master nature or, in the Heideggerean jargon, to cover over Being by the dominance of beings. By definition, this will produce an extension of modernity. Third, we may change our attitude toward technology, not so as to reject it (which would not be a "genuine" response to the concrete historical situation), but rather to shift from the modality of domination (and hence covering-over of Being) to that of letting-be, namely, to assisting in the process by which Being reveals itself, if only in the disguise of the ontic articulation of a new epoch. But what precisely does this mean? Since technology is human activity, designed explicitly to modify nature in terms of human desire, how can we re-orient ourselves toward technology in a post-modern, post-metaphysical, non-dominant sense? We are not here searching for a Marxist, or quasi-Marxist transformation of human society in such a way that human beings will no longer exploit one another with the assistance of technological artifacts. Such a transformation, assuming it to be desirable and possible, would not be a surpassing, but rather a fulfilment, of modernity, or at least of one centrally important aspect of the dream of modernity. What sense does it make to speak of the fulfilment of modernity as a surpassing of modernity, or an entrance into the post-modern? None at all, I submit. The essence of modernity is to remove restrictions to the human will. A

shift from one restriction to another is not a suppression of modernity. And restrictions will not be entirely suppressed with the withering-away of the state, to state only the melodramatic instance, men will still face the restriction of mortality itself, or of death.

It is not a social resolution, then, for which we search, but rather an ontological one. Now I must confess that I am unable to attach any positive significance to the thesis that such an ontological resolution is possible. Either art completes nature or it reconstitutes, i.e. creates it. The first alternative is the thesis of the ancients; the second is the thesis of modernity. There is no post-modern attitude toward technology, because (as is admitted by the view under attack) technology is itself, or is the expression of, the essence of modernity. One way in which to understand the current fuss about the post-modern is as panic induced by the recognition of the enigmatic and deeply unsatisfying nature, as well as the inescapability (by any route short of self-destruction) of modernity. The contemporary attitude toward technology may serve as the paradigm of this panic. I disregard, of course, those for whom technology presents no problem, since for such persons, the entire problem of the modern and the post-modern is invisible. As for the rest of us, we may be divided into two main camps. The first is made up of those who fear technology, more or less explicitly, whether because of its effects on the soul or because of its dangers to the body. The second includes all those who have sublimated their panic into an aggressive optimism, articulated by the rhetoric of existential commitment, and solaced by science-fiction. For both camps, the present is either intolerable or deeply menacing. Since the only way to return to the past is by projecting it into the future, the result is a diversified, yet essentially homogeneous, obsession with the "next" historical epoch.

Obsession with history is a necessary consequence of the will to recreate and thereby master nature. It is also a version of metaphysics, if by that term we mean a doctrine of two worlds, or of a radical distinction between eternity and temporality, between essence and appearance. The doctrine of radical historicity assures us that eternity is unthinkable or inaccessible. It thereby transforms historicity itself, whether understood as Being or as the filter through which Being "drips," into eternity and essence. Each finite historical epoch is an appearance of the essence of Being; the structure of meaning secreted by a radical existential commitment is a simulacrum of eternity, that is, of historicity. If we put to one side such exotic flora as Plato's so-called "theory of Ideas" or Aristotle's divine intellect, one can say that the ancients were as unmetaphysical a people as ever lived. A genuine overcoming of metaphysics would return us to the world of the Greek gods and the polis. But no such overcoming is possible. As an amusing sign of this, I point to the effort by the positivist movement of the 20's to abolish metaphysics. If the reader will permit an unorthodox comparison, I would liken, say, Rudolph Carnap to Descartes, with the radical difference that Carnap was not faced with the need to institute a revolution against theology, and consequently never developed an interesting rhetoric. However this may be, the fruits of positivism, as we now know, are the essentialist metaphysics of modal logic, a Proustian emphasis upon the "ways of world-making," and a two-worlds doctrine of logical "satisfaction" as distinguished from the cognitively inaccessible domain of "meaning." To make the same point

in a slightly different way, the current popularity of surrealism and dadaism in the philosophy of science, which is derived from the writings of the later Wittgenstein, has its deeper cause in the bankruptcy of the effort to banish self-consciousness or reflection from a rational analysis of modern science.

Whatever one's objections to Cartesian dualism, understood in the superficial sense as the radical distinction between the mind and the body, there is in my opinion no escape from the dualism of will and formal structure. When my "hard-headed" contemporaries object to the assertion that science is metaphysics, or the will to power, they silence these slogans by the force of their will, as for example by the brute (or subtle) exercise of academic power, and not by argument. Voltaire "refuted" Christianity by laughing at it. Positivists and their progeny attempted to refute metaphysics by laughing at it. Now the laugh is on them. Laughter is no doubt refreshing for the soul, and it has important political consequences. The same can be said of spiritual fatigue and boredom. In the academy, the current split between the hard-headed professors and those who dance to softer muses is a metaphysical battle between two versions of the damage done to the human soul by its inescapable impetus toward freedom from restrictions. This impetus leads both to exhilaration and fatigue, sometimes within the same breast, and often in the most subtle of blends. We acquire immunity from these ultimately debilitating moods, not through the freedom of infinite progress *or* of radical finitude, but through the loss of self-consciousness, and hence of freedom in any meaningful sense.

In this necessarily circumscribed format, I have now indicated how I would respond to three of the six questions directed toward advocates of post-modernism or the end of metaphysics. To summarise: the difference between the ancients and the moderns is that, for the ancients, art completes nature, whereas for the moderns, art creates nature. There is no valid or sound cognitive content to the notion of "post-modernism," which is itself a typically modern slogan. And metaphysics cannot be refuted by exposing the logical flaws or existential inconveniences of the doctrine of two worlds, because man is by his nature as self-conscious a "two-worlds" being. I have also implied an answer to a fourth question: since we are all always either standing with one foot in the air or falling on our faces, dragging ourselves erect in some slightly different location, and raising our feet, there is not much difference between freedom and stumbling about in the dark. The answer to a fifth question follows trivially from my previous answers. Since none of us is "outside" modernity, the question is misleadingly posed. But if some of us could extricate ourselves from modernity, we would promptly lose consciousness, and hence fail to understand anything at all. The one question which I have not attempted to answer concerns the nature of Christianity. I would prefer to leave this question to those who are far more competent than I to deal with it. Nevertheless, simply to round off the present section of this essay, I will venture the opinion that Nietzsche's interpretation of Christianity is initially tempting but finally wrong and inadequate. It is tempting, of course, not to Christians, but to those who have not been touched by that religion, to those who have broken away from it, and to those "hard-headed" men who suppose that religious faith can be "refuted," whether by argument or sociological observation, by psychological analysis or mockery.

There is, then, no end to metaphysics, and certainly no end to philosophy. Man is by his nature the philosophical animal, and never more so than when he attempts to overcome himself. In this sense, I agree with Nietzsche's observation in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, that man is the unfinished animal. This observation was certainly intended as a rejection of ancient philosophy, understood by Nietzsche as a doctrine of finished ends (or "values") and natural essences. To take Nietzsche's paradigmatic example, the distinction within the Platonic dialogues between the Ideas or pure Forms on the one hand, and the world of genesis on the other, both set an artificial limit to man's development and devalued the historical world. I cannot enter here into the extremely difficult question of the true sense of the doctrine of Ideas. I do want, however, to make a remark about the distinction between the Ideas and genesis that is appropriate to the present discussion, in which our emphasis is upon "politics" in the broadest sense of the term.

The political sense of the doctrine of Ideas is that it serves to define the revolutionary nature of philosophy. This point is entirely obvious in Plato's *Republic*, and especially in the famous allegory of the cave. However, the fundamental difference between classical or Platonic and modern or Cartesian revolution is that the first is theoretical whereas the second is practical. Again at the most obvious level, Socrates rebels against Greek tradition and universal common sense in his verbal founding of the ostensibly just city, which is, however, not an "open society" in the modern sense, but an incarnation of the difference between the few and the many, or the philosophers and the non-philosophers. The revolution, so to speak, is stopped in its tracks even as it occurs. In the Cartesian revolution, on the other hand, a great show is made of the compatibility between the new science and the old theology. The revolution is ostensibly technical or methodological; but this in itself is a practical revolution, and one which leads inevitably to an open society of progressive science and technology. To state this as concisely as possible, the technician is the mediation between the theoretician and the non-theoretician. Granting that the shift from Platonic to Cartesian science is theoretical, it gives rise to a practical revolution that is entirely non-Platonic. The split between the philosophers and the non-philosophers is overcome in principle. And this is the basis for modern doctrines of egalitarianism, to be brought about not merely by the withering-away of the state, but by genetic engineering and, in general, by science.

The theoretical nature of the Platonic revolution does not, however, amount to a rejection of the Nietzschean thesis that man is the unfinished animal. In the first place, that revolution takes place in speech, not in deed. Socrates makes it all but explicit that the city he describes is virtually impossible. He leaves it to our judgment whether it is in fact, as he claims, the city that all just men wish for. Wishing is the symbol for unfinished business. Let me try to restate this point in a slightly different manner. The non-philosophers must be restricted by education and force, not because they are "finished," but because they can *never* be finished. They are radically incomplete. On this point, I see no difference at all between Plato and Nietzsche. Plato, however, infers from the radical incompleteness of the non-philosopher, the political destructiveness of what we now call historical progress. Nietzsche aside, the difference between Plato and the typical contemporary thinker is from Plato's standpoint that between liberty and libertinism. Turning now to the philosophers, it must be said that they, too, are incomplete, if

in a different sense from the non-philosophers. Socrates makes it explicit in the dialogues that wisdom is impossible for human beings. The highest stage accessible to man is philosophy or the love, which is also a lack, of wisdom. Passing over the paradoxical aspects of this thesis (properly noted by Hegel), its relevance for us is plain. Philosophers know that they are incomplete, and attempt to rectify this deficiency, while taking prudential steps to limit the dangerous consequences of that attempt. Nietzsche, on the contrary, shouts out from the rooftops human incompleteness, and transforms into the highest nobility the impetus to accomplish in and *upon* the public (or body politic) the uncompletable and hence extraordinarily dangerous revolution. And this despite his regular, exaggeratedly Platonic denunciation of the many.

This brief comparison between Plato and Nietzsche was intended, among other things, to illustrate the following principle. No one believes more strongly than I that an accurate knowledge of a philosophical teaching depends upon a minute and comprehensive analysis of the body of relevant texts. Nevertheless, from time to time it is necessary for us to raise our heads from the texts, and to attempt to grasp in the broadest possible terms the nature of the teaching to which we address ourselves. This exercise of head-raising is certainly mandatory on occasions like the present one, namely, a symposium on modernity. I am well aware that the picture I am painting consists of very broad strokes. However, I contend that it is accurate in the sense that it conforms to the standards appropriate to pictures painted in broad strokes. One cannot for that matter understand the specific technical points of a philosophical teaching if one has no idea of the role they play within the overall conception of the philosopher in question. For our present purposes, then, one cannot understand the difference between antiquity and modernity unless one is able to distinguish between specific methodologies, arguments, and technical terminology on the one hand, and the fundamental intentions of the philosopher on the other.

This same principle applies in the case of attempts to distinguish between one modern philosophical doctrine and another. The reader may well have been asking himself, as he has considered the preceding paragraphs, whether there is not a difference between this or that modern school, even if I am right in denying the sense of the distinction between the modern and the post-modern. Needless to say, there are such differences. It is also true that any effort to enforce a precise distinction between ancient and modern teachings on a basis of chronology will fail. To give only one example among many, the political teaching of Rousseau contains crucial elements of "Platonism." Nevertheless, it is impossible not to see the difference between Rousseau and Plato. One could also say that my previous comparison between Descartes and Carnap, even at the broadest level, is marred by the presence of scholastic or for that matter Platonic elements in the Cartesian teaching. I would reply simply that the distance from Duns Scotus (to say nothing of Plato) to Descartes is infinitely great, while the distance from Descartes to Carnap is finite. The most pedestrian reading of Descartes and Carnap will not fail to observe that they are united in their attempt to mathematicize the world, however different the technical steps in each attempt, and even granting important theoretical differences. Again at the level of the pedestrian, suppose it is objected

that God plays a crucial role in Cartesian metaphysics, while He is entirely absent from Carnapian metaphysics. I do not need to reply with a complex argument that denies any but a rhetorical importance to the Cartesian God. Let us assume that Descartes was a devout Catholic, and sincerely believed that God guarantees clear and distinct ideas, and so too the entire edifice of mathematical physics. This belief is philosophically and historically irrelevant, when we raise up our heads to look at the broad picture. Within the broad picture, the "project" of mathematicising the world is an act of the human will which makes God, sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, *a superfluous hypothesis*. As soon as the Cartesian revolution occurs, God is effectively dead, whether or not all members of that revolution "believe" in Him.

To turn to another example, we are today living through a quarrel, not between the ancients and the moderns, but between two modern schools who for purposes of convenience (and in keeping with their own slogans) may be characterised as the analysts and the continentalists. I have no doubt that this distinction is an absurd one. In the first place, philosophical analysis originated, not at Oxford or Harvard, but on the European continent. In the second place, phenomenologists, existentialists, and the rest who are classified under the rubric of "continental thinkers" engage in just as much analysis as do the self-styled analysts. Third and more important, both camps are at heart closely united by a fundamental historicism; both are in a process of continuous decay, with the result that the quarrel is turning, at an ever increasing rate, into a mixture, and even in some cases a marriage (if only of convenience). Yet who would wish to deny that there are many differences of intention, method, and terminology between the analysts and the continentalists? I myself would go a step further. Disregarding the differences among them, if Quine, Davidson, Kripke, Rawls and Searle, let us say, were to determine the future development of academic philosophy (for this is the extent of their power), the results would be quite different from those which might follow from the dominance of Habermas, Derrida, Deleuze and (to name an American Neo-Continentalist) Rorty. I grant all of this. Nevertheless, it is all irrelevant from the standpoint of the present discussion. It may be true that, explicitly or implicitly, the analysts as a group place greater emphasis upon logic, mathematics, and natural science than do the continentalists as a group. But the continentalists are not advocating the abolition of science, or a return to the classical view that art completes nature. What they are rather doing is placing a greater emphasis than the analysts upon the role of the will in the modern project. The logical analysis of the language of intentionality, whatever its technical interest, is a radical misunderstanding of the philosophical significance of the will, which is better addressed by Nietzsche's doctrine of the will to power, however vague and even illogical that doctrine may be.

