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PSYCHOANALYSIS, IDEOLOGY and LANGUAGE

ego under siege • new french feminism • narcissism and neo-conservatism • ideology as imaginary • beleaguered family • citizenship to the word • sexual outlaws • mis-recognized consciousness • cultural radicalism • witch on the moor • quartième groupe • discourse on desire • bourgeois épistème • reading individualism • fiction of the I • ego under siege • new french feminism • narcissism and neo-conservatism • ideology as imaginary • beleaguered family • citizenship to the word • sexual outlaws • mis-recognized consciousness • cultural radicalism • witch

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Contents

CULTURAL THEMATIC

Capitalism and the Sovereignty of Desire

It would be a poor monument, indeed, to the memory of Roland Barthes to celebrate, not writing, but consciousness "degree zero"; to deliver up to utterance a mode of knowledge which is amodal and antiseptic in character. For too long, has not *theoria* remained under the sign of a falsifiable alienation, a recorder and interpreter of the flat horizon of administered society, rather than assuming the position of confessor to executioners and victims in the slaughterhouse of "normalizing" society, to the witnesses of carnival time in high capitalism?

For that weary, restless interval between the renunciation of the positivistic "analytic" and the abandonment of the false start of late critical theory, it seemed inevitable that the categories of bourgeois society, however problematical, would continue as the vehicle for the inscription of desire onto the social body, onto society. When the world swirls in a half-dream of madness, when fiction is naturalized and then socialized as the stuff of realism, do we not have to be resigned to the sad fate of sheltering consciousness in the illusion of the facticity of the object, of grounding the claims of reason on a dramatic play of force, of power and capital, between an artifact called the State and an historical *imaginaire* termed Economy?

William James once said that consciousness is a born traitor; and I consider that this is so with regard to the recession of critical reason towards the disappearing-point of scribe, of mute flunkey, before the ensemble of everyday institutions. Consciousness flees from its basis in the silence of unuttered remembrance, from duration, to take refuge in the tidy task of assembling random jottings on the discourse of institutional conflict. The eroticism of the concept, the sensuality of Barthes' *écriture*, is repressed so as to better adapt the mutinous elements of imagination to the role of history's cipher. A geology of bourgeois society would thus reveal only a horizontal plane of analogically, not causally, related social processes — an axis stretching along the surface of our recognition which congeals in mind under the relative signs of State, Power, Ideology and Capital. But the horizontal axis of bourgeois society, Foucault's conventicle of normalizing society, has no moment of vertical eruption. Where, after all, in the discourse of normalization, surveillance and categorization — the full *coda* of administration — are there to be found even whisperings about the contingent nature of human passion, about the *Leviathan* as a shroud, a death-mask? Where in the language, the *parole*, of capitalism is there an utterance, a word or a murmuring, which by the defensive realism of its form does not seek to

repress the return of the unconscious; to hold outside the political conventicle the weeping within the body which is the ransom exacted by bourgeois society itself.

Now, in the social armistice of capitalism, have we not reached the vanishing point of human agency? And is not at least one common element in the political legacy of Marcuse and Sartre the recognition that Capital demands for its sustenance the denial of ontology, and the sequestration of desire within a general, normalizing discourse. Seemingly in this century the complexity of the life field has been simplified by the spread of the dull routines of the "hospital-theatre" — Rieff's image of society which has gone over, after Freud, to the primal of psychological man. The multiplicity, the "differentness" of social experience has been strained through the white sound of centering institutions. All eyes now turn outwards to the localization of power in the "juridical mechanism" of the State,[1] to the positioning in the market-place of rights of jurisdiction over exchange, and to the grounding of legitimation in the sphere of the socio-cultural. It is as if the universalisation of capital, of domination, however horrific, has made unproblematical the terms of discourse concerning the nature and condition of our institutional confinement. The domiciling of the classical mediations of power and money in the centering institutions of the State and Economy is now the routinized, and rationalized, alphabet of capitalism. Within the logic of this alphabet develops the critique of political economy and the equally eloquent indictments of early critical theory. Within the social grammar of capitalism, within the levelling of the unconscious in favour of the normalizing discourse of Polity and Economy, there occurs the orderly imprisonment of body, mind and desire. Weber's depiction of ascetic morality as the originating impulse of capitalism proves to be prophetic of the incarceration of the social body in a generalized systems-theoretic. Capitalism has as its secret the transparency of the operations of the Apparatus of sequestration: it unfolds before Critique as a dreamlike condition of narcissism and bestiality. And critical reason is misled by the absence of mystery, by the surfacing of desire in the form of the most banal and denotative of concretions, into the self-guilt and self-flagellation of displacement — politicians of the liberal regime beg in the streets for degradation; intellectuals invent the discourse of the crisis-ridden revolutionary subject; and even file-keepers scheme on the sly as to how the "secret" of bureaucracy might be best revealed to the mob at the door.

Before Foucault, the trial of capitalism takes place in an epistemological venue in which both parties to the case, Critique and Apologia, are ensnared as polarities of the same discourse. But now, *theoria* may be dragooned into liberation, for it is confronted with the task of following the flight of power and property, of desire, to the shadowy realm of society, of culture. In a brilliant series of essays, including the "Right of Death and Power over Life"

and "On Governmentality," Foucault suggests that the modern era is typified not only by the emergence and extension of an "apparatus of security" but by the development, since the eighteenth century, of a "double movement" of power.[2] Foucault claims that what is enigmatic in our society is the transformation of power from its original meaning as a regulatory, juridical mechanism, from the law of interdiction of the Sovereign, into a "strategic grid" of "relations of force" concerned with the administration of life — with the disciplining of the body and the surveillance of that modernist invention, the demography of "population." In the eloquence of Foucault's phrase, power "has escaped the body of the Sovereign . . . it retreats into the shadows of society": a society "equipped with an apparatus whose form is sequestration, whose aim is the constitution of labour-power, and whose instrument is the acquisition of discipline . . . ."[3] A political technology of life, of the public administration of the sexuality of the individual and of the social habits of the population, replaces the appropriative, death-dispensing, power of the state, of the Sovereign. In Foucault's terms, the "discourse of the king" dissolves and is substituted for by the discourse "of him who sets forth the norm, of him who engages in surveillance, who judges the normal from the abnormal — the discourse of the teacher, the judge, the doctor, the psychiatrist, and finally above all, the discourse of the psychoanalyist."[4] Power, as a field of force relations, takes wing from the *imaginaire* of Polity; embedding itself under the sign of surveillance, under the banner of "reality principle" in the interstices of society.

The flight of power beyond its institutional basis in the "juridical being" of the State anticipates the inscription of power as a "lived relation" on the body of the individual, and through the "norm" on the social body itself. A change in the meaning of power is necessary. In a lecture delivered at the Collège de France, Foucault traces the elements of a re-reading of power: a discourse on power which would free the concept from its grounding in the juridical mechanism, from its reduction to appropriation, and from its subordination to a mode of production.[5] The thematic of radical consciousness, of consciousness which infiltrates beyond the logic of the discourse of normalization, has to do with deciphering the ensemble of knowledge-power-body. Following Foucault, the field of domination, of sequestration and surveillance, has now shifted its "sitings" to the ambiguous realm of human sexuality, the beleaguered family, the "great forgetting" of madness, and the disciplining of labour. More harshly, the Gulag of the Soviet Union has been transposed into the everyday "carceral institutions" of the West: Bentham's Panopticon reveals liberal democracy to be true only in the moment of its inversion. And as Barthes has testified even the Word has now been imprisoned. Power, the normalizing power of the discourse of the human sciences, has fled from its sanctuary in the prohibitions of Law; property, as

anticipated in the conception of "possessive individualism," has also been inscribed in desire on the body, and in pain on the labouring being.

Reason must cease its slumber. Capitalism, following the flight of power and property beyond the vocabulary of State and Market to the more serious, and more dangerous, realm of society, is not caught up in a dramatic advance. Capitalism, this ensemble of relations of appropriation and prohibition, returns to its primal, to the sovereignty of desire. And desire, in the insistent eroticism of the field, the mediation, of power-property speaks the language, the lullaby, of domination: it is the tongue of macho administration, the fleshy texture of subordination under the sign of the performance principle, the loving torment of capitalist life. And power itself speaks; it whispers from within the body; it is the censor which gazes inward to block the reminiscences of the unconscious and which dictates outwards as conscience. Foucault says that ours is a society of the celebration of the confessional; if this is so then the confessional is, ironically, conducted through the screen of power-property, once inscribed on the surface of population.

To discover the nature of the confession of culture, we have initiated in this journal an occasional section dealing with the thematic of cultural interpretations. Following our initiative of last issue in which there was an investigation of the form and content of the moving image, the contemporary film, this number contains a major review section which surveys recent publications organized around the theme of "Psychoanalysis, Ideology and Language." While the journal has never been the partisan of any one viewpoint, the thematic and research strategy involved in the review section of this issue are further illuminations of the relation of the unconscious, ideology and utterance in a time when capitalism comes under, once again, the open sway of desire.

Arthur Kroker

Notes

1. Here I have reference to Michael Foucault's thesis that power, in its first inscription on society, is sited in the institution of law, in the legislative utterance of the Sovereign.
2. See particularly, Michael Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1978, pp. 135-155; and also, M. Foucault, "On Governmentality," *Ideology and Consciousness*, 6, Autumn, 1979.
3. Meaghan Morris and Paul Patton, editors, *Michael Foucault: Power, Truth, Strategy*, Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979, p. 64.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
5. *Op. cit.*, "Power and Norm: Notes," pp. 59-66.

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PSYCHOANALYSIS, IDEOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

"WITH SUCH PRIVACIES CAN A MAN FEEL WELL?"

Jon Robert Schiller

—such a price
The Gods exact for a song:
To become what we sing.
—Arnold

I

For those who have labored in relative isolation with the Freudian texts, convinced that within them lay the key to the phantasy otherwise known as political reality, the works reviewed in this section have had a liberating effect. Support for such labors has been denied by university and psychoanalytic institute alike, the one claiming the irrelevancy of the subject, and the other rushing headlong to justify that charge. Until the recent appearance on these shores of works by Lacan, the Birmingham School, Althusser, etc., the effort to understand Freud felt like a symptom — a private system of discourse inaccessible to the rational elements of social life.

The "return to Freud" has taken place in the space left by two long-standing theoretical lacunae: the absence of an explicit social discourse in psychoanalytic thought, and the subjective element bracketed by Marx. It is of special note that repairing the former has taken place by interpolation rather than extrapolation. Enough harm had been done to psychoanalytic thought by the Fromms of the world tacking a Marxist humanism onto a desexualized Freudianism. In general, the radical elements in psychoanalysis had nearly been forgotten under the onslaught of that diverse crew of social theorists and analysts whose expropriations threatened to effect a new historical repression; the idea of the unconscious was close to reacquiring the quality of unconsciousness. I refer here to Horney, Hartmann, Mahler, Erikson, etc. In the United States the list is endless.

Following upon the psychoanalytic method, the interpretation rather than revision of Freud is now dispelling the amnesia of the last forty years,

discovering in the original texts the latent social meaning. The most significant ally in this interpretation has come from the science of linguistics, in conjunction with forceful renunciations of the common sense "discoveries" of adaptation and individuation.

Two parallel paths have been followed in reaching the social: the one (owing its origins to the Frankfurt School) has emphasized psychoanalysis as the study of socialization, disclosing the deepest structures where the internalization of social formations are embedded; the other consists in turning the analytic method onto the last vestige of human narcissism remaining after Freud's exposé of the ego as not master of its own house. Far from being a master, we now hear that the ego is a slave, as the final remnants of Kantian presuppositions are expunged from the theory. At the risk of exaggeration, it may be said that Freud's work settled on distortions regarding the object-world, and the ego is more or less taken as a given. In this schema, the fragile but nevertheless unified ego defends itself by adopting measures which work over reality, altering it in accordance with the antipodal demands of danger and desire.

The French, led by Lacan and fired by his relentless attack on ego-psychology, have subjected the ego itself to analysis, and found its own internal integrity as chimerical as its capacity to reality-test the external world. The sources of this shifted focus are manifold: from Freud's own work on narcissism and melancholia, never fully incorporated into the second topography; from an examination of psychotic, rather than neurotic, structures; and from Lacan's familiarity with Surrealist thought.