Speaking in very general but widely admitted terms, analytical philosophy is itself divided into two camps, originating, more or less, in the writings of the early and the later Wittgenstein. Early analysis is a continuation of the positivist tradition, which in turn descends to us from the mathematical side of the Cartesian revolution. Later analysis rejects positivism in favor of a broader conception of human language, a conception which descends to us from the Cartesian doctrine

of the priority of the will to the intellect. If this last point is not as immediately clear as the former, let the reader compare the Cartesian thesis on eternal truths with the later Wittgenstein's philosophy of mathematics, or more generally, with his doctrine of rules. The bridge between the two apparently disparate dimensions of Descartes' teaching, and the corresponding two schools of contemporary analytical philosophy, is Kant. Kant attempts to reconcile the doctrine of the autonomy of the human will and the mathematical or rule-governed paradigm of rationality. Without going into the details, it is plain that his reconciliation depends upon two crucial theses. The first is the distinction between the phenomenal and the noumenal (let us say crudely between the knowable and the unknowable), and the second is the eternal validity of classical mathematics and physics. The retention of the first thesis in the temporalised form of historicism or linguistic relativism, and the rejection of the second thesis, under the impetus of non-Euclidean geometries, relativity-physics and deviate logics, reduces the theoretical differences between the two major contemporary schools of analytical philosophy to a point of rhetoric or ideology. The penchant of one camp for formalisms, and of the other for epigrams and charming literary interpretations, is theoretically insignificant. Analytical philosophy is moving steadily toward surrender to continentalism, regardless of temporary local deviations due to academic custom or power-politics. This is of course *not* to say that interest in formalisms will disappear, but rather that such interest is *already* understood by the majority in terms of the dominance of the will, or as it is sometimes called today, of human creativity. If then we are capable of lifting our noses up from our logic texts or our treatises on the new hermeneutics for a long enough time to survey the comprehensive contemporary situation, I submit that the view is clear. Contemporary fashions are variations on the central theme of modernity, which was well-stated by Fichte: freedom is higher than being. These words might well serve as the motto of the later Wittgenstein, as well as of the contemporary successors of Carnap and Russell.

Nothing I have said thus far is intended as a denial of the obvious fact that we are living in an age of rapid transition. The most I would claim is that the rapidity of the transition is a typical sign of modernism. Another way to put the point is in terms of technology. We are currently obsessed with technique and its correlative, methodology, whether we count ourselves as disciples of the hard or the soft muses. For reasons which would have to be considered with great care, we are now undergoing a technical explosion, and one which is, to put it mildly, not always marked by theoretical reflection. As a central example, I cite the case of mathematical logic, set theory, and closely related branches of mathematics. When one reads the masters in this series of disciplines, Cantor, Frege, Russell, Brouwer, Hilbert, Skolem, and Gödel, to note some of the most important names, one sees at once that they are philosophers and not merely technicians. Mathamatical analysis is in the service of deep philosophical investigation, touching upon the most comprehensive problems of thinking, intelligibility, and human nature. One of the most important questions of our generation, a question which is not raised by the most fashionable descendants of the aforementioned masters, is why the production of technical artifacts has replaced philosophical speculation in the "philosophy" of mathematics.

This rage for technical innovation has also engulfed the "humanists" among us, as is patent in the current popularity of "hermeneutics," with its often preposterous emphasis upon methods, technical terms, and a dehumanised textualism. It is interesting to note that technicist hermeneutics is no longer the center of attention in Paris, where much of the most extreme work of this sort originated. The center of hermeneutics is now the United States, the land par excellence of technology. What used to be called literary criticism has at last reached the exalted status of mathematically-oriented economics, in which imaginary technical artifacts ("models" in the one case, "texts" in the other) replace common-sense observation of what is actually happening, or what has actually been written. If one takes a sufficiently broad view, there is a deep relationship between, say, the efforts of Robert MacNamara and his associates to run the American government, and specifically the war in Viet Nam, by computers, and the efforts by structuralists, post-structuralists, and deconstructivists to detach works of art from their creators, and consequently from their readers. To say that the text has a life of its own, independent of the intentionality of the author or the reader, is to identify "life" with abstract structures, and in this sense is like treating the mathematical model of reality apart from that reality. In order to be more than provocative, this analogy would have to be spelled out at much greater length than I have space for. I must therefore rest content with the possibility that the reader will be provoked into a consideration of the analogy between rule-governed thinking or the technologizing of reason, and the suppression of common-sense from the art of reading a book or interpreting a work of art.

On all fronts, then, the whirling dervishes of methodology have produced intense currents of change. They have also provoked counter-movements, from neo-conservatism and the moral majority to a perceptible recognition among academicians that technical progress without moral sensibility and indeed moral responsibility, is inadequate and destructive. One could perhaps wish that these quarrels were conducted at a deeper level of theoretical understanding. But whatever genius has been invested in this quarrel is technical, and hence not postmodern. Modernity is the age of *techne*. There is no technical exit, and no exit at all, other than death or total self-destructiveness. But this means that we cannot return to antiquity. What is required, if I am not mistaken, is the same as in any epoch, whatever name we give to the epoch itself: we must first understand who we are before we do something about whom we should like to be.

The reader may protest that I am taking refuge in a platitude. Let me close this essay with the attempt to defend myself against such a charge. As more fully developed, the charge runs something like this. The modern period, from Montaigne to Kant, is defined by a central concern with the question: "who am I?" Post-Kantian Idealism may accordingly be understood as the transformation of the empirical "I" into the Absolute Ego. The deconstruction of the ego by Nietzsche and Freud simply continues the work of Idealism, except that the Absolute Ego is now understood as the "sub-conscious" self or *id*. Nietzsche and Freud thus represent the transition from the modern to the post-modern period, in which latter the "absolute" is no longer divine but sub-human. From this standpoint, the development of post-modernism during the past fifty or seventy-five years has

been the process by which the sub-human (i.e. will to power, instinct, libido) is generalized into the non-human (formal structures of cybernetics on the one hand, post-structural deconstructivism on the other). The net result is the suppression of psychologism, subjectivity, and in general, anthropocentrism.

The first thing to be said in reply to this charge is that the question "who am I?" is also central to antiquity, at the very least since Socrates, and hence to Platonism. The view under inspection is thus an alternate version of the thesis that the modern epoch is an extension of Platonism. Metaphysics is then presumably essentially related to, if not identical with, subjectivism, anthropocentrism, and what Nietzsche calls perspectivism. It follows easily that an obsession with the ego deteriorates into egomania, and consequently, the will to power. But the will to power, as is plain from the examples of Nietzsche and Freud, is also the process of the suppression of the ego. The net result is that the tripartition of "ancient/ modern/post-modern" disappears; or rather it is itself transformed from a rigid articulation of history into a dialectical process *continuous* with history. The surface structure of history is then rigid and illusory; the deep structure is dialectical: *all* of European history, or at least European history from Socrates onward, is then post-modern! However, if we accept the radical distinction, insisted upon by Nietzsche and Heidegger, between the Pre-Socratics and Socrates, then it becomes more coherent, even by dialectical standards, to re-establish the distinction between the ancient and the modern epoch, with the essential proviso that Socrates is the first modern man. It is not dialectical, but nonsensical, to describe *all* of European history as post-modern. And the characteristic doctrines of the adherents of post-modernism dissolve the conventional distinction between antiquity and modernity in such a way as to establish an essential, if dialectical, continuity between the result of that dissolution and themselves.

Let me repeat the main point here. The will to power, ostensibly the essential feature of the "modern" (i.e. ancient plus modern) epoch is also, as the deconstruction of the ego, the essential feature of the "post-modern" epoch. For once the ego is entirely suppressed, so too is history, whether in the sense of "story" or historicity. Whatever the source of the structure of their intentionality, the protagonists in a story are self-conscious egos. It is hardly by accident that "post-modern" fiction frowns on the story, or the view that works of art are extensions of human experience. If there is such a phenomenon as post-modernism, then it is the abyss beyond the end of history. Let us call it the day of judgment, if one upon which there are no more judges and no one to be judged. Whether in speculative philosophy or the mathematical sciences, an excess of ontologizing leads to the dissolution, not to the saving, of the phenomena. To say this, however, is not to be committed to a return to the conventional rigidities of the distinction between the ancients and the moderns. From the deepest standpoint, which coincides with the surface of things, it is of no ultimate importance whether Socrates or Montaigne is to count as the first modern man. What counts is man (the counting animal), and hence the question: "who am I?" As Heidegger himself points out, this is the proper formulation of the question "what is man?"

Whether in a conventional or in an orthodox sense, we need to re-establish what should never have been overlooked, what can be disregarded but never suppressed

apart from self-destruction. The ostensible deconstruction of the ego is in fact an answer to the question: "who am I?" The answer may vary in its specific words, but in one way or another it repeats the Odyssean reply: "no one." In the *Odyssey*, however, this reply is a conscious concealment, one which represents in miniature Homer's concealed representation of the fundamental truth about man in the persona of *Odysseus*. If there is a post-modern epoch, its assertion of "no one" is not a conscious concealment, but rather the conscious assertion of nihilism. Post-modernism, even on this account, is then the attempt to assert Nietzsche's doctrine in noble nihilism while suppressing nobility. Once again, it stands identified as a defective version of modernism.

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MODERNITY AND THE QUEST FOR
POLITICAL COMMUNITY

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Although the idea that it is possible "to be modern" already appeared in the writings of the Roman historian Cassiodorus, it is common to cite the 18th century as the beginning of the modern age.[1] For many the spirit of modernity achieved its clearest expression in the goals and aspirations of the French Enlightenment. There the scientific work of Locke and Newton was interpreted as providing the guidelines for an historical project. Freed from the superstitions and ignorance of an earlier religious age, modern man was to follow the dictates of autonomous reason and create, thereby, the conditions for the good life on earth. The introduction of such a project within an essentially Christian civilization was bound to produce a series of severe personal and social dislocations. Given this, a reaction was all but inevitable and, in time, such conservative thinkers as de Maistre, Bonald, Novalis, Mueller, and Fichte began to question that assumption of historical perfectability which was implicit with the modernist project itself. In particular modernity's critics were concerned about the future of the political community. The Enlightenment's emphasis upon individual self-interest, its sensualist psychology, and its commitment to progress and historical change appeared to undermine the sense of cultural and historical continuity which was believed to be a necessary prerequisite for minimal political order. Indeed a comparison of the artificial and unnatural quality of those relationships which were formed by modern men with the more natural and somewhat organic bonds characteristic of a more traditional or perfected community is a theme which can be found in the writings of such diverse critics of the Enlightenment as Burke, Rousseau, and Marx. Even today commentators continue to call attention to the destructive impact of modernization upon the more traditional forms of community life. For example, Peter Berger writes:

> Modernization has entailed a progressive separation of the individual from collective entities, and as a result has brought about a historically unprecedented counterposition of individual and society . . . (This is caused by) the weakening of the all-embracing, all-containing communities that used to sustain the individual in premodern societies.[2]

Similarly, in his *Law and Modern Society*, Roberto Unger distinguishes among three types of modern societies: the post-liberal, the traditionalistic, and the revolutionary-socialist. Each, however, faces a common problem of balancing the

modern concern for freedom and progress with the perennial need for a legitimate and cohesive social order:

> But postliberal, traditionalistic, and revolutionary socialist society are all obsessed, in different ways, with the reconciliation of freedom and community. This alliance is part of a broader responsibility: the sense of a latent or natural order in social life must be harmonized with the capacity to let the will remake social arrangements. To achieve this reconciliation, and thereby to work toward the ideal of a universal community, is the greatest task of modern societies.[3]

The challenge of creating and preserving a sense of community is not one which is unique to the modern age. Indeed as Glenn Tinder has argued, there are certain unavoidable and necessary obstacles to the creation of a full community.[4] First, as a mortal creature living in time and bound by space, man's very nature limits his capacity to enter into a full and enduring communal existence. As distinct, limited, and separate individuals, our very bodies represent a denial of community identity. Secondly, as necessarily self-concerned and all too often selfish creatures, we also appear to lack the necessary moral capacity for community life. The tension that exists between the individual's personal good and the society's more general common good sets an obvious moral limit to any community's claim upon the loyalty of its members. Finally, as Aristotle first suggested, friendships which are formed on any basis other than that of simple goodness are necessarily unenduring. Given the fact of human imperfection, therefore, no community can be guaranteed the substantial foundation that its perfection would seem to require. Thus Tinder concludes:

> Community is not only alluring, however, it is also unattainable. Man is not capable of community — not, at least, in any full and stable form. No doubt relationships of communal quality can be realized occasionally and in limits by a family, a town, a university, or even a nation. But no historical institution can be purely and simply a community.[5]

One can grant Tinder's argument and yet at the same time recognize that success in realizing a real community is essentially a matter of degree. Assuming that community is a good, the question is not whether it is fully attainable or not, but rather the degree to which specific historical societies are capable of participating in that excellence which is fully represented by the concept of community in its perfected form. Thus, allowing Tinder's claim that a true community can never be fully realized in any age, it is nonetheless the case that the quest for community appears to be a particularly difficult one for modern man. Not only have communities proven to be fragile entities in the face of powerful historical and economic changes but just as importantly they are increasingly being experienced as such by

their members. Man's institutional environment is losing the appearance of objectivity and what was once considered to be a natural, and therefore legitimate, order is increasingly being perceived as arbitrary and situational.[6]

In part, one can explain the growing fragility of contemporary institutions by reference to the growth of modern science and technology. The rapidity of technological innovation, the increased division of labor and its concomitant need for centralized planning and administration, the social and cultural pluralism of the newer urban centers, the forms of instrumental rationality imposed by the commitment to technological efficiency, the development of the mass media, and the pluralization of man's social life-worlds have all had a somewhat corrosive effect on traditional communal bonds. However such factors provide only a partial explanation for the increasingly difficult task of creating and preserving a sense of community in the modern age. In seeking a more complete understanding, one must turn to the tradition of political philosophy.

To a certain degree, modern political thought has set for itself the task of liberating the individual personality. In the process of doing so, however, it has been forced to reconsider its understanding of both nature and history. This, in turn, has called into question the appropriateness of those very categories by which pre-modern societies could establish their legitimacy and thus preserve their objectivity. The following discussion is meant to serve as a summary of this development.

Nature

An examination of the Greek use of the concept of nature may help to clarify this point. It appears that all the schools of Greek natural philosophy, be they evolutionary or creational, materialistic or formal, began with the common assumption that the objective of science was to uncover the permanent, and thus knowable, substance of things. Seeking the internal nature of physical reality, Greek natural science was motivated primarily by the desire for theoretical wisdom. Although this was obviously true for both Plato and Aristotle, it was equally the case for such atomists as Epicurus and Lucretius.[7] Accordingly, nature was seen as an ordered whole having both accidental and essential attributes. Knowledge of these attributes, in turn, was understood as being a fundamental constituent of that intellectual fulfillment which was characteristic of true human happiness. For the Greeks, then, nature was seen as a source of both knowledge and meaning and, as such, it was understood to be providing a sense of direction and purpose to human life. Man was intended by his nature to know and thus by gaining a knowledge of nature in general, he fulfilled the potential of his own being.

The belief that nature was a source of both meaning and direction had obvious political implications. As a consequence a major theme within Greek political speculation was concerned with the proper relationship between nature and custom. Generally the Greeks believed that nature should serve as a model for the political order. Thus, for example, such different thinkers as Plato, Callicles, Demosthenes, Aristotle, Hippias, and Antiphon appealed to nature as the standard by which to judge the political practices of their time. Obviously they disagreed as

to what constituted a correct interpretation of nature but at the same time they understood it as something to which man could turn for instruction. Although it is true that the teachings of such Greeks as Protagoras, Critias, and Isocrates prove that such an appeal to nature was not an acceptable method for everyone, it is nonetheless true that the Greek understanding of nature would allow for such an appeal to be made. Thus one could maintain that specific sets of laws or practices were legitimate because they were natural, and that, as natural, they were neither arbitrary nor meaningless. This, indeed, is the assumption behind traditional natural law theory.

The modern understanding of nature, on the other hand, is one which denies the existence of both formal and final causation. Thus neither the mechanistic cosmologies of early modern science, which attempted to explain natural phenomena in terms of material and efficient causation, nor today's probabilistic cosmologies, which have substituted the law of chance for the principle of cause and effect, permit a discussion of purpose. As understood today, nature intends nothing; it has no preferred outcomes and consequently it is indifferent to a distinction among values. Intending nothing, it permits all and, as such, denies the existence of a natural hierarchy among goods. Lacking a design and devoid of a purpose, there can be no "ought" in nature. As a consequence the meaning of any activity can only be found in the intentions which men bring to its performance. Culture, in turn, becomes nothing but the sum total of those "projects" which men choose to undertake. Yet inasmuch as there can be no reasons in nature for such choices, the projects themselves must necessarily appear to be arbitrary. Referring to this feature of the "one-leveled universe" described by modern science Marjorie Grene writes:

> First, be it noted, it is a universe constructed on the foundation of the contrast between the *natural* and the *artificial*. There can be no "higher" and "lower" in nature. Yet in human life, in what we call culture, in language, custom, institutions, we find nature transformed by man . . . To many these products of human activity, laws, theories, works of art, have seemed higher realities, or the expression of higher realities to which we owe allegiance. In a one-leveled world, they can be interpreted only, in contrast to what "really" is, as artifacts, as what we have *made* in contrast to what naturally exists.[8]

The fact that what a particular culture calls the "higher" is not really so but rather is only that which is made to appear as such necessarily implies the essentially arbitrary character of all cultures. Philosophical nominalism, then, would appear to be an inevitable result of such a position and Thomas Hobbes was surely correct in calling attention to the political difficulties which arise from within the nominalist perspective. Yet Hobbes' analysis may not have been radical enough. For him nominalism was a political problem because of the number of voices (the church, the state, and the universities) which attempted to set the values for society. His solution, therefore, was simply to restrict the advantage of defining the public good

to one person, i.e. the sovereign. Indeed such a recommendation may solve the problem of pluralism but it does not address the more important issue of legitimacy. Perhaps Hobbes' simple mechanistic psychology blinded him to man's serious need for meaning. Yet it is certainly questionable whether a society in which all of its members were convinced of the purely arbitrary nature of their deepest commitments could be either politically viable or conducive for true human happiness.[9]

History

A similar process of delegitimation has occurred for those who have turned to history as a source for meaning and social purpose. In both its cyclical and linear interpretations, history has often been understood as a source of information which allows man to "locate" the events of his particular time within a larger dramatic context and thereby explain their deeper meaning or significance. For example, both Polybius and Machiavelli referred to history's cyclical pattern to explain what otherwise may have appeared to be the meaningless collapse of once vibrant civilizations. Similarly in ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Israel there emerged a tradition of historiogenic speculation which attempted to trace a relationship between the pragmatic events of the day and the actual creation of the cosmic order itself.

Within the West the most important form of historical speculation has been that which is represented by orthodox Christianity in general and Augustine in particular. According to Augustine the events of profane history are understood as being meaningful only insofar as they are related to the more important developments of sacred history. The latter, in turn, is essentially completed inasmuch as God has achieved a reconciliation with mankind through the incarnation of Christ. According to Augustine, the significance of history is set once and for all, and all men may share in its meaning through an act of faith. In particular, every individual may find meaning in his life by participating in the eternal presence of God whose truth has been revealed in time. From this perspective, then, history is able to serve as a source of meaning only because its theme is completed and its significance transcends the realm of pragmatic events.

In the modern age beginning with the Enlightenment, the Christian understanding of history has given way to the various forms of progressivism. In either its liberal or Marxist form, progressivism assumes that history is a series of ordered events which is moving beyond the present order toward a future point in time which is both different from and superior to the present. Some thinkers, such as Voltaire and Condorcet, envisioned a future age which would be characterized by the excellence of man's universal human spirit. Others, such as Hegel and Marx, wrote of the transcending of alienation; while still others, such as Comte and Saint-Simon, foresaw the development of a harmonious technocratic society. As different as these end goals may have been, each form of progressivist historiography shared a common structure. Specifically history was understood to possess its own immanent goal and to contain those processes which would eventuate in its realization. Accordingly, the present found its only meaning in its contribution to

the future. Yet inasmuch as the future was an intramundane rather than a transcendental condition, the present could never share in the meaning of that stage to which it contributed. In short, progressivist historiography denied the possibility of a meaningful "here and now." Unavoidably living in the present, man, his institutions, and his commitments were necessarily incomplete. Referring to this condition as exemplified in the historiography of Turgot, Eric Voegelin writes:

> Turgot transposes the Christian dichotomy of sacred and profane history into the context of intramundane thought through his dichotomy of the "thread of progress" and the vast historical ups and downs which have no meaning in themselves. However he cannot extract from the "sacred" thread of progress a meaning for the spiritual destiny of the concrete person . . . Since the finite lines of meaning, which can be found in the civilizational process, can have no meaning for man as a spiritual person, man and his concrete problems have to be brushed aside. Since concrete man cannot be the subject for whom history has a meaning, the subject as to be changed — man is replaced by the *masse totale*.[10]

By treating the present as a means to an end, progressivist historiography suggests that the present moment lacks its own intrinsic worth. As such progressivism delegitimates the present and thereby calls into question its ability to serve as a source of meaning for man or his community. From the progressivist perspective, history is necessarily incomplete and, as such, is incapable of revealing that meaningful order by which its events can be arranged so as to form a coherent whole. Modern historiography does indeed seek for meaning from history. Yet whereas the Christian tradition sought to recognize those moments of meaning *within* history, modernity seeks the meaning *of* history itself.

Conclusion

If the above arguments are correct, the difficulty of creating a sense of community during the modern age is due to more than the mere rapidity of technological change or the increased division of labor within contemporary industry. Rather I have suggested that the modern understanding of both nature and history have deprived the political community of that ontological ground upon which it originally based its claim to legitimacy. Not surprisingly, then, social contract theorizing has become the most important means for justifying political rule since the 17th century. Yet, inasmuch as the will is unable to take its bearings from either the goods of nature or the present significance of history, it, too, is ultimately arbitrary and thus devoid of true authority.

This situation is not entirely without precedent. Indeed Hellenistic political thought was characterized by a similar concern for what appeared to be the arbitray nature of man's political order. Yet in Hellenistic culture this social meaninglessness and personal isolation was the result of the destruction of the Greek *polis* and

its accompanying philosophical traditions while today this same condition represents the very achievement of the modern project itself. Modernity began in an effort to establish the sovereignty of man. As such the Industrial Revolution aspired to gain control over the forces of nature while the French Revolution embodied a similar desire to control man's political and historical destiny. By treating both nature and history as open fields which provide the material for an essentially human project modernity has succeeded in liberating the individual personality to an hitherto unrealized degree. The question remains, however, whether such a liberation can be brought into balance with the needs of man's social and political nature.

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Notes

1. An example of such dating according to themes from within philosophy can be found in the work of Tilo Schabert. See his *Gewalt und Humanitaet* (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1978). At the same time an examination of social, economic, and political factors leads to a similar dating. See Reinhard Bendix, *Embattled Reason: Essays on Social Knowledge* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970).

2. Peter Berger, *Facing Up to Modernity* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), p. 75.

3. Roberto Unger, *Law in Modern Society* (New York: The Free Press, 1976), p. 266.

4. Glenn Tinder, *Community: Reflections on a Tragic Ideal* (Baton Rouge: L.S.U. Press, 1980).

5. Tinder, *Community*, p. 2.

6. Thus in commenting on the work of Arnold Gehlen, Peter Berger writes: "Archaic institutions are highly objective; that is, they are experienced as inevitable, to-be-relied-upon facts, analogous to the facts of nature. Modern institutions, by contrast, are deficient in this objectivity. They are readily seen and indeed experienced as ad hoc constructions, here and now and possibly gone tomorrow, in any case not to be taken for granted and always open to radical change." Peter Berger, "Forward", in Arnold Gehlen, *Man in the Age of Technology*, trans. Patricia Lipscomb (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. xi.

7. This summary of Greek science is based upon F.M. Cornford, *The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1967), pp. 81-94.

8. Marjorie Grene, *Philosophy in and out of Europe* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1976), p. 159.

9. See Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*, trans. Arthur Wills (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1971).

10. Eric Voegelin, *From Enlightenment to Revolution*, ed. John H. Hallowell (Durham: Duke University Press, 1975), p. 94.

THE ENGLISH FACE OF IDEOLOGY

JEREMY RAYNER

The Modern Ideologies Series under the general editorship of
R.N. Berki and Noel O'Sullivan. London: J.M. Dent and Sons.
R.N. Berki, *Socialism* (1975): Noel O'Sullivan, *Conservatism* (1976); D.J. Manning, *Liberalism* (1976); John Charvet, *Feminism* (1982); Noel O'Sullivan, *Fascism* (1983); David Miller, *Anarchism* (1984).

Ideology presents many faces. In part, this is the result of a familiar modern predicament: in order to teach introductory courses we stifle our misgivings about a concept and so another generation of students learns about the 'isms' even as we privately wonder whether this ragbag of doctrines, movements and leaders has any unifying features at all. But there is a more important reason. Our misgivings themselves arise because 'ideology' is a concept over which there is such deep disagreement that it is perhaps misleading to talk of a single concept at all. It is not the least of the virtues of the Modern Ideologies Series that it can accomodate such disagreements, even acknowledge them, while still making a contribution to our understanding of particular ideological writings. The combination of a narrative history of movements and an analysis of doctrines is never less than competently handled by the five authors whose contributions have appeared intermittently over the last ten years. And yet the very affability of our guides — pausing here to introduce a new and unfamiliar face or there to bestow some characteristically discreet word of praise or reproof — gives the impression that it would be an irrelevance amounting almost to a *faux pas* to ask awkward questions about the sense of the enterprise as a whole. It is, indeed, in their epistemological agnosticism that these books best present the English face of ideology, but the time has come to consider whether agnosticism is a possible attitude to take.