From the Marxist side as well, a re-examination along the same lines has been taking place: toward a theory of the subject. The associative link between the Freudian and Marxist endeavors consists in the new formulations regarding the processes and logic of *ideology*. It may sound curious that the register of material social relations should be sought at the level of subjectivity, but it was precisely owing to an ignorance concerning this admixture that European Marxists felt obliged to understand psychoanalysis. Ideology refers to the manner in which ideas are lived — in other words, a subject matter properly belonging to the field of psychology. It is no longer possible to believe that the individual simply reflects forces acting on him from without. This conception should have been laid to rest the day Freud resolved his anguish over the seduction theory by discovering the psychical reality into which the practical reality of parental sexuality had been transposed in the thought processes of the child. Here, in a nutshell, lies the problematic of the subject in its relation to social formations: that such formations, when internalized, take on a life of their own. Thus at the level of meaning, it is the subject who is to be brought under scrutiny as the cipher for comprehending the ways in which the outer world is articulated in practice.

II

Is psychoanalysis capable of this comprehension? In order to approximate an answer to this question, I want to take leave from discussions *about* psychoanalysis and turn instead to an explication from within. In this way it will be finally ascertained whether the special logic of analytic thought can be employed as an instrument to reveal the ideological subject. As for the theory of the ideological field itself, I will make use of Althusser's formulations:

(a) that the ideological level is "relatively autonomous" in relation to the economic structure. In other words, the former has a history of its own which cannot be reduced to economics. Though the concept "relative autonomy" is remarkably vague, it does serve to undermine the silly, but persistent, dismissal of psychoanalysis on the grounds that its findings are independent of material determination. I will propose, without arguing further here, that relative ideological autonomy derives from the relation of the subject to its own unconscious — i.e., to the autonomous realm within. The unconscious is autonomous in a two-fold sense: first, in that it understands experience according to its own laws, and thus cannot be determined in any straightforward way by social reality; and second, it is outside the control of the conscious ego. Nevertheless, the unconscious is deeply implicated in the processes and consequences of socialization, as I will point out below;

(b) ideology inheres less in our ideas about reality, than in our "lived relation" to it, designated by Althusser as "Imaginary." It is not, as in the classical Marxist understanding, a relationship to reality mediated by false ideas; rather, ideology inheres in the lived, imaginary relationship to the real relations. The exemplary model of such relationships is one whose actual signification is power, but which is experienced and lived as if it were authority. The real, "first order" relationship is re-presented in consciousness and lived out (practiced) as a "second order" relationship. This *practical* transformational process is, I believe, the same as the preconscious *ideational* process which subjects unacceptable unconscious ideas to a "secondary revision" as a condition of conscious recognition. Such ideas undergo the tripartite revision of *rationalization, justification* and *naturalization.* In the same fashion, the reality of social domination remains a secret, and is experienced instead as rational, just and natural.

It is impossible to understand Althusser's refinement of the Marxist concept of ideology — characterized by one author as "the first new . . . conception of ideology since Marx and Nietzsche"[2] — without reference to the division of the psyche into conscious and unconscious systems wherein ideological transvaluation originates and is sustained. The contents of the unconscious are elaborations of two themes, violence (from which power is derived) and sex. These themes are *re-presented* to consciousness; that is to

say, they are *revised* in a manner which is acceptable to the ego. In this way, lust becomes "affection," and murderous impulses are transformed into "respect." It is in this sense that Freud defined ego-consciousness as a "protective barrier," shielding the ego from the recognition of danger.

Suddenly we come to understand the effects of this structuration as it influences the experience of the external world. The ego represents to consciousness that world in the same manner that unconscious desire is represented. The dual processes of repression and revision, first called into play as a defense against internal danger, are now turned outward. Instead of being altered through action, reality is repressed and revised internally, and then experienced along the lines laid down by this modification.

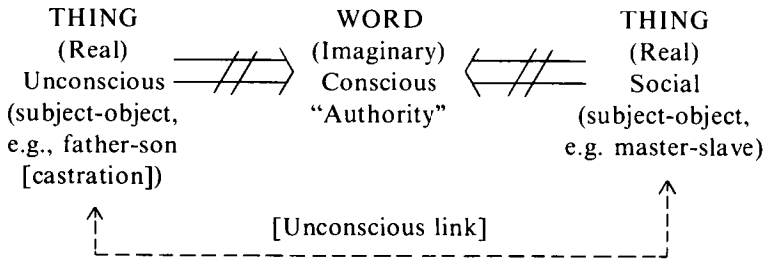
By way of contrast, note that in Freud's work misrecognition was a *direct* result of unconscious influence, where spurious identifications were made between unconscious materials and the material of reality. Thus the perception of reality dangers, and the defense against them, were, in effect, created by the unconscious memory of danger and did not inhere in reality itself. (The archetypal expression of this line of thought is contained in Freud's discussions of the fear of death which is but a derivative of the unconscious fear of castration.) In my reading, the emphasis shifts from unconscious *contents* to defensive *structures,* first acquired by the ego as a protection against its unconscious phantasies. Having learned to defend itself internally through repression and revision, the ego now employs the same tactics in its external recognitions. In thinking of *origins* as the determinant of misrecognition, it is to structural rather than substantive elements that we turn. The beginning of consciousness is the recognition of danger (see below) and its subsequent repression. The after-effects follow the same lines laid down by these origins.

Two other elements are implicated in the establishment and maintenance of the ideological level. I have just described the effects of the original structuration which, as it were, turns around to face the world — much as the child changes from a narcissist to a social being. But it is, of course, also the case, that the social world is constituted by relations of violence and sex, nuclear elements in social institutions as diverse as family and factory. The unconscious, which in any case "stretches feelers to the external world"[3] and forges the most improbable links between its own repressed material and the external world, recognizes the versimilitude between its own content and the content of social relations. Repression, Freud noted, is applied not only on the original material, but to its derivatives as well — on the elements of the world brought into association with that material.

The second element establishes a difference between the operations performed on the dangers emanating from the two different sources. In the relations between the conscious and unconscious systems the distortions are

private: the subject creates its own transformational grammar as a way of laundering unconscious memories and thus making them acceptable to consciousness. It is for this reason that dream interpretation depends on the associations of the dreamer himself and cannot be made from outside, or by reference to a universal dream index. In the relations between consciousness and the external world, *the transformational grammar is already pre-formed in the linguistic structures of the culture.* The "work" which in nocturnal and neurotic states must be done by the individual is, in waking life, performed by language. Thus, the latent (i.e., actual) content of social relations is revised through linguistic re-definition.

Freud provided some clues to the nature of this process in a few random remarks on the interplay between "thing-presentations" and "word-presentations." Thing-presentations refer to the pre-linguistic content of the unconscious, the relations among persons and objects. Thus the language of dreams is contained in dramatic scenes, where words themselves are treated as things. The language of consciousness is made up of words, and it is by means of word-presentations and word-presentations alone that consciousness comes to "understand" the relations among things. Thing-presentations — actual social relations — are presented to consciousness linguistically, and in this fashion transformed. Moreover, there is, as I have just noted, a secret affinity between the thing-presentations of the unconscious and the thing-presentations of the external world, and this too is filtered by language. The structure appears to take this form:



(c) finally, ideology refers to the creation of the subject — the "interpellation" of the individual such that he *experiences himself* and not only the world in ways dictated by the ideological order. It is here that the contribution of Lacan plays the greatest role.

I mentioned earlier that Freud never fully analyzed the ego, though he lay the groundwork in several of the metapsychological papers.[4] Lacan made this final analysis, and in so doing constructed a bridge between the intrasubjective and the ideological. This bridge consists of three supports — the phases passed through by the ego in the process of its constitution:

(1) the *mirror phase* when the ego is falsely recognized as a unitary entity by identification with a counterpart — most clearly understood by reference to a mirror imago. This is not yet the subject but its foundation, evoked in alienation where the ego only discovers itself in a reflection from without. Primary narcissism is the product of this stage — a delusionary idealization of the self, created as a defense against the previous state of affairs when self is experienced on one hand, as identical to an other, and on the other, as fragmented, a "body-in-pieces" (*corps morcelé*);

(2) the *imaginary phase* when the narcissistic structure is invested in object relations. Here, the nascent subject undergoes a second alienation in the dependence on others for its sense of self-hood. Object-relations theory has documented this phase in describing the initial merger of self- and object-representations.

My own understanding of this phase is that it is marked by the processes of identification, set into motion by the infantile psyche as a way of denying difference and object-loss. Stated briefly, the infant's narcissism is belied by the presence of the other on whom the child depends. The paradox is resolved by merging the idealized self-representation with the imago of the object, and the ego is thus displaced: it becomes for itself, the other. In classical terms, the Imaginary explicates the infant's Oedipal "attachment" to the mother, not as an object-relation per se, but as a movement to reify the self via the psychical association with her. While this may sound somewhat abstruse and hypothetical, it should be acknowledged that adult love relationships clearly repeat their infantile origins: love is both a verification of narcissism, and a wound to it — and in every case, involves the incorporation of the object into the ego;

(3) the *symbolic phase* at which point the psyche is split into two systems (conscious and unconscious) and the subject is born. As a moment in the Oedipal drama, the Symbolic results from the recognition by and of the father; that is to say, it is the time when the child represses its imaginary relation to the mother and assumes its rightful place in the family structure. That which was formerly conscious — the identification with the mother, the ego as other — is now rendered unconscious *and in the space thus created linguistic substitutions are imposed*: the child takes the "name-of-the-Father" and becomes an "I," misrecognizing himself as separate, unique and free.

There is scarcely anything new in the idea that language, or the acquisition of symbols, ideologizes the subject and forces him to comprehend social formations through filters of mystification. Lacan has penetrated this simplistic and abstract notion: first by way of an analysis of language itself, and second by analyzing the ego in its relation to language.

In examining the structure of language, Lacan discovered a striking similarity to the structure of unconscious ideation (primary process thought).

Consciousness is ruled by linguistic representations which employ, in the creation of meaning, metaphor and metonymy — the secondary process counterparts to condensation and displacement. In the case of both the primary and secondary modalities, the actual referent (i.e., the "thing" — relations) is lost, subsumed by the processes which revise it as a pre-condition for conscious recognition. The latent content of perception is worked over, translated into metaphors and metonyms, and only then does it become manifest as "meaning," in the same way that the latent content of a dream must be subjected to condensation and displacement.

Now wherever there is a similtude of this type, it is assumed that a substitutive process is at work, and that the secondary manifestation represents a safe mode of gratification. Unconscious thought, falling under the sign of Desire, gives way to repression, and its place is taken by social discourse. The latter is to its predecessor as a wife is to her husband's mother: a substitute sharing characteristics with the original such that attention, belief and faith characterize the derivative.[5] Again we are faced with the realization that it is not the substitution of objects, emphasized by Freud, which holds the key to the process of misrecognition, or even the substitution of words for objects, but *the substitution of structures.* I might add in this regard the intriguing notion that critical social theory consists of interpretation in the technical sense of the term: the re-construction of latent structures which have undergone censorship at the hands of social discourse.

III

Up to this point, I have only discussed the creation of social subjectivity, but we have heard nothing of the subject who bears that subjectivity. We know from psychoanalysis that behind every act of mystification lies a narcissistic component, for which the mystification is in some way a defense. So it should come as no surprise to learn that the roots of ideological misrecognition lie in a narcissistic defense as well. Or to put the matter differently, under what conditions could the pale substitute of language supplant the play of unconscious desire? Why accept this substitution — and not only accept it, but celebrate it as the instrument of attention, faith and belief — in a word, of meaning?

The answer derives from the original sequence of events ending in the incorporation of the Symbolic — at which point psychic development has been foreclosed and a subject reproduced. Recall that the mirror and imaginary phases were invoked as means of constituting the self in defiance of actual experience (*corps morcelé*, object-loss). The Symbolic is a continuation of this defensive process in the service of narcissism, but now social rather than private materials are utilized. Language is forced on the individual and

seized by him, and a cover is thus created which seems to unify the opposing demands of self-love and of Law.