"Modern Ideologies," we are told in the publisher's description, "is a series dealing with the most important social and political doctrines of our age. The chief emphasis is on analysis and internal criticism of the several ideologies discussed in the context of their historical development." The assumption, then, is that an ideology is a doctrine or group of related doctrines, albeit one which must be placed in a particular historical context to be properly understood. Again, the easy combination of narrative and "internal criticism" which this approach assumes is not unrelated to the "historical context" of the authors themselves. Four out of the five have been students or teachers at the London School of Economics during the

time when Michael Oakeshott and Elie Kedourie occupied chairs. The fifth, David Miller, in addition to being somewhat younger, comes from the Oxford of Sir Isaiah Berlin and the late John Plamenatz. Their treatment of ideologies as doctrines is clearly intimated in Oakeshott's pre-war collection *The Social and Political Doctrines of Contemporary Europe* and in Kedourie's influential study of *Nationalism* which begins by informing the reader that "Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century."[1]

Now, there is nothing obviously wrong with treating ideology in this way, but two related questions are suggested. First, what are the proper criteria for assessing doctrines of this kind and, in particular, doesn't "internal criticism" in fact amount to treating the doctrines as theories independently of their historical context? Secondly, why do we want to call a doctrine ideological at all, why not simply call it a theory? Anyone who proposes to treat ideas as ideologies must have at least some sketch of an answer to both these questions however agnostic they wish to be on questions of epistemology.

The Modern Ideologies Series is especially interesting in this respect because none of the authors answers this second question — what makes a doctrine ideological — in the way which is probably most familiar to students of ideology. That is, none of them appeals to the idea of false consciousness. This, it seems to me, is one of the great strengths of the series as a whole because, in its less sophisticated versions at least, the false consciousness thesis has always promised a great deal more than it has been able to deliver. To identify ideology as false consciousness depends upon a careful specification of what a true consciousness would amount to. As Alasdair MacIntyre has noted, most false consciousness arguments, especially those which try to relate ideological distortion to the interests of dominant groups or classes, appeal to the idea of a science of society which could yield objective knowledge on the model of the natural sciences.[2] Some such datum of objective knowledge must be produced to make good the claim to be able to measure the distortion introduced by an ideological 'viewpoint'. For many reasons, social scientists have begun to doubt that the natural sciences could serve as a model, and other attempts to specify a neutral perspective from which an undistorted theory could be developed have not been notably successful. The Modern Ideologies Series loses nothing by passing over this approach.

But there is a more sophisticated version of the false consciousness argument, one less easily charged with what MacIntyre calls "epistemological self-righteousness." It begins from the assumptions that the most general form of a social theory is an answer to the question 'what is going on?' and that the answer will not be an explanation in terms of antecedent causal conditions and covering laws but an interpretation or redescription of agents' motives and intentions. On this view, ideology is a kind of low-level theorizing about the identities which we assume and attribute to others in conduct. Ideological beliefs are not necessarily false or self-interested, but they are nonetheless prone to be opaque, sometimes failing to reach even that minimal level of consistency necessary to realize our projects and goals. Perhaps they even impose goals which we find to be notably delusive or self-contradictory when, as agents, we fail to be sufficiently 'clairvoyant' about social identities. In sum, ideology is a species of low-level theorizing about identities and

practices, indispensable but prone to self-interested breakdown.[3] This more sophisticated view attempts to preserve the sense in which ideology is a distinctive kind of theorizing without setting up an unrealizable criterion to mark the distinction. With a little tidying up, I suspect that it is the best that can be offered in the way of a theory of ideology today.

Both Miller's study of anarchism and Berki's of socialism share something in common with the view that I have just set out. Studying anarchism as an ideology, Miller tells us in his preface, means studying "a set of beliefs about human nature, society and the state that attempts both to explain the world and to help change it." Unlike the other authors, Miller and Berki see nothing odd about the attempt to explain the world and to change it. Although he is not explicit on this point, Miller seems to assume that anarchist beliefs are principally explanations and that they are tested out in the experiences of anarchists. Thus his book is divided into two sections, one dealing with "the fundamental ideas of anarchism" and the other which "look(s) at how anarchists have attempted to bring about the transformation that they desire" (62). He concentrates particularly on the problems which anarchists have had reconciling their hostility to any form of coercive coordination with the necessary organizational preconditions for successful revolutionary actions against the modern state. Here is a very good example of a self-delusion which frustrates goals. But it is clear that, for Miller at least, it is not the delusive character of anarchist doctrine which makes it ideological: it is the project of explaining the world and changing it. And this remains true for the whole thesis about ideology which I have just outlined. It maintains that ideology is a kind of theorizing which is prone to become self-delusion but which need not in fact do so. It is the idea of a 'level' of theorizing which acts as a criterion for identifying ideology and, as such, the level must be carefully specified. Clearly, Miller and Berki think that ideology is a distinctive kind of theorizing because it aims at social and political change, but they pay no special attention to the difficulties that such 'practical theorizing' raises. In fact, both seem to think that the doctrines that they have described are simply explanatory in form, so that the practical successes and failure of anarchists and socialists provide dramatic confirmations and refutations of the explanations. The difference between ideology and other kinds of theorizing remains incompletely specified and we are left wondering why anarchism and socialism should be called ideologies at all.

In their different ways, Charvet, Manning and O'Sullivan are spared this particular difficulty because they do find something strange about the aspiration to explain the world and to change it. They begin from a conception of ideology which is to be found in some of Oakeshott's essays, particularly "Political Education" and "Rationalism in Politics." Since politics is a practical activity, the argument runs, the sort of knowledge that would prove immediately useful is practical skill acquired by political experience. A theoretical understanding or explanation of political life is not entirely useless, but it cannot stand on its own as a 'recipe' for action. As we all at some time discover, even cookery requires something more than an ignorant man, a cookery book and some ingredients. So where we find 'theories' apparently being employed in political practice, they must in fact be performing some other function, and Oakeshott mentions justification and the "abridgement"

of a tradition of political activity as examples. In O'Sullivan's work in particular this Oakeshottian perspective is coupled with the darker reflections of Kedourie, who dwells upon the corruption that politics undergoes when men of genuine skill are replaced by men of mere book-learning, apt to confuse politics with the pursuit of the millenium.[4] For these authors, then, the question is: since ideology cannot be theory, what can it be? Is it merely the kind of nonsense one would expect from ignorant men masquerading as statesmen or does it have some genuine place in political life?

Charvet ducks the question entirely. He announces that he is interested in feminist doctrines, not in feminist movements nor in feminism as an ideology "whose worth is to be understood only in relation to the practical aims of the thinkers and their adherents" (1). In order to deal with feminist doctrines as "serious contributions to an understanding of the ethical basis of relations between men and women" we must remove them from the contaminating environment of practice altogether. This, it seems to me, is a perfectly defensible approach. The wonder of it is that the resulting book should be included in a series on modern ideologies.

O'Sullivan's books on *Conservatism* and *Fascism* constitute one of the most satisfying attempts to use Oakeshott's reflections on ideology as a basis for the analysis of particular ideologies. For O'Sullivan, an ideology consists of two parts, a philosophy or *Weltanschauung* on the one hand, and a distinctive style of political engagement on the other. In contrast to both Berki and Miller, he holds that the relation between these two parts is not that of theory to practice as commonly understood. Indeed, the preference for a particular style of political engagement is historically prior to its justification in doctrine. Thus the conservative preference for a limited style of politics, coming under attack after the French Revolution, was defended and justified by a "philosophy of imperfection" which is the heart of the conservative *Weltanschauung*. And we learn in *Fascism* that the activist style of politics which was one of the chief consequences of that revolution was ultimately taken up and justified by fascist doctrines of "permanent revolution . . . a cult of despotic leadership . . . and a highly theatrical form of state worship" (5). In no sense could the success or failure of the activity serve to refute or confirm the justifying doctrine.

This is an ingenious and robust scheme, particularly in its treatment of ideologies as traditions of thought and action, but it is not without its problems. If it provides a ready answer to the second of our questions — what makes a doctrine ideological — it is not so strong on the first of them — the part to be played by internal criticism of the doctrines themselves. If the doctrines function as justifications for a style of activity, what is there for criticism to do other than to note whether it was successful or not? So, far from being internal, such criticism must record the number of copies sold, the number of adherents gained, and so on. Of course, where dusk has already fallen, it might seem that judgements about the consequences of holding particular doctrines are in order.[5] But a further assumption is still required because, on O'Sullivan's account, a doctrine can only be held to account for the consequences of the style of action it justifies if there is at least some connection between them which is not simply *ex post facto*. He does claim that fascist doctrine

throws light on "the inner logic and structure of the new activist style of politics" (182) but exactly how it does so is not spelled out. What tends to go proxy for an explanation here is the general Oakeshott/Kedourie thesis that politics is a limited activity concerned with judgements about practical possibilities so that any doctrine that obscures this truth must be pernicious.

The most ambitious attempt to tackle the theoretical questions about the status of ideology remains Manning's *Liberalism*. He too accepts that, appearances notwithstanding, ideology cannot be a kind of social theory, 'low-level', debased or otherwise. He is adamant that there would be no point in setting out to describe or explain the world when the point is to change it, and he is happy with the consequence that the different ideologies are not in any sense competing explanations of an independent political 'reality': "each and every ideology is an independent way in which experience may be interpreted" (83). The real purpose of ideological "interpretation" is to bring the reader to accept an identity — to see himself as an Aryan or an individual or a proletarian — and the arguments used will be those judged most suitable for the occasion. In *Liberalism* at least, there is no very clear account of the role of these identities in politics. Manning maintains that they are no substitute for genuine political skill and makes the suggestion that they serve to identify friends and enemies.[6]

For Manning, then, ideology is a mode of argumentation designed to establish and sustain a political identity, but there is the additional suggestion that there is something rather suspect about it. Ideology "purports to present an objective view of human experience on the basis of which guidance is offered as to the correct form of future political conduct" (145). The significance of "purports" is not to act as a warning that the identities might prove delusive or incoherent. Rather it relates directly to the claim that an "objective view" could not possibly provide guidance in political life. In this respect, ideological argument is just a gigantic category mistake. For Manning, the internal criticism of liberalism amounts to pointing out how Locke, Mill, Spencer and Green imagined that they were drawing politically relevant conclusions from theoretical arguments. Since no such conclusions could possibly be established in this way, their arguments are not so much wrong as beside the point. This does not render them politically useless. Properly understood, Manning's liberals are to be seen using the prestige of theoretical modes to sustain the liberal identity in politics.

Certainly Manning does seem to have evaded the horns of the dilemma upon which all the other authors in the series find themselves impaled. If we treat ideology as a branch of political theory and subject it to internal criticism on that basis, we lose the sense in which an ideological doctrine is distinct from any other kind of doctrine. Why have a series on Modern Ideologies instead of one on Modern Political Ideas? If, on the other hand, we start out by claiming that ideology is not a kind of theorizing at all, then internal criticism seems quite the wrong way of appraising it. If ideology does not set out to give an explanation, why criticize ideologists for producing defective theories? When the idea of a political identity is fleshed out, Manning's approach begins to look very much like the account of ideology as low-level theorizing about the self-understandings we exhibit in politics. Political ideology becomes the discourse in which political identities are

established and criticized. The only obstacle to seeing what the critique of ideology entails is Manning's insistence that this sort of thinking is categorically distinct from anything that could be called 'theory'.

We recall that the objection to subsuming ideology under the general rubric of political theory and distinguishing it not by its propensity to error but by its 'level' or 'objective' rested on a reading of Oakeshott. No theory could serve as a guide to conduct independently of a practical skill or 'knowing one's way about' the practice in question. But it is clear that, while a political identity is certainly not premeditated independently of the practice of politics, an identity can be thought through and defended well or badly. The die-hard Oakeshottian may sniff at the resulting discourses as not 'really' theoretical at all and many examples are fairly risible, but a categorical distinction between theory and practice is not very helpful here.

One reason for this has been mentioned by Charles Taylor. He remarks that we live in a peculiarly "theory-prone" civilization,[7] and examples are not difficult to find. Take a recent column in the *New York Times Magazine* in which Noel Perrin described his dismay when, confronted with the prospect of a "part-time marriage", he found that there was no theory to help him cope with it.

> Although our society is even now witnessing de facto part-time
> arrangements, such as the couple who work in different cities
> and meet only on weekends, we have no theory of part-time
> marriage, at least no theory that has reached the general public.
> ... To me it's clear that we need such a theory.[8]

Now, we may want to agree with the Oakeshottian that a man whose first thought in these circumstances is to run to the library for a book is already in deep trouble. And there is also something especially silly in Perrin's suspicion that there might be a theory not yet released to the general public, like a drug undergoing clinical tests. But we can recognize in his genuine distress a cry for a legitimating discourse, a plea that is related to the obscure satisfaction we sometimes find in knowing the medical name of an ailment.

In other words, our way of life seems to be intimating a new social identity for which we have no name and, as yet, no way of assessing whether the identity is being enacted well or badly. But this does not mean that discursive resources are entirely lacking. Even as Perrin writes, popular social science, disseminated in monthly magazines and 'self-help' books with their licensed hierarchies of therapists and counsellors, is coming to the rescue of a theory-prone civilization.[9] If they are right, and such arrangements are becoming more common, we shall soon have the discursive resources to find our way around them as easily as more traditional households.

This relatively trivial example illustrates the major drawback of the treatment of ideologies as doctrines. Our authors' intellectual background renders them far too scrupulous as historians to endow ideologies with undue systematicity. In fact, they offer original and valuable guidance on how to establish the historical identity of an ideological tradition. But they all, to a greater or lesser degree, miss the sense in which the doctrines that they examine for internal consistency are the particular expressions of cultural productions, notably language. What else does it mean to

have an identity or a self-understanding other than to have assumed a particular stance towards the cultural objects with which one is presented? If more people like Perrin demand that periods of separation be included within the concept 'marriage' then the concept will change to accomodate them and, in doing so, will reorganize a whole area of related concepts. However, this is not something that happens according to any arcane structural process. Whether and how the change will take place depends upon the 'stands' of people like Perrin and, to an even greater extent, the activities of those whom the discourse licenses to give an authoritative opinion. The discourse of public identities is the locus of ideologies and consequently the proper focus for the study of ideology is not so much doctrine, the finished work of cultural production, but the practices and processes of production itself. In shifting focus, we can finally displace the whole 'problem' of ideology from the barren ground of the theory/practice relation which caused Manning to stop short of seeing his 'identities' as anything more than rhetorical *personae*.

The treatment of ideology as practices of cultural production, which has motivated a whole range of interesting studies — on the analysis of discourse, on popular culture, or on symbol and myth, for example — is not without problems of its own. Is the extremely inclusive understanding of ideology as the discourse which produces public identities too vague? John B. Thompson has made a powerful case that specifically ideological discourse "serves to sustain relations of domination," and that too inclusive a definition only robs the concept of its "critical edge."[10] But again, his emphasis is away from the finished product — belief systems, value judgements, doctrines — and towards the practices and processes of production, particularly linguistic practices. Disagreement over inclusive and exclusive definitions is part of the general 'tidying up' to which I referred earlier.

Set against these developments in the theory of ideology, Modern Ideologies is already looking rather dated. It is a meritorious and well-executed series suffering from what was once (before popular psychology moved on) called an identity crisis. The individual works in the series have strengths, notably in portraying the historical identities of traditions of discourse, which the more sociologically minded theorists of cultural production would do well not to overlook. We do indeed learn a greal deal about some of the most important social and political doctrines of our age. We also learn much about people who called themselves liberals, socialists, anarchists, etc. But, apart from the fact that, for example, a man popularly known as a socialist advanced this particular doctrine, we learn about what made that doctrine ideological mainly by reading between the lines. And yet, when all this is said, one cannot help thinking that agnosticism presents a more agreeable face than self-righteousness.

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Notes

1. Michael Oakeshott, *The Social and Political Doctrines of Contemporary Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938); Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (London: Hutchinson, 1966), p. 9.

2.   Alasdair MacIntyre, "Ideology, Social Science, and Revolution," *Comparative Politics* (1973), pp. 321-3.

3.   This account of ideology leans heavily upon some arguments of Charles Taylor, notably his "Political Theory and Practice," in Christopher Lloyd (ed.), *Social Theory and Political Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), and "The Use and Abuse of Theory," in Anthony Parel (ed.), *Ideology, Philosophy and Politics* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1983); for an example of a study of an ideology conducted along these lines see John Dunn, *The Politics of Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

4.   *Fascism* is dedicated to "M.O. and E.K."

5.   O'Sullivan does not always respect the condition of the owl of Minerva's flight: there are some very odd remarks on the "future of conservatism" in *Conservatism* (150-3). He is much more circumspect in discussing "Fascism and the Future" (183).

6.   He has developed these ideas further in an important new book: D.J. Manning and T.J. Robinson, *The Place of Ideology in Political Life* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

7.   Taylor, "The Use and Abuse of Theory," p. 39.

8.   Noel Perrin, "A Part-Time Marriage," *New York Times Magazine*, September 9, 1984, p. 122.

9.   See, e.g., Stephanie Brush, "Love Stretchers," *Self*, September 1983, 118-21; Catherine Clifford, "Love at a Distance," *Self*, December 1983, pp. 88-91. *Self*, which scrupulously records the academic qualifications of the 'experts' cited in its articles, is an excellent example of a vehicle of cultural production in a "theory-prone" civilization.

10. John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), p. 4 and *passim*.

TWO FINITUDES

ZDRAVKO PLANINC

Barry Cooper, *The End of History: An Essay on Modern Hegelianism*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984, pp. viii, 391.

Hugh MacLennan, *Voices in Time*, N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1980, pp. 313.

> Here is what you have to do. . . . Your winter anxieties about the End of History seem now all well comforted to rest, part of your biography now like any old bad dream.
> THOMAS PYNCHON, *Gravity's Rainbow*

What can the end of history possibly mean? It is commonly understood as either nuclear annihilation or an unrealizable state of perfection for mankind. The Kantian argument developed by Karl Jaspers claims it is both, in other words that modernity is confronted with a choice between two finitudes: either a nuclear war resulting in the physical end of mankind or "the establishment of world peace without atom bombs" following a radical transformation of man "in his moral, rational and political aspects — a transformation so extensive that it would become the turning point of history."[1] Jaspers finds the choice tragic, but Kantians can also find modernity comfortable. The Harvard Nuclear Study Group claims that it is possible for us to live in peace with nuclear weapons, and that Strangelove Scenarios are of less use to the average man than, say, its Checklists for nuclear weapons issues and arms control proposals, which present no hard choices. As responsible Kantians they attempt to provide the public with important (unclassified) information about nuclear arms and to give solid advice to politicians who are usually too preoccupied with elections to develop any expertise in such matters.[2] The end of this story is frequent publication without secret articles, somewhat at odds with Kant's Second Supplement to "Perpetual Peace."

A more profound articulation of the end of history was given by Robert Oppenheimer, who spoke for all modern humankind when he cited the *Bhagavadgita* upon witnessing the first atomic explosion: "Now I am become death, the destroyer of worlds." Each of us is a *Wibakusha*, an A-bomb survivor who experiences a permanent encounter with death. The modern encounter with death is neither denying nor discomforting nor despairing, and its permanence gives rise to wisdom. To be modern is to be wise in the way that *zeks* who survived the Gulag Arkipelago are wise. This wisdom cannot be expressed in Kantian terms; its

content explodes the Kantian form. The modern "art of dying" is best expressed in the Hegelian System of Science, as presented by Alexandre Kojève's *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*. Kojève claims that we live in a post-historical world: history has ended and nothing new can happen, even though it may take each particular man some time to discover the truth for himself. Absolute knowledge has been attained, and is being realized in the spread of the universal and homogeneous state. Since the realization of the final state involves a good deal of compulsion, personal discoveries of the truth have often been preceded by a fanfare of bombs. Napoleon's artillery shelled Jena just before Hegel saw world-history ride in on a white horse. For the soldiers and targetted civilians of the World Wars, the opening words of Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* are reminder enough of their experience: "A screaming comes across the sky. It has happened before, but there is nothing to compare it to now." Oppenheimer had an easy time of it. He made his own bomb and thus recognized only himself in the explosion.

In the two works under review, Barry Cooper and Hugh MacLennan provide us with a Hegelian-Kojèvian account of modernity's two finitudes: the end of history is part of our past, i.e., the moral, rational and political transformation of man has already occurred; and global nuclear war will not change anything essentially. But they also provide us with an account of the limits of modernity that may be said to be distinctively Canadian. This is not completely surprising. Both authors are English-Canadians, though of different generations and writing independently, one as a political philosopher and the other as a poet, in Plato's sense of the term. As Canadians reflecting on their experience, both are modern at one remove. This requires some comment. According to George Grant, a prophet understood only in his own land, Canada's unique standing among nations and empires had allowed it to be both a witness to, and a voice against the spread of the universal and homogeneous state. (There is more truth to this than there was in Heidegger's claim that the German *geist* is involved in a world-historical confrontation with technological "always-the-sameness" embodied in American and Societ imperialism.) Grant could only express his understanding as a lament, sung at the falling of the dusk. As Canada became increasingly incorporated within the American empire, Canadians who felt the same sense of loss were driven to reflection. It was now possible for them to become self-consciously modern, accepting and even loving modernity as their own, while also understanding its limitations. This is what philosophers and poets do, or at least those who are healthy enough to diagnose and cure the spiritual disorders of their age first of all within themselves. Homeopathic cures of this sort are most effective at some remove from the source of the disease: in Canada rather than the USA; in, say, the foothills of the Rockies or North Hatley rather than Calgary, Toronto or Montreal. And of significance for MacLennan's *Voice in Time*, remote communities also have the advantage of not being targets for ICBMs.

The End of History is an essay; *Voices in Time* is a novel. Two different techniques, scholarship and fiction, are used to bring us into the presence of the most important questions. Cooper's technique takes us through three layers of analysis. His book is about the contemporary world and how to understand it, about Kojève's interpretation of Hegel, and about Hegel himself. His purpose in writing

is not simply to decode Kojève's frequently allusive discourse and turn it into a coherent argument, but also to defend the thesis that "the content of Kojève's interpretation expresses the self-understanding of modernity." Kojève's discourse expresses the Absolute Knowledge of the Hegelian Sage, the knowledge that even the totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin were part of the unfolding of the "final, perfect, and complete regime described by Hegelian science" (*EH*, 4-6). After all, the real is rational. Thus, "the emergence of multi-national enterprises [MNEs] as the successors to nineteenth-century colonial imperialism, the system of Soviet concentration camps, and the supersession of them both in the technological society" are not unrelated phenomena, but rather can be integrated into one configuration of meaning. The Sage after Stalin knows that ex-*zeks* and execs are both wise. However, Cooper is not Kojève. He understands that there are limitations to modernity. But since "we must come to understand the truth of our existence by way of our modernity," one way of doing so — perhaps the best way — is by confronting Kojève's understanding of post-historical discourse and practice. An alternative to the view that history is over "is enormously difficult to formulate;" but nothing is gained by understanding modernity "from the outside except moral superiority and the fraudulence of a good conscience" (*EH* 11-12, 330).

Kojève's signifiance is well known among political philosophers. Allan Bloom, for instance, has written that the *Introduction* is "one of the few important books of the twentieth century — a book, knowledge of which is requisite to the full awareness of our situation and to the grasp of the most modern perspective on the eternal questions of philosophy."[3] Yet Kojève is all too frequently dismissed for his historicism, his failure to understand human nature, or his apologies for tyrannical regimes. These objections are easily met. First, if the dilemma of the relation between *philosophia perennis* and temporal (historical) existence leads to nihilism, then only those who do not accept that history has ended are nihilists. The System of Science gives no evidence of historicism (*EH* 40-50, 74-77). Second, although Hegel made a few regrettable errors concerning the existence of a natural dialectic, Kojève does not. Nature has no role in history; and insofar as human nature is relevant, Hobbes provides the best account. The Hobbesian state of nature and the Hegelian Master-Slave dialectic are equivalent. Both describe the natural substratum of history. The fear of death at the hands of another gives rise in a man to the desire for power after power. Knowledge is power. Consequently, Absolute Knowledge is power over death. And the universal Leviathan allows all men to overcome death (*EH* 26-45, 78-93, 90-94). Third, according to Hobbes, tyranny is a term used by those who dislike a regime. Often they are philosophers who also claim that knowledge has no relation to power. But these philosophers do, on occasion, advise tyrants. Kojève's reading of Xenophon's *Heiro* shows that the universal and homogeneous state resolves once and for all the problem of the relation between wisdom and tyranny. If some remain unconvinced that their knowledge is nothing but the rationality of the real, then they are merely beautiful souls who refuse to recognise that their inconclusive objections have already been answered by the System of Science (*EH* 265-272, 330-336).

There are formal and empirical criteria for Hegelian-Kojèvian wisdom. The

formal criteria are that one's knowledge must be comprehensive and circular, that is, both total, unchangable, universally true and capable of accounting for itself. All discourse that is not complete discourse or wisdom is ideological. All ideological discourse has a component of power, since ideologists treat their (incomplete) ideas as self-evident realities, make deductions from them as if they were logical premises, and then act on their deductions as if they were policy instructions. Wisdom is possible when all ideologies have worked themselves out in the world, in proper order. Pagan philosophers and Christian theologians were of special signifiance among ideologists because they accepted the ideal of wisdom while denying the possibility of attaining it; instead, they loved wisdom, or loved God, who possesses wisdom. Hegel and Kojève provide us with several complete catalogues of all possible ideologies: the histories of metaphysics (how man understands the world), of anthropology (how man understands himself), and of "religion" (social self-interpretation) are all roads leading to Absolute Knowledge, and are, strictly speaking, equivalent in the eyes of the Sage. One can thus surmise that the empirical criteria for wisdom are: the existence of Sages, or rather of their self-conscious wisdom in book form; and the unfolding of the universal and homogeneous state in post-historical time, or at least sufficient evidence to convince a Sage (*EH* 170-177, 211-221).

It takes a great deal of evidence to convince some people. For those unfamiliar with the virtues of textual exegesis, Cooper's Kojèvian reconstruction of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and his discussion of its place in Hegel's System may not be enough to convince them that they are citizens of the post-historical regime (*EH* 244-265). Then again, the number of people killed by and for a variety of states in this century may not be enough either. For those with common sense, Cooper discusses the work of Hannah Arendt, whose *Origins of Totalitarianism* describes "in an uncompromising way the political face of the modern crisis, the new regime of modern political man." There is an obvious "connection between the emancipation of bourgeois spirituality from the constraints of medieval life [i.e., God and nature] . . . and the eventual creation of a novel political regime, totalitarianism." All contemporary states have common roots in the modern break with antiquity, but they also have a common goal in the actualization of the universal and homogeneous Leviathan, even though this may occur "in characteristically different ways in its several provinces" (*EH* 14-22, 283-290, 329). Concentration camps are not the same as MNEs, but the principles that underlie them find their place in the comprehensive System that also explains the present stand-off between the American and Soviet ideological empires under threat of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD) as the Hobbesian-Hegelian struggle for recognition writ large. There is a rationality that is common to both MNEs and the Gulag, both Hiroshima and Kolyma; it appears "most perfectly" in the technological society, and in technology's most perfect product, the Bomb. Today, we all know "the real potential for complete catastrophe." We need not experience the Hobbesian state of nature immediately, as *zeks* do. "And knowing what it means assures us of our wisdom" (*EH* 290-327).