I refer here to the creation of the "ego." It is necessary to remember that Freud never employed the Latin sublimation; rather he spoke simply of the "*Ich*" ("I") which Lacan has seen for what it is: a word. Thus the first instance of linguistic acquisition continues the previous phases while simultaneously dispossessing them. "I" signifies the desire of the mirror phase, and enforces a breach in the imaginary unity with the mother, placing in that breach the symbolic self.

In this constitutive instance of ego-consciousness, the individual colludes with culture in accepting a linguistic substitute for desire — a substitution, it must be said, which wholly confounds the narcissistic impulse that it seems to objectify. For not only is the impulse displaced onto a mere symbol, but in the same act the "I" is situated in relation to other "I" 's — it is, in Althusser's word, "interpellated" into the structure of social relations such that the subject is defined by its relation to other selves. To speak the word "I" is to unconsciously acknowledge subordination. Thus for Lacan the acqusition of the "I" and of *le nom-du-père* are indistinguishable.

The foregoing represents a double radicalization of Freud: first, by subjecting the ego itself to the same deep analysis that Freud accomplished in dissecting the relations between the ego and the forces acting on it; and second, by discovering in the course of this analysis the social constitution of the ego. It is now necessary to disabuse ourselves of the notion held dearly by radical humanists (e.g., Laing), ego-psychologists, vulgar Marxists and the like, of an ego, pristine and autonomous in its origins, but invaded by the external world. Instead, a more complex and alarming picture emerges, revealing a psyche protecting itself from internal and external dangers by incorporating into its own structure the structure of social reality. One is still free to conceive of this reality as an invading army, but it must be borne in mind that the troops are greeted with open arms.

I believe that my summary, read in conjunction with other papers included in this Section (Peltz, Goldberg and Sekoff, Wolff von Amerongen), represents an approximation to the long sought after synthesis of Marxist and Freudian studies. Still, we must be alert to the danger — seemingly inherent in the structuralist style of thought — of describing the subject in ways that remain universal and abstract: there is, for example, nothing in my analysis to distinguish the ideological constitution of the subject in one culture from its constitution in any other. In all cultures the subject presumably is called into being by language, and willingly answers that call as an alternative to dissolution, merger and castration. What is there in our particular comprehension of the ideological subject to render a distinction? What is it that specifies not only the content, but also the structure of interpenetration

between the ideational formations accompanying bourgeois-capitalist culture and the psyche?

The subject has always and everywhere been enacted in the manner described above, but this enactment is now eclipsed by totally unique forms of mystification. Prior to the bourgeois *epistème*, the truth of the subject's condition was inherent in communal mythology, and the power of the Word was recognized in religious practice. The term "ideology" does not apply to this condition or practice, but to their wholesale mystification. The "individual," as Foucault has shown, did not exist until modern times, and it was only at the moment of his enunciation, occurring concurrently with the demise of the Word, that ideology came into being. Thus Althusser's formula — ideology as the imaginary relation to real relations — applies only to capitalist social formations. Before their rise, real relations, mediated through mythology, were embedded in experience.

Two prominent features of liberal ideation and practice are brought to bear on this point: individualism, and the unprecendented hegemony of words over things. By ways that I am not yet able to specify, the hegemony derives from the technological mediation of the relation to nature. Or so it seems that phenomena surely related to technological mastery give evidence of linguistic omnipotence: the legalization of existence; bureaucracy as the dominant mode of organization; the penetration of media into the most intimate recesses of private life; the shifting balance between blue- and white-collar jobs; and the rise of a psychology prescribing the efficacy of speech at the expense of action. It is as if a mass of verbiage had interposed itself between nature — human and otherwise — and the experience of it.

Nowhere is the displacement of the Real by language more influential than in the reification of the individual. Individualism reproduces the imaginary constitution of the I, *articulating the repression of its unconscious foundation as social discourse*; whereas, in pre-scientific discourse it was not the sign of repression (the I) but the repressed which found public articulation. In our own time, the repressed only makes itself known by way of private symptoms, so firm has the split become between the actual foundation of the I, and its superficial layer of consciousness.

"I" is the social word *nonpareil*, eluding the "we" for which it is a screen, and thus reproducing social determination by repressing the consciousness of it. Now we come to understand the meaning intrinsic to the *repression of* the Oedipus-complex, in contrast to its content. For it is not, as Freud thought, the content which is its distinguishing element, but the repression of the social interpellation signified by that content; to wit, paternal power transvalued by reaction-formation into a liberated "I." It is again useful to mark off this state of affairs from other cultural formations where the interpellation is everywhere acknowledged, albeit in hidden ways: by the sense of *community*,

by the recognition of social *hierarchy*, and by the conscious submission to *authority*. Bourgeois culture fills in the lacunae created by repression through the presentation of three fictional *idées fixes* which effect, like a symptom, the reversal of social consciousness: the *individual, equality* and *rational organization*. Cultures of freedom thus derive their unprecedented social control from the repression of the very idea of social existence. As Freud noted, the power of the unconscious lies in the characteristic of unconsciousness itself, where determinant forces act beyond the reach of awareness.

It is my understanding that this psychological analysis explains the paradoxical observation of Tocqueville, inexplicable in the sociological terms that can only describe it; namely, the conjunction of individualism with social despotism. The paradox is normally explained away by the argument that the idea of individualism is simply a cover for the reality of control. Tocqueville was not so naive: he understood that individualism was more than an idea — it was the central character in the structure of *mores*, or what is termed here "lived experience." "Fetters and horsemen," he wrote

> were the coarse instruments which tyranny formerly employed; but the civilization of our age has refined the ideas of despotism, which seemed however to have been sufficiently developed before. The excesses of monarchical power had devised a variety of physical means of oppression: the democratic republics of the present day have rendered it entirely an affair of the mind, as that will which it is intended to coerce. Under the absolute sway of an individual despot, the body was attacked in order to subdue the soul; and the soul escaped the blows which were directed against it, and rose superior to the attempt; but such is not the course adopted by tyranny in democratic republics; there the body is left free, and the soul is enslaved.[6]

I have shown psychoanalytically the sense in which ideology is understood as lived experience. As noted earlier, Althusser also characterizes the ideological level as relatively autonomous. This autonomy must be understood as the result of psychic dynamics which can only partially reflect the level of economic determination. Stuart Hall has suggested, by way of Max Weber, that the mediation between psychical and economic levels takes place at the locus of *character-structure* which is *homologously rather than causally related* to the material domain.[7]

The representative character-structure of advanced capitalism is, as I have written elsewhere, the narcissistic disposition,[8] whose most pronounced

clinical attributes are the defensive structures erected against the social properties of dependence and intimacy. For developmental reasons that need not be reviewed here, the unconscious representation of social relations are considered dangerous, and are defended against internally by means of repression and splitting, and externally by the maintenance of detachment. In the place of such relations, a grandiose self-concept is formed which exercises a hyper-vigilance to threats from without. So, in addition to the dangers of intimacy and dependence, envy occupies a considerable portion of the character-structure, since qualities possessed by others can at any moment belie the illusion of the grandiose self. Narcissism thus presents itself as the psychopathological metaphor for individualism — the apotheosis of the fictional "I," defending itself on all sides from the forces which rule it.

In Weber's schema, the Puritan character-type — objectified in routinized activity — found an "elective affinity" with the regulated economic activity necessary to early capitalist development. We need to ask what similar affinities might exist between narcissism and late capitalist development: in other words, how the lived experience of the individualistic ideological field conforms to capitalist production. Besides the mystification of social control, several such affinities come easily to mind:

Consumption. As words come to replace things in the wholesale supercession of the unconscious by consciousness, so there is a new register of thing-presentations in the form of consumer objects. Advertising makes it quite clear that these objects are conceived as appurtenances to the self, and thus they must be thought of as weapons in the ego's defensive armour. It is indeed astonishing that a social product, mass-produced and consumed, could be incorporated as the signification of the ego's integrity — but this process, after all, only recapitulates the process by which the ego was originally formed;

Bureaucracy. Bureaucratic organization demands of the subjects who inhabit it that they not be emotionally beholden to persons, offices or the organization itself, and that decisions be made on rational grounds alone. Of course, this ideal is systematically contradicted by the intense emotional investment of the participants. But this investment is not to the organization as a social formation, but to one's position. The genius of bureaucracy is that order and control are maintained, rather than opposed, by self-worship;

Envy. For reasons of both competition and consumption, envy is an important economic attribute, and one which comes naturally to selves signified by relations of *position,* rather than by *connection* to other selves;

Technology. Phillip Slater has usefully argued the connection between narcissism and technological power, showing that the latter objectifies omnipotent phantasies of control;[9]

Cultural idealization. Individualism itself becomes a source of cultural pride, often expressed as horror toward communal modes of organization.[10] We see now that this pride is not simply an identification with the culture, but in a more profound sense it represents *the* important psychical interest: the belief in the reality of the individual ego. It is in order to maintain the deepest beliefs regarding the self that the irreality of cultural individualism, and the particular cultures which embody it, are so vigorously defended.

The cultural psyche depicted in these pages exists in a state of contradication: its ideological constitution now holds the truth of social determination and the illusion of individual freedom in an uneasy relationship. As long as the social determination is consigned to the unconscious, it exists only as a danger which is the meaning attached to all ideas thus maintained. At other times and in other places, social power presents itself as the collective truth of the human condition; but at the present historical juncture, it is only the repressed which bespeaks this truth. It does not take Jeremiah to foresee that the forces of production will soon be limited in their capacity to preserve the illusion of individualism, nor can the repressed be secured in that state forever. It shall return as a demand for collective articulation. Whether this return takes a fascist form, or whether it expresses the Marxist vision is not, however, a question amenable to psychological analysis. This analysis can only lay bare the inner forces at work: their manifestation as political reality is the proper field of praxis.

IV

The following papers, despite their apparent diversity, elucidate the unconscious foundations of the ego, for which its surface unity and facility at adaptation and competence are but defenses receiving verification from the ideology of individualism. Thus Hummel's review, while seemingly an account of the theoretical struggles in France, evoked by the discovery of the de-centered ego, implicitly suggests the intriguing notion that there is a quality within the nature of the discovery itself necessarily lending itself to those struggles. Having de-constructed the agent of psychic unity, one would hardly expect a theoretical unity to arise out of the product: the uncovering of the heterogeneous ego seeks revenge in heterogeneous theorizing.

Three papers (Marcil-Lacoste on Irigaray, Melman on French feminist thought, and Adams on homosexuality) address the topic of sexuality. Lacan has been accused of de-sexualizing psychoanalysis; for example, sublimating the penis into a Phallus — and in general, subsuming sexuality by language. The works reviewed on feminism and homosexuality, coming out of a Lacanian perspective, redress Lacan's impulse toward sublimation. It is becoming increasingly evident that a major portion of the unconscious ego is

not so much the repression of sexuality itself as Freud tended to argue, but of particular forms; namely, the feminine and the homosexual. To paraphrase Melman's astute formula: the sexuality of the oppressed sexual classes is the royal road to the unconscious foundations of bourgeois culture.

Peltz's paper introduces a second line of advance for bridging the intrapsychic and the social: namely, in the analysis of those intermediary social formations which assimilate the individual to the social order. Owing in part to the rigidity of contemporary psychoanalytic discourse, and also to the unfortunate history of family therapy — now little more than a compilation of barely understood (and hence dangerous) clinical techniques — the psychofamilial impulses of inner life inevitably play themselves out in social consciousness through processes that remain mysterious. The difficulty of Peltz's project is indicated by the necessity to synthesize four separate strands of thought: the family as a system, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and structuralism. The urgency with which this project must be pursued is laid out at the conclusion of Harned's paper on Coward and Ellis, at the same time bringing us to the topic of praxis: that a psychoanalytic/Marxist praxis is most appropriate at the level of groups where regression to the psychofamilial in blatantly pre-Oedipal forms is endemic. The gap in the Marxist theory of consciousness and ideology necessarily appears in socialist praxis where group efforts at consciousness-raising are routinely sabotaged by the regressive pull toward archaic, unconscious structures. New conceptions of praxis must be capable of contending with this danger through the comprehension and interpretation of such structures.