A central feature of post-historical life is the banality of wisdom. Aristotle claimed that beasts and gods have no place in the polis (*Politics* 1253a29). A beast

is a mind that thinks nothing, a man sleeping without dreams; an Aristotelian god is a mind thinking itself eternally. The former has no dignity, the latter needs none (*Metaphysics* 1074b15-35). Since Hegel has given an exhaustive account of the contents of mind thinking itself eternally, and has demonstrated that these contents are manifest in the modern regime, post-historical citizens of that regime are of necessity either beasts or gods — possibly both. Modern life is undignified. "One *Wibakusha*-author summarized the entire death-saturated A-bomb experience as 'the omission of various ceremonies'" (*EH* 326). Without ceremony, anything is possible; or rather, one ceremony is as good as another. A complete catalogue of "life-styles" exists. All one need do is choose. Combinations are also possible. A druggist can be a Dionysian as easily as a vegetarian can be an alchemist. Of course, presenting oneself as anything other than thoroughly modern has a certain quaintness about it. Most prefer to find a place within the post-historical hierarchy headed by the citizen-Sage as civil servant or advisor and filled out by a range of "lazy, androgynous, comic, animal gods, no less wise in their own ways than the men and women nominally above them" (*EH* 272-282).

In the *Republic*, Socrates descends from the Acropolis to Piraeus, to observe the festivals, and finds that one is as good as another. He is prevented from ascending by the persistence of his interlocutors' questions as well as by a few threats to his safety. *The End of History* leads its reader into a similar confrontation with Hegelian-Kojèvian knowledge/power. But how to get away? Cooper's Epilogue provides the basis for a critical understanding of modernity. Stanley Rosen's discussion of the formal aporias to be found in the Hegelian claims concerning the actualization of wisdom is summarized. The Sage betrays himself; he cannot be a "complete" man, or mortal god, because "he must either display his humanity by speaking or else remain silent and so indistinguishable from a beast" (*EH* 336-339). Eric Voegelin's argument that a magic compulsiveness lies at the heart of the Hegelian-Kojèvian enterprise is also presented. Voegelin understands modernity in the same way that Alexandre Solzhenitsyn understands the Gulag: "Everything is steeped in lies, and *everybody knows it*." In the words of Geoffrey Clive, at the heart of modernity's grotesqueness "lies the lie, depravity superimposed upon senselessness" (*EH* 313). But what alternative is there? Kojève's account may not be open to the full range of human experiences, but what would those experiences be, and how would it be possible to give an account of them?

Cooper concludes *The End of History* by saying, "perhaps Heidegger was right: only a god can save us. Perhaps, indeed, a logos that has turned into technique must fall silent to leave room for regeneration" (*EH* 350). MacLennan's *Voices in time* speaks in the silence of modernity about the possibility of regeneration. It is the Myth of Er, the saving tale, that completes our ascent from the Lie. *Voices in Time* is a Platonic anamnetic experiment in mythopoetic form. It is presented as a book of memoirs compiled in the next century by a Canadian survivor of a global nuclear catastrophe. MacLennan compels the reader of his novel to descend in time from the future to the present and recent past — indeed, into Nazi Germany, the Lie itself — while also ascending to the god that will save him. The conflicting movements induced in the soul of the reader allow him to diagnose and cure the spiritual disorders of modernity within himself through *anamnesis*, or recollection,

just as John Wellfleet, the author of the memoirs, is cured by the memory of those he knew and loved.

Late in his life, Wellfleet is told that a strongbox filled with papers concerning two of his relatives has been discovered in the ruins of old Montreal by André Gervais, a young engineer-architect so dissatisfied with the lies he has been taught by the new regime that he asks Wellfleet to compile the papers in a book that would reveal the truth for him and others of like mind. The box contained the incomplete autobiographies of his step-father, Conrad Dehmel, who had lived through the second World War in Germany and later came to Canada, and his cousin, Timothy Wellfleet, a Montreal television journalist during the 1960s who had contributed to the murder of Dehmel by the manner in which he interviewed him on one of his programs. Shock at his own irresponsibility led Timothy to attempt to complete Dehmel's memoirs while beginning his own, but the shock quickly dissipated. The papers were stored away by Stephanie, who was Dehmel's second wife, Timothy's first cousin, and John Wellfleet's mother. It should be taken as a sign of their spiritual health that these men loved women, and that they all loved Stephanie in their various ways. Dehmel and John Wellfleet also had a deep love for their grandfathers, and Gervais came to love Wellfleet in similar fashion. One generation blends into another, and incompleteness gives rise to memories. One generation completes another through memory, just as men and women complete one another through love.

When he first spoke with Gervais and heard him mention Stephanie's name, "Wellfleet felt as though someone had torn stitches from a wound in his soul." Yet that night he dreamt not of his mother, but of Joanne, a girl he had loved in his youth: "Her body had been dust for years but she had never been more real" than in that dream (*VIT* 1-5). His experience of having a wounded soul indicated that what Wellfleet took to be health was in reality a pathological state of his *eros*; the wound's reopening was a sign of recovery. By the time of his death several years later, Wellfleet could live freely with such memories. He no longer needed to approach them in dreams. When Gervais discovered his body he also found by its side a letter with only the word "Dear" written. Was it intended for Stephanie or Joanne? Gervais didn't know, but he was sure "that in this last instant of his life he was remembering someone he had loved" (*VIT* 313). Gervais understood, as did young Dehmel at the death of his grandfather, "that in the end each one of us is alone with something that may be infinity," and that love is participation in infinity (*VIT* 153). Wellfleet regained his spiritual health by writing a book in which he confronted the disorders of modernity. His first lines were: "As it is with the individual, so it may be with the whole world. When the individual is wounded in his soul he often wishes to die. . . . Can it be the same with communities?" (*VIT* 28) The answer is yes. After reading Dehmel's memoirs he concludes that there is no real difference "between the ambition of a man who sets out to conquer all the people in the world and that of one who sets out to conquer all the knowledge in it." Both are symptomatic of a diseased *eros*, of a deliberate murder of the truth of the soul. Looking back over the past century he writes: "The deliberate murder of truth led to the murder of people. In our case it led to the self-murder of a civilization" (*VIT* 166, 249).

The inexorable growth of the universal and homogeneous state from its Hobbe-

sian roots appears clearly to Wellfleet from his vantage in Year 25 of the Third Bureaucracy. The "crack-up" leading to humanity's self-murder, not suicide, began in the licence of the 1960s. Wellfleet recalls that it was all "marvellously exciting. Anything could happen. . . . It was a golden age. The golden age of the Common Man" (*VIT* 14). Dehmel compared it with the early decades in Germany, when common men were screaming for freedom without knowing what it is, or what its discipline involves. Indeed, this golden age extends as far back as the French Revolution (*VIT* 203, 295). In any event, the euphoria of the 1960s was soon sobered by the rise of the Smiling Bureaucracies and the global spread of nuclear terrorism. The period of the Great Fear followed, as each man came to terms with the possibility of an arbitrary death. The Smiling Bureaucracies consolidated into a federal Leviathan, the global Second Bureaucracy; and more efficient, or "clean" nuclear weapons proliferated. One day, the Destructions came. The world was "annihilated by a computer balls-up", that is, for no apparent reason. Such an unceremonious, and even trivial death is not the same as being reduced to "a screech of agony" by the Gestapo: "This man Hitler made everything personal." Yet surviving in the Hobbesian state of nature had its own horror: "There was no control at all. It was every man for himself" (*VIT* 8, 248). The cunning of reason was silently at work in the Destructions. Every period of reconstruction following a World War had allowed the universal and homogeneous state to rationalize and strengthen itself. The Destructions produced the Third Bureaucracy, the final regime that stopped time in 2014 AD by proclaiming Year One and codifying all previous history in the Diagram, an easily memorized pictoral representation of the Lie. Everything contradicting the Diagram was destroyed, no matter whether the evidence was contained in books or in minds. The Third Bureaucracy thus rationalized and generalized the methods of Danton and Hitler (*VIT* 203).

Fifty copies of Wellfleet's memoirs were printed. They too would be destroyed if found, but were being kept safe by an underground movement dedicated to a "second Renaissance." Wellfleet knew that their hopes were ill-founded. He was nonetheless moved by their naive sincerity. For instance, Gervais wanted to know "where the truth is," and what the history of mankind was before the Third Bureaucracy. But these were things "he could not grasp because he had never had the chance to understand time and its passage" (*VIT* 7, 124, 170, 312). Gervais could see no further than the beginning of the end of history. His faith in a new beginning prevented him from realizing that the whole sorry tale would simply repeat itself. Wellfleet, therefore, gives him some grandfatherly advice in the memoirs — the same advice Dehmel had received from his grandfather. As a young student in Germany, Dehmel set out to complete a Grand Design: "He would harmonize traditional History with the new findings in Psychology, Biology, and Anthropology, and out of the mexture he would develop a new Moral Philosophy." In short, he became a "learned fool," bent on rediscovering the end of history. Only after surviving the second World War did he appreciate what his grandfather had told him during the first: "They will tell you about the Laws of History when you go to university. Don't believe them. This war wasn't caused by laws, it was caused by fools" (*VIT* 148, 160, 166). Fools with guns are murderers, and learned fools — especially sincere ones — need not fire shots to be complicitous.

As a television journalist, Timothy Wellfleet revelled in modernity, though not

without some awareness of his role in the post-historical regime. His wisdom, however, did not absolve him of complicity in Dehmel's murder. Before he ended up with the CBC, Timothy was, of course, in advertising. His literary ambitions led him to draft an outline for a play, an ad-man's version of Plato's cave allegory. There was no dialogue. The characters were dressed in the costumes of every previous historical epoch. They simply came on stage, looked about, and disappeared, all in the silence of beasts and gods. Behind them was an enormous television screen flashing images of everything "in the news which adds up to the vast war of shadows . . . the world has become." When given the opportunity, Timothy readily entered this world with the dream of mastering it (*VIT* 86-87). His interview program was to be "a mirror of *Now*, and there was no limit to the material *Now* could furnish." He need not understand it. His job was to create impressions, and this required that he bring himself "close to insanity." Timothy later reflected: "I had . . . made myself one of the safety valves in the very System I was trying to destroy. I was far cheaper than policemen and torture chambers." Far more efficient too. He could not master the System, but he could tend to the electronic fire and exert the System's power over his "guests" — except on one occasion when a scientist answered his question about how the world will end by saying: "In an armchair. Staring at electrical vibrations in boxes and listening to fools" (*VIT* 45-46, 61-65). Timothy had enough power to destroy Dehmel. He claimed publicly to have proof that Dehmel had been a member of the Gestapo and that he had been responsible for the death of Hanna Erlich among others. One of his viewers, a concentration camp survivor, thought he recognized Dehmel as his torturer, one Obersturmbannführer Heinrich, and flew to Montreal to kill him. Upon realizing his mistake, he committed suicide (*VIT* 116-117, 307-309).

The difference between Dehmel and Heinrich is the difference between the truth of the soul and the Lie. The story of their relation is the saving tale for us all. The young Dehmel lived in a time "when it was dangerous to tell the truth even to yourself." Reason was "helpless" before the rationality of the Nazis: "What we have here is the logic of *Alice in Wonderland*. . . . Logical conclusions proceeding from absurd hypotheses. Logic can never explain the Nazis" (*VIT* 205, 219, 241). Neither can common sense, even though it might indicate when things have become unendurable. Dehmel's recovery of the truth required an introspective awareness of the degree to which all modern rationality is based on the logic of *Alice*. It also required spiritual strength and the compulsion of circumstances. Dehmel's first marriage was a conventional one; his wife, Eva Schmidt, "was invincibly stupid and sexually frustrated." It ended abruptly. Eva went on to find wisdom and satisfaction in the Gestapo, married to Heinrich. Dehmel was saved from his own scholasticism by the "love in impermanence" of a young Jewess, Hanna Erlich. As the lives of Hanna and her father became increasingly endangered, Dehmel joined first the Intelligence service and then the Gestapo in an attempt to acquire enough authority to arrange their escape. Love in impermanence requires great courage. Joining the Gestapo had its price. After recounting his training in the techniques of interrogation and torture, Dehmel wrote: "I have found it impossible to love myself. It was this experience that started it. . . . I was no longer the same kind of man I had been before. . . . I felt worse than

a murderer. I wondered if the shame and horror had passed into my face and I soon discovered that it had" (*VIT* 272-273). The escape attempt failed. Dehmel was discovered in Freiburg by Eva, and then tortured by Heinrich until he revealed where Hanna and her father were hidden. When he last saw Hanna alive she screamed out, "it doesn't matter what you said." Whether or not they had been found before he betrayed them is uncertain. And it truly didn't matter (*VIT* 288-294). What mattered was the love in impermanence that Hanna and Conrad shared, the erotic participation in eternity that allows the soul to distinguish between the truth and the Lie when reason fails. There was no other difference between Heinrich and Dehmel.

During the bombing of Freiburg by the French in World War I, Dehmel's grandfather cited an ancient verse to him: "'And in a rush of wind the gods left the city.' . . . I wonder where the gods are going?" (*VIT* 151) Taken together, Cooper's *End of History* and MacLennan's *Voices in Time* provide an answer for those of us who remain to confront the two finitudes of modernity alone. The ancient gods will not return, the Christian God will not be resurrected, and yet only a god can save us. By making the end of history part of our biographies, we allow the god to appear. We are the gods now. But we are immortal only while we live — and while we have the courage to accept our incompleteness. The vulgarity of the animalized and the wise of the Kojèvian world results from their pathological desire to deny their mortality at the expense of participating in the eternal in the highest and most noble ways open to mortals. Truly mortal gods accept their natality and respond to the movements of *eros* in their souls. They are capable of love in impermanence. And "love consists in this, that two solitudes protect, and touch, and greet each other" (Rainer Maria Rilke).