The review of Lasch addresses many of these questions from the other side: namely, the psychical and social forms assumed by what I have termed the repression of our social constitution. The formation erected as a defence is narcissism, a character-type perfectly suited to the maintenance of late capitalist social disintegration. Wolff von Amerongen's paper on Lacan summarizes the work most influential in building bridges between psychoanalysis and structuralism, and from which Althusser in particular has derived great insights. Goldberg's and Sekoff's exegesis presents us with a history of the understanding of ideology, carefully detailing the gaps in that understanding, and pointing the way toward closing them.

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Notes

1. Phillip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therepeutic: The Uses of Faith after Freud*, New York and Evanston: Harper & Row Publishers/Harper Torchbooks, 1968, p. 70. My essay and those by Peltz, Goldberg and Sekoff, Melman, Wolff von Amerongen, and Harned are, in part, the fruits of an intellectual collective, The Sunday Group. An additional member of the Group, Michel Roublev, is represented in these pages by his editorial advice and assistance.

2. Fredric Jameson, "Imaginary and Symbolic in Lacan: Marxism, Psycholanalytic Criticism, and the Problem of the Subject," *Yale French Studies*, No. 55/56, pp. 393-394.

3. Sigmund Freud, "A Note Upon the 'Mystic Writing-Pad,'" (1925*e*) *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XIX, James Strachey, ed. and trans., London: The Hogarth Press, p. 231. Hereafter references to the *Standard Edition* will be designated by "*S.E.*"

4. Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914*c*), *S.E.* XIV; "Instincts and their Vicissitudes (1915*c*), *S.E.*, XIV; "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917*e*), *S.E.* XIV; *The Ego and the Id* (1923*b*), *S.E.* XIX; "Splitting of the Ego in the Process of Defence" (1940*e*), *S.E.* XXIII.

5. The prerequisite for attention, belief and faith is that the objects thus endowed are derivatives of unconscious memories: every object finding is an object-refinding. See Freud, "Negation" (1925*h*), *S.E.* XIX, pp. 234ff.

6. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Vol. I, trans. Henry Reeve and with a critical appaisal by John Stuart Mill, New York: Schocken Books, 1961, pp. 310-311.

7. Stuart Hall, "The Hinterland of Science: Ideology and the 'Sociology of Knowledge,'" in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *On Ideology*, London: Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., 1978, pp. 16-17.

8. Jon Robert Schiller, "The Political Psychology of Narcissism" (Xerox, 1978); and "The Illusion of a Future," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring/Summer, 1979), 118-120.

9. Phillip Slater, *Earthwalk*, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc./A Bantam Book, 1975, *passim*.

10. The dread of communalism pre-dates its cold war expression. Michael Rogin (*Fathers and Sons: Andrew Jackson and the Subjugation of the American Indians*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975) and Richard Slotkin (*Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860*, Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1974) have documented this dread in the white reaction to Indian social organization, thus implicitly indicating a psycho-social foundation rather than a superficial political one.

Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory/Revue canadienne de théorie politique et sociale, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring-Summer/Printemps-Eté, 1980).

IDEOLOGY AND THE QUESTION OF THE SUBJECT

Peter Goldberg and Jed Sekoff

Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *On Ideology*, London: Hutchinson & Co., 1978, pp. 265.[1]

The essence of Marx's project was the development of a critical method capable of unmasking the opacity of social relations under capitalism. Critical thought faces the task, in Marx's words, of "deciphering the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secrets of our social products." Nowhere is the opacity of social relations so dense, its secrets so deep, than in the shrouded relationship of the subject to the social formation. Marx situates the starting point for an understanding of human agency in his insistence that social and subjective existence must be seen as indissolubly connected elements of historical-material processes. Both the social and the subjective are materially constituted entities of multiple determination, inseparably wedded, yet with relatively distinguishable characteristics. This position challenges that idealism which seeks to place individuals beyond the ken of social processes, proclaiming for them a secular egoism, and divorcing "human essence" from history and the material world.

Yet a theorisation of subjectivity remained in the shadows of Marx's thought. Aware of this, Marx left cryptic notes in the *Grundrisse* of topics for future investigation, including the following speculative title: "Forms of the state and forms of consciousness in relation to the relations of production and circulation, legal relations, family relations." Unfortunately, the burden of the economics prevented him from embarking on such explorations. If dialectical materialism situates the terrain of subjectivity, it has as yet failed to map this terrain, a failure that has produced some unfortunate consequences in Marxist theory and practice. Instead of working through with Marx a basis for a theory of subjectivity, many subsequent thinkers — not least the doomed interpreters of the Second International — vulgarised Marx's conception of social relations, obliterating the problematic of the subject by means of economic reductionism. The tragic failure of the communes in 1919, along with the cataclysm of fascist triumphs, indicted Marxist theory and practice, demanding among other things an explanation of the constitution of the

subject, revolutionary or not. Much of subsequent Marxist scholarship in this century revolves around this challenge, from Lukács, the Frankfurt School, and the aesthetic debates of the 1930's involving the likes of Brecht and Benjamin; to the post-war revisionist, existentialist, new left and structuralist movements. The most promising of these approaches have looked to a fuller reading of Marx, and to Freud for an explication of the psychic roots of the subject and a science of subjectivity that would not be constrained within the strict parameters of political economy.

Various attempts at synthesizing the theoretical models of Marx and Freud have met with frequent and often well founded criticism, and to date no enduring, viable synthesis has emerged. It is our conviction, however, that the force and relevance of the thought of Marx and Freud is such that their work constitutes the foundation of any relevant exploration of the subject and the social formation. Such a project would look first to a re-examination of Marx's mature theory of ideology which can be discerned in particular in *Das Kapital.* This reading suggests the intersection of ideology with the constitution of the individual subject. Ideology and subjectivity are implicated with one another in those processes of misrecognition in which the complex real relations of social life are taken to be simple, natural relations; and in which the socially constituted subject takes itself to be a naturally given individual. In other words, ideology obscures both the actual determinants of social relations *and* the actual sources of subjective constitution. By specifying the psychical operations involved in the constitution and maintenance of ideological subjectivity, psychoanalysis can contribute significantly to an understanding of ideological mystification (and hence reproduction) of the social relations of production.

The specific domain of ideology lies in what Marx termed the "superstructure," the realm of phenomenal forms and symbolic relations. The specific operation of ideology consists in the substitution, at the level of psychical processes, of symbolic relations for real relations; its specific function: the transfiguration of concrete social relations, through symbolic displacement, into lived ideological relations which effectively serve to reproduce the existing social relations. It is in this superstructural realm of lived symbolic relations that subjectivity is located and constituted. And it is on this plane, we believe, that the Freudian reading must be engaged in order to fully comprehend the meaning of subjectivity and the workings of ideology.

* * *

On Ideology represents the work of a group of scholar/practitioners at the University of Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in England. The work of the Centre consists in the investigation of sexual,

cultural, political-economic, linguistic and other social practices in western capitalist societies. *On Ideology* is the collaborative outcome of a working group on the topic. The essays in the book survey and critique the theories of several European thinkers — Lukács, Gramsci, Althusser, Poulantzas, Lacan and Kristeva — as they relate to the question of ideology. Through careful and critical analysis, the authors unravel the difficulties associated with the theorisation of the social formation in its complexity, illuminating and stressing the importance of a thorough understanding of both social and subjective formation.

This unpretentious book serves several purposes. First, it presents in readable, concise, but critical form a selection of the main theoretical contributions to the contemporary area of ideology. Second, it represents a fruitful area of English investigation into subjectivity and social formation which, while critically receptive to the contributions of (predominantly French) structuralism, nevertheless retains an attachment to the English tradition of humanist materialism. Third, it illustrates that there remains a barrier preventing thinkers in this area from entering into a theorisation of the role of psychical factors in the workings of ideology and the social formation. Despite the recognition given to the importance of subjective factors in this book and elsewhere, very little specification of these factors takes place. Like so many working in the area of ideology and subjectivity, these authors employ, albeit critically, the currency of structuralist rather than psychoanalytic thought wherever the Marxist paradigm appears to require supplementation.

Our purpose in this review is to trace in summary form the parameters of the problematic of ideology, drawn successfully in the pages of this book; and then to attempt to break the barrier and enter into some preliminary uses of psychoanalytic theory as it might inform the theory of ideology and thereby also the theory of the subject in the social formation.

On Ideology

Stuart Hall begins the collection of essays with "The Hinterland of Science: Ideology and the 'Sociology of Knowledge'" a history of the concept "ideology." One lineage of the term can be traced from its inception with the late 18th-century French Ideologues, through the Hegelian project in which the study of ideology becomes the study of Objective Mind, to Lukács' study of class consciousness. The work of Lukács, says Hall, "marks out one of the seminal points of confluence between a certain kind of Marxism and a certain kind of historicism — both deeply coloured by their Hegelian moment of inspiration" (p. 14). Karl Mannheim and Lucien Goldmann share this

epistemology, with its tendency to idealise the human subject as a unified consciousness and society as a unified totality.

Hall identifies this conception of society as expression of mind as precisely that which is departed from in Marx's conception of a disjointed, *complex* social formation, made up of different levels which exhibit relative autonomy, without any necessary correspondence. Following Althusser, Hall recognises, as do all the authors in this book, that these relatively autonomous levels of the social formation are determined "in the last instance" by the economic infrastructure, but that each level, including the ideological, has its own "internal articulation."

As an illustration of the problems surrounding the study of the "internal articulations" of these "relatively autonomous" levels, Hall refers to the work of Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* as a significant contribution to understanding the internal development of the emergent ideology of Protestantism; and how Weber nevertheless failed in what is for Marxism the crucial task of showing the relation of the ideological to other levels of the social formation (the political, the economic, etc.). Indeed, it is typical of non-Marxist studies of ideology to divorce the problematic of ideology from its relation to material factors. Hall sees an extreme example of this in the theory of the "sociology of knowledge," which has become the foremost vehicle for understanding ideology in American sociology. In the "sociology of knowledge," social relations are reduced to the terms of everyday social interactions, which thereby become the only object of analysis. This position denies any social reality independent of that created through "ideas in their typical formation," and recognises only that always-relative perspective that individual actors bring to their world. In this formulation, ideology is simply equated with "typical ideas," and social relations become simply the expression of these ideas. The very notion of a determinate material realm distinct from ideology is non-existent here.

Hall locates an important departure from this lineage of thought in that part of Durkheim's work which stresses the structural determinism of society in the production of the forms of thought. Here, social relations construct the categories of cognitive classification and meaning, and not vice versa. This view of social determinism, together with the influences of structural linguistics and the Freudian and Marxist methods of seeking deep structures beneath phenomenal appearances, combined in the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss to produce structural anthropology — and a new understanding of ideology. In Lévi-Strauss, it is the deep structure that is the relevant object of scientific investigation, rather than the endless variations of surface cultural permutations. However, Lévi-Strauss's "structural causality" refers not to the primacy of the historical mode of production, but rather to the determinism of trans-historical rules of the classification and combination of meanings. Thus,

despite Lévi-Strauss's stated indebtedness to Marxism, his work does not constitute in itself a further development of a *materialist* theory of ideology.

In fact, although drawn to each other, structuralism and Marxism have not dwelt comfortably together. This discomfort seems to arise primarily from the tendency of structuralism towards formalism and the abandonment of historical and materialist analyses. Certain semioticians, for example, have defined ideology as a formal attribute of the process of signification — "the form of the signifieds of connotation,"[2] or "a system of semantic rules to generate messages."[3]

Lacan's work, as it has been used to elucidate the theory of ideology, falls into a similar structuralist error. Lacan emphasised the constitution of subjectivity, and opened up the possibility of understanding the positioning or *interpellation* of the subject in and through ideology. But specific *historical* configurations of structure and materiality have not entered theoretically into these conceptions, which remain focused on the universals of psychical constitution. In its Lacanian usage, ideology becomes the universal site of a fundamental structure of misrecognition (the mirror-phase) which "situates the agency of the ego, *before its social determination*, in a fictional direction."[4] The identification of ideology with a pre-social form of misrecognition lifts ideology straight out of the field of historical-material factors.