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Notes

1. Karl Jaspers, *The Atom Bomb and the Future of Man*, trans. E.B. Ashton, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), pp. vii, 4.

2. Harvard Nuclear Study Group, *Living With Nuclear Weapons*, (Toronto: Bantam, 1983), pp. ix-x, 164, 204.

3. Alexandre Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. J.H. Nichols Jr., ed. Allan Bloom, (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1969), p. vii.

TECHNOLOGY AND CULTURE

STANLEY ARONOWITZ

Arthur Kroker, *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant*, Montréal: New World Perspectives, 1984; and New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985, pp. 146.

There is no critical reflection on technology in the United States. The American discourse is firmly technological; indeed all social scientific questions are reduced to problems which can be solved through instrumental reason. This radical nominalism is the other side of the domination of all American thought by technology as an organizing principle of social practice. But to the degree that there is a discourse on technology present in the U.S., it is, like much of the elegant food currently imported to satisfy the more sophisticated palates of our rising professional class, a product of European or Canadian purveyors. American critics of technological society have surfaced in the past: among our earliest, Thorstein Veblen framed his discourse in a vast commentary on culture and its relation to the rise of industrialism and the corporations which sponsored it. Later writers, such as Louis Mumford, were ambivalent in their relation to technics: like the marxists, Mumford blamed the mask spread before the environment by technics on social arrangements. In the end, he held to the western idea of Progress and called for technological humanism, a discourse on technology that celebrates it but holds to the view that it is a golem that can get out of hand unless bridled by society.

After the second world war, even the most detailed descriptions of the social implications of technological development such as those of Siegfried Gideon could barely restrain their enthusiasm for its beneficent effects. And, those of the American Studies school, following F.O. Matthiessen, incorporated their study of technology into a myth/symbol framework borrowed from the Canadian thinker, Northrop Frye. This maneuver resulted in technological humanism that showed the centrality of images of the machine for the formation of our culture, but refrained from drawing ideological or political conclusions from this observation. Moreover, after the populist 20s and 30s, a discourse on American imperialism vanishes from even these meager studies. In the 50's myths, self-contained literary objects, and social and historical context within which they are forged, become merely "background" that fulfills the formal obligation of historical investigations.

In the 60s the prophets of the tragic vision of technological society found a public among younger Americans who, for a brief moment, achieved some distance from

what Herbert Marcuse called "One-Dimensional Thought". In the American academy there appeared a critical fragment, hardly worth the characterization of *tradition*, but it established a presence in some quarters. Yet, the sources of the discourse on technology were distinctly European: the Frankfurt School, Jacques Ellul, Edmund Husserl, whose work *The Crisis of European Sciences* appeared in English in the 70s. Although the discourse on technology created a brief stir, the roots of technological thinking were so deep in the American mind that the critical tradition was rapidly overcome by a discourse on the effects of technology upon, for example, employment, new conceptions of leisure, problems of occupational safety and health, the impact of television on learning. In short, technology produced a series of discrete problems begging administrative and political solutions. Alongside these less than dark ruminations, the celebration resumed its momentum. As Americans became aware that the international marketplace was once more competitive now as before, technology was seen as the way out: the mechanism through which empire could be saved, domination once more secured. Sceptics were no longer tolerated even as marginal voices to be heard above the whir of the computer's soft tapping. They were committed to the purgatory of silence, permitted to speak as long as nobody listened.

Americans have been blinded to the dangers of modern technology because it has been central to building a world empire that has sustained material prosperity and political and economic domination over others. Canada, caught between its partial integration into technological society and the past of European culture has forged a discourse about technology that grasps, in the words of philosopher George Grant, that 'technology is ourselves'. According to Authur Kroker it is precisely owing to Canada's existence in the interstices of this conflict that technology is *the* Canadian discourse, and Canada's identity is inextricably bound up with technology. Marginality is the stuff of which insight is made, but not the marginality that derives from exclusion. Kroker's key argument is that Canada is a technological society whose membership within the American empire is today unquestioned, but is not free of the deprival of those who lack the power to determine their own destiny.

This book, the first in a series titled *New World Perspectives*, is a compact study of three Canadian thinkers who have contributed to the Canadian discourse on technology — George Grant, Marshall McLuhan and Harold Innis. Kroker invokes others — notably Margaret Atwood, artists Alex Colville and Don Proch, Dennis Lee and Pierre E. Trudeau — all of whom helped invent and define this discourse. But, Kroker has focussed on these three because they illustrate three perspectives on technology: Grant's *technological dependency*, McLuhan's *technological humanism* (who, for Kroker, are the "polar opposites of the Canadian Mind") and Harold Innis' mediation, *technological realism*.

Grant is portrayed as the Nietzsche of North America, a religiously informed philosopher whose work parallels but does not duplicate the work of Jacques Ellul and the Frankfurt school. For Grant the question concerning technology is whether freedom is possible when national and personal existence is indistinguishable from technology, when the horizon of modern culture is the "will to technique" or, even more horrificly, the "will to will" that now defines the human condition.

Grant is concerned with the ancient questions of all philosophical thought, the meaning of human life. The worst is not so much that our horizons are dominated by the ideology of "freedom through technique" but that we no longer know the difference between this concept of freedom which, after all, ties humanity to the technological imperative as an ethical norm, and an alternative idea of the "good." Grant despairs, as did Adorno and Horkheimer in their *Dialectic of the Englightenment* (written more than 40 years ago), that we possess the capacity to even imagine a moral order that is separate from modernity. This leads him not merely to inveigh against the darkness of this fully developed cultural homogeneity, but to enter what Kroker calls a "double refusal" of both the results of the American revolution and the "deep assumptions of the modern project". As Kroker points out, this makes him a representative of the "dying class" of European loyalists for whom the revolution was nothing if not the embodiment of industrial and commercial "progress". Grant retrospectively identifies himself with the past of European culture, or more exactly, that fleeting time at the dawn of capitalism when bourgeois morality was still bound to tradition and, at the same time, had a clear idea of the individual as the subject and the object of historical temporality. Grant stands at this intersection, a place which has long since become marginal, but appears to be the only space available to the critical temperament.

In one of his more acute distinctions, Kroker calls Grant's critique a discourse of lament rather than emancipation, surely the appropriate term to describe those for whom no hope is given since the social forces that might embody their vision have disappeared. Grant was, of course, aware that his conservative vision was doomed because of "the impossibility of Canada", a country that wished to build a conservative, i.e., European, nation in a time of progress. Although Grant's nationalism is emancipatory, his critique of technology is not since by his own account an "historical refusal" while enabling for the individual to "live an active life and affirmation of human freedom", it provides no ground for more than a faint hope that the "indigenous cultures" of Canada could provide a bulwark against the tyranny of technological will.

Kroker shows that Grant is an entirely original critic of the instrumental rationality that marks the march of modernity. Kroker's account of Grant's analysis of the disintegration of the idea of justice in western societies — the rise of contractual liberalism that replaces the ancient Greek idea of substantive justice — illustrates the central point of Grant's anti-technologism. Technology is not understood as merely the application of machines to the production of goods and services, but the *organizational principle* of our lives. We can no longer imagine an idea of justice that corresponds to some notion of individual traits because justice has been subordinated to the doctrine of expansionism at all costs. For Grant, purely conventional and contractual justice leads inevitably to nihilism. Unlike post-structuralism that wishes to banish "essentialism" from our critical vocabulary, Grant wishes to restore a moral conception of justice grounded in the relation of humans to the natural order.

Two things are stiking in Kroker's superb account of Grant's "technological dependency in new register". First, the critique of technological society as the "will to will" finds its categories from some anterior idea of a moral order, whether it

be early Protestant capitalism, ancient Greek society, or agrarianism. In different ways, Ellul, the Frankfurt School and Hannah Arendt found themselves constrained to defend early civilizations as ideal types in which substantive rationality could be said to prevail, an idea of a normative order based on the place of "man" in nature that was more or less fixed and, most important of all, a distinction between the private and public realms in which production was subordinated both to politics as communal consensus and to culture. In short, technological society derives from the primacy of the economic, especially the ideology that progress is identical with production with its concomitant notions of efficiency and expansion (empire). Grant joins the tradition which discloses technology to be nothing less than a mask for power sought and exercized for its own sake. "Will" is the drive for aggrandizement without moral presuppositions. The conservative critique turns out to be a discourse on technology as domination, and domination as a mode of life.

The second point is not brought out by Kroker although his sympathetic treatment of Grant as a radical tory cries out for the connection. In recent years, post structuralism has mounted a relentless attack on metaphysics, showing that all philosophies are ensnared in the logos of western thought. Derrida's main point is that if the task of philosophy is to start at the beginning, to challenge the taken-for-granted-world, the 'common sense' of ordinary discourse, its only modality is deconstruction which liberates itself from all presuppositions, even the negative dialectic.

Thus, all efforts based upon Kant's transcendental dialectic or Hegel's historical dialectic are doomed to betray the task of philosophy since they are entwined with the logic of identity. Derrida's category differance, meant to combine both the spatial ineluctability of difference and its temporal dimension constitutes a radical criticism of doctrines of reconciliation. But post-structuralism's relentless refusal of the search for meaning and its substitution of the semiotic idea of 'signification' (a context bound 'meaning' which has no transhistorical aspect), is compatible with technological society as organizing principle to the extent that nothing is substantive and substance is, itself, shown to be an ideological cateogry. As with all modernizing philosophies, including marxism, the substitution of historicity for the natural order, turns out to be the necessary ideological move to prepare the way for 'progress'. The question posed by Grant is whether we are caught in the antinomies of conservatism and a technologically transformed liberalism? In what sense have the 'revolutionary' ideologies of marxism and post-structuralism done more than clear away the ambiguities of liberalism that stand in the way of power as the prevailing discourse of modernity? Once the world is emptied of meaning, once we declare history as the substitute for morality, when the 'emancipatory' labor of critique is devoid of presuppositions, what stands in the way of the tyrannies of imperialism and technologically-mediated willing?

Marshall McLuhan is more than a celebrant of what has become the crucial technology of social power — communication. He is the theorist who addresses the problem posed by technology's critics: what is the relation of technology to human nature, to the eternal search of humanity for a way to reconcile itself both internally and with the object of its domination? Although he fully acknowledges that the new

communications' technology has abolished 'content' from communication in the sense which corresponds to Grant's lament, the now cliched slogan "the medium is the message (massage" — contrary to its recording by Grant and Jean Baudrillard to mean mass-age) — signifies for McLuhan the age of process. Surely we want to bring to consciousness the way in which the media "work us over" imposing themselves on our environment, yet says McLuhan "all media are extensions of some human faculty psychic or physical." Kroker draws on McLuhan's comments on narcissism to illustrate the point. "The youth Narcissus mistook his own reflection in the water for another person . . . The extension of himself by mirror numbed his perceptions until he became the servo-mechanism of his own extended repeated image."

If McLuhan is "no less critical than Grant of human fate in technological society" Kroker shows that he tries to find a way out by getting on top of the by now pervasive technology rather than remaining passive vicitims. The technique analogous to that of the artist, or more accurately, the psychoanalyst, is to wring out all of the ways in which technology extends our unconscious anxieties and wishes. When we have learned to counter the numbing effect of technology in culture, we may become its master. But in becoming technology's master we are learning to master ourselves since, as Kroker argues, McLuhan shares with Grant the understanding that technology *is* ourselves. McLuhan's answer to the pessimistic view of technology is to engage in a discourse of interiority, to show that it is not that "we" have been taken over by technology but that we have also created it as the image of our own constitution. McLuhan's idea of self-production also contains the concomitant concept of reification. The numbing is the form of forgetting that prevents us from recognizing ourselves in the objects we have produced, in the processes we participate in. Beneath this highly literary and mythic analysis is the argument that technological society is the image and extension of human nature objectified as otherness.

Although framed epistemologically, rather than as an historical dialectic, McLuhan optimism leads to a new idea of the subject/object identity. Harnessing the technology that we have wrought means to recognize ourselves in the machine, to understand technology as enhancing our own power and to grasp technology as human power (rather than stopping with the insights that technology effected "closure on human perception" and numbing). To take the latter view means that technology always stands as an imposition from without, a power over us. The way out, according to McLuhan, is to treat technology not as a threat but a scientific problem to be resolved through experiment. When we have succeeded in recovering technology as an expression of human faculties and stopped lamenting the advent of the processed world, we can achieve the "global village" where human understanding transcends the narrow limits of national boundaries. McLuhan's project remains nothing less than the achievement through communications technology of the classic aspiration towards the universality of humankind. Kroker admires McLuhan for the internal consistency of his thought, offering only a criticism of the 'blindspot' in the communications theory — the private appropriation of technique by capital. McLuhan became a corporate darling towards the end of his life because his vision of technology as human destiny gave

purpose to the American empire. This may have been the almost inevitable consequence of the convergence of his rather deterministic theory with the techno-logical imperative that provided both ideology and strategy to large, international corporations. Yet, 'nightmarish' as Kroker finds the perversions of the global village in mass culture, the *fact* of technological mediation of all social relations as well as individual existence raises the most serious questions about conservative or neo-marxist critiques.

Surely, neither Kroker nor others who justly distance themselves from McLuhan's embrace of the technological sensorium would maintain either that technological domination is merely the result of its private appropriation by capital or that its penetration of human sensibilities is not virtually complete. Nor can the idea of 'imposition' be taken as more than a moment in the self-negation of modernity. We might reject McLuhan's embrace, but his strategy of unpacking the elements of technological society in order to engage it *from within* is better than the lament for the lost age that inheres in any possible nationalism or Euro-centrism. The key question is to mediate the transformation of the world into a field rather than a series of events, to understand its spatialization in contrast to the older notion of historicity. And this is what Innis tries to do.