Nevertheless, in spite of its formalistic and idealistic tendencies, structuralism has offered something very attractive to Marxism: a collection of elegant theories of the superstructure. Any understanding of the internal operations of ideology seems to require some type of structuralist conception. Hall suggests that this "Kantian legacy" continues to haunt the theory of ideology because, in large part, of the underdevelopment of the materialist theory of ideology. In Hall's words:

> Ideology is one of the least developed "regions" in Marxist theory. And even where it is possible to construct the *site* of ideology, and the general relation of the ideological instance to other instances, the forms and processes specific to this region remain peculiarly ill-defined and underdeveloped. Semiotics has greatly contributed to our understanding of how signification systems work, of how things and relations signify. But — precisely in the hope of constituting a closed field amenable to positive scientific inquiry — it tends to halt its investigation at the frontier where the internal relations of "languages" articulate with social practices and historical structures.

On the other hand,

> The materialist theory of ideology has considerably advanced our understanding of the economic and socio-historical determinations *on* ideas — but it lacks an adequate theory of *representation*, without which the specificity of the ideological region cannot be constituted. (P. 28)

Hall points out, following Bordieu, that structuralism has taken "the internal relations of a field of classification as its object of analysis" while Marxism stresses the *political* function of symbolic systems: it treats logical relations as relations of power and domination" (p. 29). Pierre Bourdieu has described the inadequacies of both positions as they stand: the first makes the internal organisation of the superstructures autonomous, while the second reduces the symbolic realm of ideology to the relations of production. He argues for a mutual articulation of the Marxist and structuralist approaches, suggesting that this would make possible an understanding of ideology as it "reproduces the field of social positions in a transfigured form,"[6] i.e., as it reorganises relationships in a way that obscures and thus perpetuates class domination. This Bordieu calls the "symbolic violence" of ideology, referring to the fact that ideology always works to secure hegemony for the ruling class by interceding *symbolically* rather than by means of explicit physical force, although force and ideology frequently appear in concert.

Hall concludes by applauding attempts at "mutual articulation" of Marxist and structuralist approaches. This theoretical combination allows the retention of the Marxist premise of infrastructural "determination in the last instance" without collapsing the relatively autonomous field of ideology into the terms of the economic infrastructure. This position in fact reflects the project of the entire book — thinking through the problem of the relative autonomy of the ideological field — and the book's limitation, which consists in a lack of original theoretical contributions to the problem area. For, notwithstanding the excellent analyses of the problematic of ideology in this book, the fact is that "relative autonomy" remains a nominal descriptive term, without theoretical specification or practical application — except that, in practice, it has served to encourage, perhaps not regrettably, a great deal of purely discursive scholarship under the banner of Marxism. We shall be returning to the problem of relative autonomy shortly.

Althusser

Althusser has most influentially brought together structuralism and Marxism, and has made seminal contributions to the materialist theory of

ideology. "Althusser's Theory of Ideology" by Gregor McLennan, Victor Moliner and Roy Peters, traces the chronology of Althusser's thoughts on ideology through several modifications. For the purposes of this exposition, we will limit ourselves to mentioning some of Althusser's key conceptions on ideology.

1. To begin with, and this will involve some repetition, Althusser insists that the social formation is not a simple unity, but a complex, multi-levelled whole. While the mode of production in the infrastructure is ultimately *determinate*, the political, ideological and other superstructural levels might be *dominant*, depending on specific historical contingencies. Thus, in this formulation, the superstructural elements are not simply reflective of, or simply reducible to, the infrastructure, but are instead conditions of the existence of the infrastructure — in a reciprocal relationship with it but ultimately dependent insofar as the parameters of the superstructure are set by the infrastructure.

2. Ideology has a material existence. Althusser employs the Freudian term "overdetermination" to describe the effects of the reciprocal interaction of the different levels within a social formation. This overdetermination endows all the levels, including the ideological, with equal materiality. This recognition of the material effectivity of ideology credits the concept with a status that it was first afforded by Marx in *Das Kapital*, and carries an explicit critique of that reductionism lurking in *The German Ideology* which treats ideology as a surface epiphenomenon of the infrastructure, leaving ideology no effectivity of its own. In his essay on Ideological State Apparatuses,[7] Althusser grounds the materiality of ideology in the fact that *all* practice is governed by material rituals inserted in material ideological apparatuses.

3. Althusser considers that the existence and nature of the superstructure, and hence of ideology, cannot be understood except from the point of view of the *reproduction of the relations of production*. Class struggle is the arena in which the process of reproduction occurs, and the struggle is engaged both within and outside of production. Outside of production, reproduction takes place through the political system, and through Ideological State Apparatuses — schools, churches, the family, etc. These apparatuses have their own relative autonomy and organisation, and are understood to be indispensable to the reproduction of capitalist relations of production. However, as McLennan et al. point out, the Ideological State Apparatuses seem actually to be merely the place where subjection to the dominant ideology is *organised*.

> The effectivity of the dominant ideology on reproduction arises from the nature of ideology itself, from the fact that the dominant ideology assures individuals a specific "lived relation" to the relations of production. In this

> sense the assurance for the reproduction of the relations of production which occurs "in the consciousness, i.e. in the attitudes of the individual-subjects."[8]

Ultimately, therefore, it is not the Ideological State Apparatuses that procure the reproduction of the relations of production, but the consciousness of individual-subjects.

4. Ideology interpellates individuals as subjects. Althusser tells us that ideology functions by addressing itself to individuals, calling upon them, recruiting, transforming and constituting them as subjects — members of the social order. In capitalist relations, this process of interpellation produces subjects with a consciousness of the self as autonomous, centred and free, and of the social world as natural or God-given. Viewed in this way, the specific practico-social function of ideology is to constitute social beings as subjects who misrecognise themselves as autonomous individuals — and by the same token, misrecognise the actual social relations that gave rise to their subjectivity. Therefore, the production of subjectivity — through ideological interpellation — is a necessary part of the reproduction of the relations of production.

It is noteworthy that the notion of interpellation of subjects extends the theoretical embrace of *reproduction* to include the subject, but does not extend our understanding of the subject per se. What is in fact being theorised here is merely the production of a mystified (ideological) consciousness. No account is ventured of the way in which the complex disjunctures within the psychical make-up might be involved in this constitution of subjectivity; of how the individual answers the recruiting call only by repressing it from consciousness. In this respect, as McLennan et al. point out, Althusser's account remains pre-Freudian.

5. Ideology is "a matter of the *lived* relation between men and their world."[9] This lived relation is not consciously apprehended as a relation, but is presented to consciousness as a natural, unmediated encounter with reality. Individuals experience the material effects of ideological relations as natural, self-evident events.

> In ideology men do indeed express, not the relation between them and their conditions of existence, but *the way* they live the relation between them and their conditions of existence: this pre-supposes both a real relation and an "imaginary," "lived" relation.[10]

It is because actual social relations are not represented *as such* to consciousness, but are apprehended only in the disguised form of the material effects of practices, that Althusser refers to this apprehension as "imaginary." And it is because these imaginary apprehensions are of concrete objects and events,

because they incur a material existence, that we understand the imaginary relations residing in these apprehensions to also be *real* relations.

This conception of a lived relation which is not illusory nor merely phenomenal, but is real and material, and yet is imaginary, stands as the seminal materialist description of ideology. Yet it remains a description, not an explanation. Ideology as conceived by Althusser has enhanced the understanding of the social formation, especially with respect to its reproduction; but the question of how ideology actually works remains largely untheorised. What is lacking, in our view, is specification at the level of psychical operations. How, psychologically speaking, do we enter into and enact the ideological version of things? And if we are simply the receptacles of a dominant ideology, from where springs resistance, human contradiction, change? If we are to reject as idealism the notion that ideology consists merely in false ideas, then how are we to *account* for the imaginary nature of conscious apprehensions, rather than just describing them as imaginary? And if we are really to consider the subject as having some specific effectivity, and not as merely the passive reflection of social processes, then what is the specific nature of that effectivity? Althusser has located and described ideology as a relatively determinate formation within the social formation, and has taken us to the brink of a materialist theory of subjectivity. The crucial steps into psychological explanation remain to be taken.

Gramsci

"Politics and Ideology: Gramsci" by Stuart Hall, Bob Lumley and Gregor McLennan, functions as an introduction to his theoretical arsenal, traces his influence on later Marxist theorists, and finally identifies his contributions to an understanding of ideology. Gramsci himself left no systematic theory of ideology. Yet his attention to the complexities of social formation enables us to "symptomatically read"[11] a theory of ideology in his writings. The starting point in Gramsci for placing ideology as a determinate social formation, is his enriched conception of infrastructure/superstructure. He saw that capitalism is not merely a structure of production, but acts as a system which articulates a "whole form of social life conforming everything else into its own movement."[12] Taking a sophisticated reading of Marx, and prefiguring Althusser's later formulations, Gramsci insists that there exists no simple dichotomy between infrastructure and superstructure. The structure of capitalism is determinate of social life, but this determination is not the strict homologous engendering of social forms that economistic readings of Marx portray. The infrastructure determines, it sets limits, places pressures, molds the phenomenal forms of the superstructure, yet the activities and institutions of the latter sphere have an autonomy of their own, and place reciprocal

determinations onto the "base," structuring as it is structured. The social bloc under capitalism must be viewed in its totality; as Lukács said, "it is not the primacy of economic motives in historical explanation that constitutes the decisive difference between Marxist and bourgeois thought, but the point of view of totality."[13] Seen in this way, the processes of the superstructure are integral to the processes of the mode of production itself.

Gramsci's theoretical enterprise was designed to think the specificity of this expanded conception of infrastructure/superstructure, and his richer view of determination. Among the specific concepts he employed, the term *hegemony* is decisive for our understanding of ideology. Lenin had expanded the traditional use of the term, from a description of domination in the relation between states, to a description of class domination internal to the political arena of society. Gramsci was to go a step further, for he saw Lenin's definition of hegemony as being restricted to the power that a ruling class holds over other classes, particularly through the use of repressive state apparatuses (army, police). Gramsci recognised that apart from times of rupture and political crisis, the normal state of affairs in society is such that not explicit repression, but a whole complex interlocking of political, economic and cultural factors forge the relations of domination and subordination between classes and class fractions in a social formation. Hegemony is seen as this total complex of determinations in which the social positions of classes are secured and the productive apparatuses reproduced.

Hegemony is not, except analytically, understood as a system or a structure; rather, it is seen as a lived process. This means that it is only in the *contested relations among particular historical classes* that hegemony is produced. Hegemonic domination is never secured by a simple imposition of dominance in which a unified ruling class extends itself at will through all the social layers. On the contrary, hegemony "has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified" as it is "continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own."[14] Hegemonic relations are perpetually changing relations of contestation among classes and class fractions — relations which are so structured as to secure the ongoing character of the social formation.

Gramsci's "hegemony," in a way similar to Althusser's more formalistic model of the multi-levelled social formation, expands the arena of potential revolutionary struggle to include all areas where class contestation exists, both within and outside the realm of production. Gramsci's view of ideology is grounded firmly within this context of class contestation. Ideology is seen as a material formation within the processes of hegemony. It is a lived social process, not simply the expression of a unitary ruling class, nor simply the reflection of economic structures. Ideology is the level of socially articulated meanings and practices which serve to bind classes and class fractions in

positions of hierarchy, while obscuring the reality of these positions. Therefore, ideologies are not judged according to their inherent truth or falsehood — they always both allude to and obscure the "truth" — but rather according to their function in cementing and unifying the social bloc. This specific "unifying" function of ideology makes it a determinate and relatively autonomous force in the social formation. Furthermore, different ideologies perform the function of unifying (and obscuring) the social bloc in different ways: hence is the ideological realm the site of an ongoing struggle of great importance between contesting ideologies.

This conception of the struggle among contesting ideologies serves as an antidote to structuralist models, which in their attention to the structures of social formation, tend to portray subordinate classes as always merely assimilating the dominant ideology that surrounds them, leaving no hope of revolutionary change. Similarly, the notion of ideological struggle suggests the possibility of understanding different forms of subjectivity. Viewing them in terms of the broad conception of hegemony, we can understand forms of consciousness arising in the context of contesting ideologies, each of which in its own specific way serves to articulate the different levels and contradictory elements of social life in a comprehensive but imaginary unity of thought, action and lived experience.