In Kroker's reading, the fundamental difference between Innis and either dependency theorists or humanists was his commitment to the formation of a "democratic public" for the discourse on technology. In order to perform this not inconsiderable feat, his own work had to go beyond philosophy and literary criticism. Innis developed a political economy of technology "playing both sides" of the dualism rather than ignoring them in favor of historical specification that, in the end, loses its critical edge. Innis explored the emergence of the "technological habitat" from the staple commodities which marked Canada's place in the international division of labor: fur, lumber, cod, and other raw materials. According to Innis, the development of these trades lay at the root of Canadian dependency and Innis saw them as "historically grounded (media of communications)".

Kroker traces Innis' originality to his connection of technology and communica-tions as economic relations, or, in other words understanding the ideological basis of economics and the economics of ideology.

Further, Kroker adds some interesting information on the relation of Innis to parallel movements in the United States, particularly Robert Parks' social ecology and the critical pragmatism of C. Wright Mills and his progenitor, John Dewey. In the section on Innis, Kroker's own perspective, although always implicit, becomes more clear. Kroker sides with Innis precisely because of his refusal to capitulate to technology as the mode of existence of Canadian dependency. His, among the others, is a genuine emancipatory discourse because it has implications for politics. One cannot simply refuse the deep structure of the American Revolution and return to the myth of an integrated civilization as a heuristic device from which criticism may emanate. Nor is it possible to resort to the utopianism of McLuhan's cosmic hope for technology as the means through which community can be reconstructed. At the theoretical level, Innis undertook concrete studies of the political economy of Canadian dependency and its technological imperatives in order to preserve "historical rememberance" of origins, a necessary element in a

broad-scale resistance to technological spatialization, or to put it differently, the "flattening" of the earth by mechanized communications. So, it is no longer a question of lamenting a lost oral culture, but of undertaking the work of reclamation which exposes the development of technological, economic and finally cultural dependence of Canada on the United States.

Although Kroker says that Innis succeeded where Mills, who aspired to the creation of a new critical public, failed because of the dynamo of American empire, it is hard not to make strong comparisons between them. Mills documented the centralization of imperial power at the center, Innis showed how mass communications constituted the key lever for that power; Mills showed the main drift towards authoritarian democracy in the most formally free of all the countries of the free world; Innis demonstrated that this freedom was purchased on the backs of marginalized peoples who were obliged to feed the technological dynamo with raw materials while receiving the imperial "word" from the center. Kroker's comparison between the two is apt. Their contributions are supplements of a project that has so far failed to create a new sphere of critical discourse and a practice that fulfills it in various arenas of power.

One of the most significant features of the technological dynamo is that it homogenized culture in the form of pluralities of cultures. To the extent that even the oral tradition is represented through mass communications, it becomes a feature of the dynamo. Thus, the nostalgia for a popular culture free of the technological imperative is a necessary lament without which alternative visions become improbable. Yet, popular culture is really a metaphor for the possibility of autonomous discourse. The 'lesson' of this extraordinary book is that marginality is a condition for a discourse on technology, surely one of the most important critical tasks of our time. But the second point, that we are obliged to look within the technological dynamo rather than fleeing its force, is equally evident. George Grant found that he was obliged to jettison the entire legacy of the French revolution when he discovered the intimate link between technology and individuality. And McLuhan became a futurist, trying to find the cracks in the colossus of mass communications which allowed the old humanism to survive. Innis banked on a new politics, but plunged ever deeper into the constituent elements of technological society in the hope that he could come out the other side. In this sense, he may be the north American Walter Benjamin even more than the Canadian Mills. Recall that Benjamin extolled mass reproducibility of art, not only because it opened up hitherto blocked democratic access to auratic art, but also because it laid to rest aura itself. He argued that one could not escape the mechanism through which modern culture had been sifted, but the task of the critic was to squeeze the emancipatory possibilities of technology before condemning it. Yet, like Innis, Benjamin could not escape the recognition that technology was not mere means, it had become the culture itself.

In the text, Kroker quotes McLuhan's repudiation of the distinction between center and margin because the new technologies of mass communication make these categories obsolete. This is in the context of refusing Grant's nationalism. Perhaps the "Canadian" mind is simply a harbinger of the global mind that has become dependent on technology, experiences the world as increasingly processed,

and in Herodotus's words has achieved consciousness without control. We may not be able to transcend modernity, but the time is surely at hand when it ceases to be the common sense of advanced industrial societies. Ecological thinking which tries to overcome the dualism of subject and object by treating nature as a subject, feminist theory which finds patriarchy alive and well despite humanism, and the new religious left which has insisted that ethical discourse must be restored to political and economic life find their resonances in the critical work of Canadians on technology. Innis' public may be forming, but has not found its theoreticians. Kroker's study is a magnificent step in that direction.

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MARY DALY'S *PURE LUST*

EILEEN MANION

Mary Daly, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984, 471 pp.

> Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
> How does your garden grow?
> With silver bells, and cockle shells,
> And pretty maids all in a row.

The progress of Mary Daly's publishing career represents an important trend in contemporary radical feminist thought. In 1968, along with the first tentative stirrings of "women's liberation," *The Church and the Second Sex* appeared. However, the book itself was more a reaction to Vatican II than a product of second wave feminism. In it Daly identified all the obvious instances of sexist bias in Catholic doctrine and practice, as well as the clear strain of misogyny in Catholic theology. She concluded that "equality" of men and women in the church was desirable and possible and made "some modest proposals" toward that goal.

By the mid-seventies, when her publishers wanted to re-issue the volume (by that time out of print) Daly had rejected all modesty. The book, tame as it may seem in light of her subsequent work, had involved her in a nasty tenure struggle at Boston College, which she describes as "an archetypal battle between principalities and powers."[1] At last she had recognized the forces of evil, and defeated them in the first round, by mobilizing student support so that the administration had to reverse its decision to fire her, and instead grant her promotion and tenure.

By the time that *The Church and the Second Sex* was reprinted, it had become for Daly "the journal of a half-forgotten foremother, whose quaintness should be understood in a historical context." For women to ask for a fair deal within the Church was "comparable to a black person's demanding equality in the Ku Klux Klan."[2]

Daly had gone "beyond God the Father" (the title of her second book, published in 1973) for she had lost the hope that the Church could be reformed, though not her belief that religious concerns or ultimate questions are central for women. Daly remains a religious thinker. She wants nothing less than to conceive a whole new world view for women's redemption, which she identifies with the salvation of the earth itself.[3]

In *Beyond God the Father: Towards a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* Daly was preoccupied with "transforming the collective imagination,"[4] to get rid of an exclusively male notion of God. She looked forward to an integration of feminine and masculine principles which would result in "psychic wholeness or androgyny."[5] Toward patriarchy she took the defiant stance for which she has become so famous, "assuming the role of witch and mad woman,"[6] but she still believed men were salvageable. Power relationships were "demonic" but men might "begin to liberate themselves toward wholeness . . . when women move into the new space."[7] By renouncing male privilege, men could "succeed in becoming human."[8]

By the time Daly published *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (1978) this fond hope seems to have disappeared and "androgyny" had become a dirty word "conveying something like John Travolta and Farrah Fawcett-Majors scotch-taped together."[9] Here Daly is more preoccupied with words and word-play, more contemptuous of conventional, academic scholarship, more entranced by some of the nastier contemporary and historical instances of women's victimization or "gynocide": Indian *Suttee*, Chinese footbinding, African genital mutilation, European witch burnings, American gynecology. This catalogue of horrors, which Daly meticulously examines in *Gyn/Ecology*, is proof for her of male "vampirism." In her system men are demons "who feed on women's stolen energy."[10] Her project is no longer any kind of "reconciliation with the Father. Rather it is affirming our original birth, our original source, movement, surge of living. This finding of our original integrity is re-membering our Selves."[11] Women must refuse to give up any of their energy to men; instead they must hoard it for themselves and one another, just as nineteenth century males were counselled by some doctors to hoard their semen, make the best use of their personal sexual capital rather than waste it in masturbation, visits to prostitutes or unnecessary conjugal relations.

Gyn/Ecology was a depressing book to read. Even if one disagreed with Daly's simplistic world view, the care with which she examined (male) scholarship's minimizing of women's suffering had an impact. Daly's fluffy metaphysics could be forgotten, or skimmed off, leaving only the undiluted rage, horror, and disgust.

Daly's new book, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*, adds very little to *Gyn/Ecology*, except for some new words to play with and a slightly more extreme version of the same ideas. Basically for Daly there are two categories of "Be-ing" in the world: the necrophilic and the biophilic. Men, it seems, by definition, fall into the former category; women have biophilic potential, unless they are seduced by bad male ideas into becoming "fembots."[12] Women who might disagree are just part of the Mean Male Machine.

According to Daly's Gospel, women can retrieve "original wholeness," for "we are rooted, as are animals and trees, winds and seas, in the Earth's substance. Our origins are in the elements."[13] All this rhapsodic invocation of nature, combined with an exhortation to consider ourselves a "Race of Lusty Women" and an appeal to "the force of reason rooted in instinct, intuition, passion"[14] makes me nervous. Daly may dislike all the correct things in the modern world: "massacres of war, racism, imposed economic poverty and famine, environmentally caused ill-health, the subtly spreading drabness, banality, ugliness of the man-made environment,"[15] but she attributes them to "discharges of male instinctual energy."[16] Thus the

"change of consciousness" she offers as the first step toward solving the world's problems seems curiously resonant with fascist rejection of despised others and internal complexity/ambivalence. She gives us a useful critique of "phallic asceticism" and its often life-threatening desire to transcend the body, but, paradoxically, she herself rejects the human body in its sexual differentiation, since in her post *Beyond God the Father* writings she regards human integrity not as a reconciliation of the sexes, but as a reunion of Mother and Daughter in "pre-oepipal" (to switch terminology) bliss.

The one thing that adds a patina of complexity to Daly's basically simplistic and regressive system is her use of language, her coining of new words (bore-ocracy, methodicide), her refurbishing discredited ones (hag, crone, spinster), or her retrieving archaic ones and using them for her own purposes (brewster, webster, snool).[17] For Daly, language is virtually omnipotent. Words have "radiant powers" in themselves to break through "the bonds/bars of phallocracy."[18] Daly's word-play can be entertaining or inspirational, though it can also run into adolescent self-indulgence: "This is a world made to the image of its makers, a chip off the old block/cocks, who are worshipped by the fraternal faithless as god the flasher, god the stud, and god the wholly hoax."[19]

Part of Daly's wide appeal must surely be her irreverence. It is very gratifying to some small part of every reader to see a writer with several doctorates to her credit poke fun at academic pomposity and pretentiousness. One feels sure that she, if anyone, must have the authority to do it. Unfortunately, she often seems stuck in a repetitive conflict with Catholic dogma and symbol, as if she's still trying to scandalize the Jesuits at Boston College or perhaps the nuns from high school — with the Virgin Birth analyzed as male rape fantasy or her references to "androgynous, sweet Jesus, the misbegotten and transsexed parthenogenetic daughter."[20]

Another source of her appeal is her continual use of the metaphor of the journey, a very American image, since Americans like to think of themselves as constantly on the move, both physically and spiritually. For Daly the New Frontier is Weirdward — away from patriarchal institutions/delusions to the Garden of Original Wholeness where Eve, the tree, and the snake can get along fine without Adam or God.

Daly also titillates her readers with extreme language. For her "gynocide" replaces "sexism" as an accurate description of contemporary reality."[21] Or "Will there be a second Witch-craze?"[22] she asks. What she has in mind here, it seems, is the integration of women into the professions, which she equates with the "killing of consciousness and integrity of women."[23] Thus all the women who did not "dress for success" and get into law school can at least, reading Mary Daly, console themselves: they still have their "Memory of Gynocentric Origins" intact.

Daly defines feminism as "commitment to our past and future memories of Happiness in defiance of civilization."[24] Her Vision of "Happiness" is pre-lapsarian; if only we re-member our elemental origins, "We'll Race and leap with deer and hop with rabbits. With ladybugs we'll climb tall stalks of grass. With barnacles we'll hug the rocks of seashores."[25] Such a vision of the world is supposed to make us feel "safe" for we are "at home." It's a nice wish that has a respectably ancient pedigree. Today it may sell labrys charms and butterfly earrings, but I don't think

it will permit any realistic coming to grips with some of the problems Daly herself mentions. Worse, it encourages a smug, superior withdrawal of women who accept the Daly doctrine from a world in which we are all implicated.

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Notes

1. Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1968, 1975), "Autobiographical Preface," p. 12.

2. Daly, p. 6.

3. Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), p. 6.

4. Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, p. 19.

5. Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, p. 26.

6. Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, p. 66.

7. Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, p. 42-3.

8. Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, p. 172.

9. Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978), Preface, p. xi.

10. Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*, p. 2.

11. Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*, p. 39.

12. Has any man ever coined a more contemptuous term of abuse for women?

13. Mary Daly, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), p. 5.

14. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 7.

15. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 49.

16. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 75.

17. "Webster" and "brewster" are archaic words referring to women who weave and brew. "Snool," according to Daly is a Scottish word meaning "a cringing person." As a verb it means "to reduce to submission: cow, bully." (*Pure Lust*, p. 20-21).

18. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 4.

19. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 24.

20. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 93.

21. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 320.

22. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 109.

23. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 111.

24. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 360.

25. Daly, *Pure Lust*, p. 460.

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