On Subjectivity

We have shown, in both Althusser and Gramsci, how ideology is situated as a relatively determinate level of social operations. The question still remains: how does this determinate formation determine, how does ideology actually work? A theorization of this problem that stops with the placing of ideology as a level of social formation provides a structural description of the *role* of ideology, but not of *how* it functions. In order to extend our understanding, we must examine the workings of ideology in the subjects it engages. The question of the subject is paramount.

The vicissitudes of the term "subject" are worth reflecting upon briefly. The word itself is derived from the Latin "subjectum" meaning to throw or to cast under. In the earliest English usages, the word carried the sense of substances worked upon or persons "thrown under" authority, as under the dominion of a sovereign. Our modern usage retains vestiges of these prior usages, in the case of a person, for example, as a subject of a portrait, or in the term "British subjects." However, other connotations of the word have arisen. *Subject* has come to describe the thinking free agent. In contrast to the older connotation of subject as product of social or metaphysical determination, the modern usage suggests the autonomous, reflective individual-subject. This change in usage is indicative of a shift in representation in Western thought of the place

of human agency — from subjects as determined to subjects as determinate — a shift that marks the emergence of idealism. Other dominant philosophical trends of the bourgeois age also influence our sense of the term. Positivism, for example, takes up and reifies the dualist separation of subjects from objects, leading ironically to a devaluation of the newly valued subject. For positivism deposits things that are "objective" in a sphere that is viewed as factual, reliable and neutral, in opposition to a subjective sphere founded on impressions and feelings. The objective is the world of truth and reality, the subjective becomes unreliable and whimsical. In this respect, the modern conception of the subject captures the ironic history of human agency in our era. On the one hand, the subject is elevated outside of history as a self-reflexive free agent, progenitor of its own experience and consciousness; on the other hand, this idealised experience of self, this reified subjectivity, is devalued in the cold logic of that empirical valorisation of the external world which always lurks in the wings of idealism.

A Marxist approach to the subject explicitly rejects the twin poles of idealism and empiricism, and falls closer to the classical understanding of the term *subject*, viewing human agents always as the product of social determination. Ideology is central to any Marxist understanding of the subject; for it is the precise function of ideology to "throw under" in misrecognition the agents in a class society.

The conjuncture of ideology and the subject is taken up directly in Part III of *On Ideology*. Steve Burniston's and Chris Weedon's article, "Ideology, Subjectivity, and the Artistic Text," begins as an attempt to pose the problem of the relationships among art, literature and ideology. They move on to the problematic of a Marxist theory of subjectivity, out of their finding that the shortcomings of the aesthetic theories of such thinkers as Lukács, Goldmann, Adorno, Benjamin, Brecht and Macherey stem largely from the widespread absence of an adequate theorisation of the subject. The second half of this informative and interesting piece examines the implications of the works of two French theorists, Jacques Lacan and Julia Kristeva, for the building of a Marxist theory of the subject. The authors correctly see that a Marxism which envisions only a social-economistic construction of social-subjective formation repeats the idealistic separation of ideas from materiality, but this time inversely.

The Marxist conception of the subject as determined by social relations has frequently faltered on an equation of human agency with self-consciousness, and hence a metaphysical identification of the conscious subject as the motive force of history. Freud, following the great decenterings of Copernicus, Marx and Darwin, deconstructed an identification of consciousness with a synthetic unity of mental action. He decenters the conception of a self-present, self-motivating, unitary consciousness — thereby breaking with a dominant

Western philosophical tradition. By exposing the facade of a rational transcendent ego, psychoanalysis provides a critique of the idealist notion of the subject that Marxism has lacked. There remains the challenge of joining these two decenterings, whereby Marx places the subject in history, and Freud places the subject in process. A dialectical appraisal of subjectivity might begin, then, from the position that subjects are constituted in and through the social formation, but *not by and of it*.

Lacan

Lacan explicitly treats his "return to Freud" as a critique of the equation of the subject with self-consciousness, aiming his attack especially on the reified conceptions of ego-psychology. Burniston and Weedon point to this Lacanian critique as the point of intersection with a materialist reading of social formation, insofar as both Althusser and Kristeva take this as a link to their social theories. Lacan, following Freud, argues that subjects are made not born. Lacanian theory bases the constitution of the subject on fundamental misrecognition of the self. Infants have no natural, totalised selves, but rather move through a series of psychic constellations in which self and others are represented in a variety of phantasized (imaginary) positions. The construction of subjectivity curtails these imaginary relations, establishing self and others in fixed, ordered social (symbolic) relations. The entry from "imaginary" to "symbolic" is a *social* entry, because relations of difference among social others come to constitute the boundaries of the subject.

Now Lacan has proposed that the fundamental image of the self-as-such, the narcissistic ego-image, is founded in misrecognition, is a fiction. The perceptual relation to an other in infancy is taken as the image of oneself — and hence the very kernel of self-identity is misplaced, imaginary. Lacan writes that an infant "fastens himself to an image which alienates him from himself"; henceforth, selfhood is "forever irreducible to his lived identity."[15] This basic structure of misrecognition is said to be the foundation for all future relations.

Let us recall the argument that subjects in their social determination do not simply become the bearers of social structure. Rather, in the hegemonic processes of ideology, subjects live the relation with their real conditions of existence *as if* they themselves were the autonomous principle of determination of that relation. Precisely here, in the imaginary determinacy of the centre-self, can ideology call forth subjects, throw them under.

But it is by no means clear — as we have already pointed out — that Lacan's basic structure of misrecognition provides an adequate or even partial theorisation of the relation of subjectivity and ideology. We can mention these refutations. First, no ideological field is necessary for this alienation of the mirror-

image to take place; the latter is established within a dyadic, essentially pre-social field. Secondly, this alienation cannot account for the specificity of the ideological field or of the relations which obtain there. There is in fact nothing to convince us that the specular misrecognition of the mirror-phase founds *ideological* mis-recognition. Or, to put the distinction in a somewhat different way, Lacan's *imaginary* refers to a presocial consciousness characterised by the free reign of desire, whereas Althusser's *imaginary* refers to a socially articulated consciousness ideologically constituted so as to *expel* desire.

The "Return of the Repressed"

The first step towards introducing psychoanalytic concepts into the theory of ideology should consist in locating the role of the unconscious. Freud himself based the psychoanalytic theory of culture and society on the determinism of the unconscious. Consequently, in his sociological writings, history is revealed as repetition compulsion, and the imperatives of wish-fulfillment far outweigh those of the concrete world. Now, while Freud undoubtedly erred in his reduction of the social to the expression of the repressed unconscious, it would be a far greater error to then, for this reason, neglect to take account of the effectivity of the unconscious. Indeed, denial of the unconscious is, we shall argue, a fundamental aspect of the proper functioning of ideology. We shall go further and say that Freud's conception of society as an epiphenomenon of the repressed unconscious, while it is not really a theory of society at all, nevertheless provides an indispensable psychical link in the explanation of the workings of ideology.

The role of the unconscious in the operations of ideology can be illustrated in a preliminary way by reference to Freud's conception of the "return of the repressed." Stated in the briefest possible way, this refers to the role of objects in the external world in providing substitute gratifications for the demands of unconscious contents. By such attachment to external objects, unconscious desire is ameliorated, regulated and maintained in repression. Where the external objects are culturally signified, this substitute gratification is known as sublimation. Where the substitute objects are not culturally appropriate, the attachment to them is considered neurotic. In either case, repressed unconscious content returns to consciousness, not in its original form, but in the guise of substitute objects — in a *transfigured* form.

It is therefore possible, viewing one synchronic arc of this process of substitute gratification, to construe the social field as a field of substitute objects for the repressed objects of desire. But clearly, the social field is not thereby *organised* according to its investments from the unconscious. The primary-process character of system Unconscious and its contents are quite antithetical to the characteristics of the social field. The articulations of the

social field are described by a complex of social factors. But the social field is always captive to the powerful, motivating cathexes placed on its elements by the unconscious. It is only such unconscious attachment that brings the inert world of objects, symbols and relations to life, infusing them with a life of their own.

This, then, is how human individuals enter *unconsciously* into discourse with the social, in a way that is determinate without being articulate. It is in the second synchronic arc of the process of substitute gratification that articulate social determination occurs: the social field, its elements imbued with unconscious significance, impresses itself upon consciousness, returning to consciousness in a transfigured form — i.e. via the articulations of the social field — that which is repressed. This transfiguration consists not only in the fact that a cultural object has been substituted for an object of desire, but also in the fact that the substitute object is apprehended by consciousness in terms of the logically ordered symbolic relations of the social field. What resides only as a timeless, undifferentiated desire, returns to consciousness as a symbolically ordered relation. In this transfiguration lies the operation of ideology.

By providing substitute — symbolic — objects for the demands of *repressed* wishes, and by disguising the source and agency of those wishes, the field of ideological relations gives rise to ideological consciousness — a consciousness which misrecognises unconscious imperatives as being the volition of the conscious ego. Unconscious effectivity is denied by this consciousness; self-hood is naturally equated with — and experienced as equivalent to — this consciousness. Only because of the denial of the unconscious can this consciousness attribute autonomy, self-reflexivity and free agency to itself. But what consciousness denies and misapprehends is not limited to unconscious effectivity. As Althusser says, "the reality which is necessarily *ignored* in the very forms of recognition (ideology = recognition/ignorance) is indeed, in the last resort, the reproduction of the relations of production and of the relations deriving from them."[16] But what makes the mis-recognition of social relations and their reproduction happen, what causes consciousness to bestow immanence and naturalness upon socially determined, symbolic objects, is the *unconscious cathexis* of these objects. Were the valuation of worldly objects not unconscious, from where would arise the imaginary status that consciousness attributes to reality?

Through the denial of the unconscious, ideological consciousness constructs, in the realm of subjective experience, that essentialist division between self and social world which characterises ideological thought (as in empiricism and idealism). The social I of pre-ideological cultures becomes the reified transcendent I of ideological cultures. Ideological thought and ideological consciousness commit the fatal error of collapsing the distinction

between *symbolic logical order* and the *order of the real* (that order which for any Marxist must exist behind the obstructions of ideological phenomena). This is because consciousness has no way in and of itself of distinguishing the "symbolic" from the "real."[17] It is in this gap between concept and reality that ideology operates, specifically by *not signifying* this gap, thereby producing that reification of concepts which Marx recognised as a hallmark of ideology. Marxist theory seeks to undo this reification of concepts, whose central moment fixes the subject-consciousness in a fictitious empirical or transcendental centredness. Freud's "decentering" of the subject consisted in his revelation of unconscious effectivity — and his explanation of how repression grants immanence to the ego-imago: the *concept* of the self (as centred) is mistaken for the *reality* of the self (decentred or divided), a misrecognition central to and produced by ideology.

We can now define subjectivity as a complex formation. It consists in part of a reified consciousness, constructed ideologically; it is this part that is generally treated as the subject in its entirety. Every act of perception by this consciousness is an act of misrecognition of the true nature of the self and the social formation, and therefore is an act of reproduction of the "divided" self and the social relations of production. This simultaneous reproduction of the self and the social takes place in the same motion, in the identical location — that of lived ideological relations. Another part of the complex subject consists in the unconscious, that determinate level of psychical operations and contents which propels the subject into the ideological realm, wherein that subjectivity is re-established. Ideology, fuelled by unconscious desire, moulded by the social relations of production, serves simultaneously to reproduce particular forms of consciousness and particular relations of production and exploitation.

The model of the "return of the repressed," in its revelation of the role of unconscious factors in the workings of ideology, comprehends Althusser's notion of the real yet imaginary relations of ideology — the "way people live" their relation to the actual conditions of their existence. We can say that people *really* live this relation *unconsciously* — that is, according to the imperatives of system Unconscious — and that what is presented in consciousness is the imaginary (ideological) form of this lived relation.

The model of the "return of the repressed" further affirms that ideology has a "material existence." We can say that ideology does not consist in false representations of real objects, but in the false attribution of reality to representations of materiality which by their nature abstract from that materiality. This distinction between *ideology as misrepresentation of reality and ideology as representation of imaginary relations* is crucial, and leads us away from the question of unconscious effectivity, towards a discussion of the nature of representation.

IDEOLOGY AND THE "SUBJECT"

Ideology and Representation

In understanding the problem of representation, the fundamental, if problematic, Marxist distinction between real relations and their phenomenal forms is at stake. One type of error, already identified as a form of idealism, promotes the notion of ideology as misrepresentation of reality. This position maintains the real/phenomenal distinction, but idealises and de-materialises ideology as merely false ideas. A second type of error simply designates representation as material, dissolving the real/phenomenal distinction, and thereby losing the notion of multiple determination to a homogeneous, discursive view of the social bloc.[18] The correct approach lies in recognising that conscious representation is always ordered in a syntactical logic (epitomised by the order of language) which is asymptotic to the real, and abstract in relation to all of materiality. This contrived character of symbolic thought fails to be recognised by consciousness, and is in fact *naturalised* in the ideological field, where thought gives rise to concrete manifestations and material transformations of reality. Furthermore, as we have shown, unconsciously cathected object-representations are treated as if they transparently reflected reality.

Therefore, conscious representations *do* portray reality, but only in the abstract-relational terms of a system of symbolic logic which does not reside in nature or in the objects themselves, but in the hegemonic logic of symbolic thought and action — i.e., in the ideological field. The phenomenal does not, therefore, *mis-represent* the real, but *transfigures* it by recasting it in terms of a symbolic order. This happens necessarily, because symbolic thought always signifies relations among objects and experiences which do not *in reality* exist. In consciousness, real objects are always signified as abstract symbolic relations.[19]

We have taken the position that ideologies exist as lived relations, ordered by the interplay of economic, political and other social factors, and also in turn ordering these factors in such a way that they *mean* something to human beings. Ideology therefore operates at the level of representations, and its particular function consists in making oppressive, contradictory and alienating social events appear inevitable and natural. Representations of things are taken to be the things themselves, and it is in this collapsing of concrete experience into the logic of symbolic relations that ideology operates. It remains now to offer a more specific theorisation of representation at the level of subjective operations.

Thing-presentations and Word-presentations

Freud's theory of psychical representations, a little known and relatively undeveloped part of his work, seems to address itself to the problem of ideology and representation. For Freud, "becoming conscious is no mere act of perception, but is also a *hypercathexis*, a further advance in the psychical organisation."[20] In his 1914 paper entitled "The Unconscious," Freud specified the type of hypercathexis which gives rise to consciousness: "The conscious presentation comprises the presentation of the thing plus the presentation of the word belonging to it, while the unconscious presentation is the presentation of the thing alone." System Pcs.-Cs. comes about "by this thing-presentation being hypercathected through being linked with the word-presentation corresponding to it. It is these hypercathexes, we may suppose, that bring about a higher psychical organisation and make it possible for the primary process to be succeeded by the secondary process which is dominant in the *Pcs.*"[21] This "translation into words which shall remain attached to the object" is the *necessary condition for conscious representation* of any signifier. Therefore, consciousness is redefined as word-presentational consciousness each time such a hypercathexis occurs — that is, with each thought and action. The effect of the hypercathexis of words and things is to cast thing-perceptions into the abstract relations that obtain among words. These word-presentational relations, which are formalised in language, reside at the level of the psyche in system *Pcs.*, the preconscious field of latent word-presentations that are available to consciousness. Conscious representation always consists in the perceptual signifier of experience being replaced by one of these (previously signified verbal) signs from the preconscious.[22] In other words, in order to enter consciousness, the signifiers of a current experience are cast into the signifying relations of past experience expressed as word-presentations. Thus, it is not the content of the repressed alone that is banished from consciousness; it is also the *form* of unconscious representation — "thing-presentations" — that is antithetical to the order of consciousness. This illuminates the central ideological effect in which symbolic relations are confounded with the real: Symbolic relations are taken by consciousness to be real relations precisely because consciousness is *structured symbolically* — in the form of word-presentations — and therefore apprehends the world and the self as *naturalised domains* of word-presentations.

Finally, this conception allows us to understand system *Pcs.* as being organised into a number of latent chains of word-presentations, each reflecting a domain of practice, an aspect of lived relations. Ongoing experience, then, is re-signified in terms of one or another of these symbolic chains of meaning. And different kinds of social practice, different ideologies or partial ideologies, may in this way become part of the subjective make-up of

individuals. This possibility, which brings to mind Gramsci's insistence on the multiple contestations at all levels of the social formation under hegemony, suggests the possible importance of struggle and revolutionary change at the level of the subject.

Conclusion: The Problem of Determinism

We have attempted to show the relevance of certain psychoanalytic insights for the theory of ideology. And several important contemporary theoretical propositions concerning the nature of ideology do indeed seem to gain some specificity from the psychoanalytic conception of a complex, "divided" subjectivity. In particular, the Althusserian description of ideology as a "representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" requires an explanation at the level of the subject. The role of the unconscious in the motivation, if not the articulation, of the ideological field makes new sense of ideology as a "lived relation," and of the role of ideology in the constitution of a misrecognised subjectivity. A conception of ideology as the field in which both unconscious effectivity and social effectivity are misrecognised simultaneously, opens up a genuine dialectic of the subject and the social formation. And Freud's theory of psychical representations offers a specific explanation of the ideological reification of concepts, and the ideological construction of symbolic abstractions in the place of reality.

But perhaps the most far-reaching potential contribution of psychoanalysis to the theory of ideology, and one which we can only allude to here, concerns the problem of determinism. We have already argued that Althusser's notions of "relative autonomy" and "determination in the last instance" remain largely untheorised. The problem facing these conceptions arise from the insistence in Marxist epistemology on a single ultimately determining historical contradiction — that within the infrastructure. While various degrees of leeway are granted to relatively autonomous articulations in the superstructure, the fact is that no theorisation of the internal articulation of any superstructural level of the social formation can ultimately survive in the Marxist arena of thought.

What psychoanalysis can offer is the paradigm of another irreducible source of determinism. The model for this has already emerged here in our discussion of unconscious effectivity upon the ideological field. At once, the problem of the relative autonomy of the ideological instance seems soluble, in terms of the specific function ideology has of weaving social and psychical determinants together into the fabric of an orderly lived experience. Ideology will always be relatively autonomous with respect to infrastructural determinants and unconscious determinants, but it is ultimately determined by both.

The problem of reproduction is also relocated somewhat in this formulation — shifted from its usual preoccupation with the reproduction of the productive apparatus, to a broader "hegemonic" view in which other determinate contradictions (for example, between *need* and *desire*) might attain dominance in the processes of reproduction.

Julia Kristeva's notion of the *semiotic* constitutes an important contribution to the theorisation of a psychical determinacy. Her work emerges as an attempt to provide Marxism with a psychoanalytically based theory of subjectivity. Thesemiotic — ontologically equivalent to Lacan's "imaginary" — is a quasi-social realm of pre-symbolic relations and "semiotic materials": sound, gesture, color, movement, intonation. The semiotic realm is prelinguistic and pre-social and "cannot therefore rest on any concept of a fixed subject which is constituted in the symbolic realm"[23] (Burniston and Wedon, p. 221). It is the realm of affect and bodily sensation unhegemonised by an alien subject-centeredness. Although close to the drives, the semiotic is by no means a biological realm, but is rather the realm of thing-presentations, integrally contained in every symbolic representation. This "double articulation," as Kristeva calls it, in which the semiotic material of pre-subjective existence is ordered in the relations of the symbolic realm, constitutes the structure of *signifying practice* — the lived experience of the subject. Signifying practice — which constitutes the ideological field — brings together the social and the psychical, the subject and the anti-subject, but only as fixed moments in a continuing process of disjuncture of the semiotic from the symbolic — a disjuncture that can, in the failure of ideology, produce disruption of the social formation.

This conception of an irreducible realm of psychical representation, with its own specific form of articulation, interacting dialectically with other determinate infrastructures in the social formation, remains to be developed, substantiated and justified. But it at least holds the promise of disrupting the impasse in the theories of relative autonomy, determinism and ideology.

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Notes

1. First published in 1977 by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, University of Birmingham, as its *Working Paper in Cultural Studies,* No. 10.

2. Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology,* New York: Hill and Wang, 1977, p. 92.

3. Veron, quoted in Marina Camargo Heck, "The Ideological Dimension of Media Messages," University of Birmingham C.C.C.S., Stencilled Occasional Paper, No. 10, p. 5. The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies makes available a number of informative Stencilled Occasional Papers.

4. Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1977, p. 2, our emphasis.

5. Pierre Bourdieu, *Symbolic Power*, CCCS Occasional Stencilled Paper, No. 46, translated by Richard Nice.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

7. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatusses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971.

8. McLennan et al., p. 94, quoting Althusser, 1971, p. 170.

9. L. Althusser, *For Marx*, London: Allen Lane, 1969, p. 233.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 234.

11. Althusser, in *For Marx*, uses this Freudian analogy to describe a reading of what is implicit in a text.

12. Stuart Hall, "Rethinking the 'Base and Superstructure' Metaphor," in J. Bloonfield, The Communist University of London papers on *Class, Hegemony, and Party*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1977, p. 65.

13. Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, Cambridge M.I.T. Press, 1971, p. 52.

14. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, London: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 112.

15. J. Lacan, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

16. Althusser, 1971, pp. 182-183.

17. For this reason, Freud's term "reality testing" is a misnomer. It is not reality that is tested, but representations of reality that are symbolically encoded. We owe the idea of using the Freudian term "the return of the repressed" in this fashion to Jon Schiller, "Foundations of a Psychology of Culture Repression and the 'Testing' of Reality" (Xerox, 1976).

18. This position, which is similar to that of Foucault except that Foucault explicitly disavows the importance of materialism, can be discerned frequently in the work of those interested in developing a materialist theory of the subject, for example in the editorial position of the English journal *Ideology and Consciousness*.

19. The notion of a "symbolic order" has been used by Lacan, but our usage refers more to ways in which linguistic systems create meaning. F. de Saussure's theory of signification (*Course of General Linguistics*, New York Library, 1960) provides the model for understanding that meaning does not arise in the relation of concept to reality, nor even in the relation of content (signifier) to meaning (signified), but in the relation of signifier to signifier — in the abstract relation of difference between signifiers.

20. S. Freud, "The Unsonscious," in *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. XIV, James Strachey, ed. and trans., London: The Hogarth Press, p. 194.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 201-202.

22. Thus, in terms of the Saussurian formula, the signifier of current experience is replaced by a previously articulated sign $\left(\frac{Sr}{Sd}\right)$ to produce a conscious signification: $\left(\frac{\left(\frac{Sr}{Sd}\right)}{Sd}\right)$. This could be taken as the formula for work-presentation. It is perhaps not coincidental that this formula matches exactly the formula for the plane of connotation in Barthes' *Elements of Semiology* (pp. 90-91), in which the signified of connotation is the form of ideology.

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HOUSE DIVIDED: EXPLORING THE CONTRADICTIONS OF FAMILY LIFE

Rachael A. Peltz

Mark Poster, *Critical Theory of the Family,* New York: Seabury Press, 1973.

Mark Poster has written his *Critical Theory of the Family* at a time when contradictions between capitalism and the family present themselves in every aspect of daily life. The family is being examined intensively by conservative, liberal and leftist theorists because it assumes a position of centrality in capitalist society. It is the pivotal social unit in which the organization of consumption, production of labor power, socialization of children, and regulation of social control — as well as the fulfillment of psychic and emotional needs — are presumably located. Yet the forces of capitalism essentially render family life impossible. As long as capitalism persists the family will remain in a constant state of imbalance. Furthermore, capitalist ideology will continue to mask the realities which lie at the root of the family's immizeration.[1]

As Juliet Mitchell observes:

> Part of the function of the ideology of the family under capitalism is to preserve this unity (of the family) in the face of its essential breakup. However in doing this it ties itself in knots. The social nature of work under capitalism fragments the unitary family, thereby it enforces the social nature of the family itself.[2]

Mitchell's complex quote offers a glimpse of the contradictory character of the family under capitalism. On the one hand family life appears to be disintegrating under the impact of its subjection to disruptive and destabilizing forces. On the other hand, the family manifests a surprising resilience — organizing and re-organizing itself in the face of these economic, social and political forces. Otherwise stated: As the family is increasingly undercut by the various sectors of daily life it nevertheless remains as the last symbol of social control, emotional fulfillment and personal (unalienated) productivity — the last "haven in a heartless world."[3]

The obvious question that presents itself is the meaning of the family's persistence. How do the contradictions we observe within the family reflect the contradictions within capitalism itself?. And how are the needs of family members fulfilled (or unfulfilled) by the family under capitalism?

Poster's book is written at a time when such questions are foremost in our minds, and his answer is to propose a critical theory of the family — precisely what is needed. Poster's goal is to strip past theories of their "ideological nature" in favor of the formation of a "critical" theory for future use. He does this by examining major psychological, sociological, critical and structural theorists, and offering a critique of their underlying conceptions of the family. This critique is based largely on Poster's notion that a "critical" theory must contain within it both historical and social elements; otherwise it falls into the category of the "ideological". He then proposes what he calls the "elements of a critical theory of the family" followed by a historical analysis of four models of family structure. In the final analysis his actual examination of previous theorizing represents a facile critique that ultimately strips the theories of their essences, and produces an idealist non-theory rather than the critical theory we need.

There are a number of ways in which Poster undermines his efforts to offer a critical theory of the family. First, he fails to distinguish between historically specific manifestations and trans-historical structures within or relating to the family. Hence, the instances in which he identifies ideological presumptions become just cause for the dismissal of an entire theory. The most obvious example of this is Poster's treatment of Freud. Poster dismisses as ideological Freud's major theoretical formulations — the Oedipus complex, the castration complex, penis envy and Freud's delineation of the structure of the unconscious:

> The consequence of [Freud's] theory is to present the bourgeois psyche as the human psyche, bourgeois complexes as human complexes, to mask the determinate social practices that maintain this psyche, even while penetrating the structure and mechanisms of this psyche as no one before. Freud is then, the Adam Smith of the family.[4]

Poster has clearly misconstrued Freud, and reduced the essence of his theory to an ideological statement about the 19th-century family. While it is true Freud's theory reflects the ideology of his time and does lack historical formulation of the family per se, it is still extremely useful. The psychic structures posited by Freud (conscious/unconscious, Oedipus complex and attendent components) occur in every society, but take on different manifestations depending on the historically specific social relations.

Compare Juliet Mitchell's interpretation of Freud as illustrated in her discussion of the Oedipus complex:

> The Oedipus complex is the repressed ideas that appertain to the family drama *of any primary constellation of figures* within which the child must find its place. It is not the *actual* family situation or the conscious desires it evokes.[5]

Instead of recognizing this distinction between the bourgeois family and the psychic structure which ultimately provides the entry of the individual subject into culture via its kinship structure,[6] Poster dismisses the theory altogether.

The second difficulty within Poster's analysis is the tendency to fall into a form of relativism which defeats the capacity to theorize at all. The roots of this relativism lie in his adamant attack on vulgar Marxism and Freudianism. In his effort to avoid the pitfalls of either individual or economic reductionism he fails to perceive *any* determining relationships beyond the vague notion that the forces which bear on society and the family are many and complex. This hardly constitutes the material of theory.

In his section on the elements of a critical theory Poster concludes, "family history should be conceived in the plural, as the history of distinct structures of age and sex hierarchies. The changes from one structure to another will require different exploratory strategies, each suited to its own case."[7] We are left here with a statement devoid of any theoretical postulates which would account for either the family as the agent of psychic constitution, or the *meaning* of its historical manifestations. Poster's struggle against this reductionism of vulgar Marxism and Freudianism hardly necessitates the reduction of theory to relativistic "explanatory strategies"; rather, it calls for a closer examination of the complex interface between psychic and social structures. Such an examination requires a theory of the subject that takes into account the "process through which *any* human subject is constituted in determinate ways."[8]

The strength of Poster's endeavor is his effort to demystify the patriarchal, nuclear family by: 1) revealing the manner in which its ideology[9] is reinforced by bourgeois social theory and, 2) attempting to generate a definition of the family which encompasses its social nature. The history of bourgeois social theory reveals two basic approaches to the understanding of the family: the internal approach which studies the family's inner structure and dynamics; and the external approach which views the role of the family in society by emphasizing it as the agent of reproduction and socialization. Both perspectives have historically accepted the patriarchal nuclear family as the inevitable — and desirable — form of the family.[10] And both perspectives

assume the family as a distinct social unit, separate from, but functioning within, society. Thus a false dichotomy is posed between "family" on the one hand and "society" on the other — a dichotomy which, when taken further, has cemented a particular conception of the family into the ideological constructs of our time. As Poster recognizes, this perspective creates an abstract idealization — the isolate "family" — and thus contributes to, in both theory and practice, a false experience of the family's social meaning.

Poster's solution to this reified and biased conceptualization of the family is to propose a definition of the family "which is broad and loose enough to encompass the varying family configurations of the pre-industrial and industrial periods."[11] With this in mind he defines the family as "the place where psychic structure is formed* and where experience is characterized in the first instance by emotional patterns."[12] He then opposes economic determinist conceptions which view the family exclusively through its functions in the economy. These theories are countered with a statement of the "partial autonomy" of the family.

Poster's definition of the family does eliminate the ideological biases implicit in bourgeois family theory. But in its broadness it implies that the family can take on virtually any form. In the absence of the essential psychic determinations Poster is forced to substitute vague notions of "love," "authority," and "hierarchies of age and sex" which perhaps enable one to describe the family but hardly permit an understanding of it. He provides no theoretical tools for grasping why the family manifests its particular form, or the particular contradiction to which it is subject in capitalist culture.

Poster suggests that the reader should consider certain categories as central for locating the daily routines of family life within society. They include among others: composition of households, material structure, marriage and courtship customs, and regulation of sexuality. The problem with these categories is that they are essentially descriptive and static. The categories again facilitate an ethno-methodological description of different family types but leave many of the key questions unanswered, questions which are central to the dynamics of family life: what is the meaning of the family's "emotional patterns"?; what is the relationship of the family to the economic and social structures?; how does the family assume a position of "partial autonomy"?; what are the implications of the family as a social formation for the psychic structures of its members?

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*It is unclear what Poster means here since he earlier opposed any notion of determinate psychic structures. Further it is difficult to ascertain a distinction between psychic structures as the term is normally understood (e.g. in psychoanalytic theory) and the mere internalization of social norms.

The unanswered questions that emerge as a consequence of Poster's book can begin to be illuminated by examining some of the recent efforts of theorists who are attempting to synthesize elements of psychoanalysis, Marxism and structuralism. These theorists, whose works are explicated elsewhere in this section, focus on the individual subject. But the family too can be seen in a wholly new light if, as I suggest, we employ similar concepts to understand the position of the family as a social formation, and in a relation to other such formations. Thus the family also is "de-centered"; i.e., its most private intimacies are determined elsewhere — by the ideological, political and (ultimately) economic structures of capitalist societies.[13] It is also the case that — as with other social formations — a relative autonomy exists. In the words of Juliet Mitchell:

> The dominant ideological formation is not separable from the dominant economic one, but while linked it does have a degree of autonomy and its own laws. The ideology of the family can remain: individualism, freedom and equality (at home, you're yourself), while the social and economic reality can be very much at odds with such a concept.[14]

The family's relative autonomy is a consequence of the unintended and unconscious dynamic set into motion by the interaction of psychic and social determinants, but never fully reducible to either of them. For example, the structure and function of the family is clearly dominated by the character of the means of production. But this domination is limited by the dialectic this sets into motion, where independent affective components take on a life of their own. Thus the current chaos into which the family has been thrown by economic and social factors may be quite compatible with late capitalist development, but the emotional fissures thereby created may well serve to undermine social control — by creating a culture of borderline characters or dissolving the psychological basis of authority. Therefore the contradiction between the emotions and the economy is ultimately located within the social formation of the family under capitalism — the outcome of which cannot be predicted.

A closer examination of the economic, political and ideological structures will illustrate this contradiction further. The position of the family has shifted drastically from that period when it functioned as a unit of production. Industrialism set into motion the family's gradual breakdown and separation from other social spheres. This movement both accentuated the (nuclear) family's importance for emotional purposes while simultaneously creating a fragmented realm of personal life where the disparities among family,

production and social existence increased.[15] As a social formation the family recapitulated the anarchy of production witnessed by its unpredictable response to economic and political conditions — increased child abuse, divorce rate, etc. Yet it resisted ultimate demise by reconstituting itself in new alternative forms.

The alienation of the family from production was accompanied by the gradual breakdown of attendant institutions such that it no longer performed social functions within a network of integrated institutional structures. Whereas in the past the family, production, religion, education and recreation operated within the same sphere of relations, the later stages of capitalism dictated the creation of separated, fragmented spheres.

The current state of the family is yet more perplexing. In some ways one could deduce it has increased its function in the economic realm due to inflation. Presently two incomes are necessary to maintain the same standard of living previously maintained by one.[16] Consequently families with two incomes fare significantly better than single income families, especially single mother families. Therefore where economic forces once served to fragment it, the family now imposes an ersatz unity if only to insure temporarily the capacity to provide for basics — food, clothing, shelter, transportation. Although the family does not function exclusively in response to economic pressures, this example highlights the de-stabilizing and destructive forces of the economy on the family's structure and emotional life.

The social breakdown occurring during the middle stage of capitalist development led to an emotional crisis within the family, which in turn spawned the intervention of the *political* apparatus. In response to this crisis increased public policy was initiated to attempt to bolster the family's position and restore it to its previous state. Whether these interventions actually usurped the family's functions or authority, as suggested by Lasch and Keniston, rather than responding to the already evident breakdown of the family and social structures indigenous to its functioning, is open for discussion. Regardless, these efforts have failed.

The crisis of the family persists, accentuated by a public policy designed to alleviate it. A stage of acknowledgement and denial has now been reached when ideology — beginning to lose its hold on implicit lived experience — must pronounce itself explicitly.

The desperate effort on the part of the state to somehow preserve the integrity of the family illustrates the function of the third structure — *ideology*. At this point ideology assumes a dominant position within the complex relations affecting the family. Because capitalism has destroyed the structures capable of fulfilling the emotional needs of its subjects, it relies on ideology. As objective conditions increasingly stretch family life in opposing directions, ideology is unwittingly accepted as a substitute for a reality too

painful to bear. It is at this point that Althusser's theory of the subject can be applied to the family: the ethic of the homogeneous family, as well as the free individual, prevents the perception of those social forces which belie these misrecognitions.

Just as capitalist ideology obscures the realization of the forces of domination in the individual subject, so does it mask the meaning of the family's chaos and misery. Individuals separately experience their "personal failures" as marriages break up. Parents increasingly look *inward* for the answers to why their kids are acting "out of control." For the family, ideology provides the myths that substitute for lost realities. But ideological mystification alone cannot repair the damages nor substitute for the necessary social structures to circumvent further decomposition of the family and its members.

* * *

I will briefly interject a clinical example of the contradiction by offering some material received in the context of my work as a therapist. I work at an agency where family therapy is employed as prevention for status offender youths from entering the juvenile justice system. A status offense is one which, for an adult, would not constitute breaking the law: e.g., running away, truancy, curfew violations, and "incorrigibility." The scenario that typically unfolds includes a youth between nine and eighteen years who has ceased to attend school regularly, gets bad grades, maintains erratic hours, dabbles in minor drugs, is sexually active, associates with the "wrong" crowd and needs prodding to accomplish household responsibilities. The parents are either married, separated, divorced, and living either singly, with a lover, or with a spouse. They generally feel helpless in the face of their child's behavior, incompetent and guilty as parents, protective of the sanctity of the family, disillusioned with the state apparatuses (e.g., schools, police probation, juvenile laws), frustrated with their primary relationship or lonely for lack of one, and desperate for a solution from the therapist.

This recurrent scene epitomizes the most common emotional crisis of contemporary family life. Further, it offers a lucid illustration of the breakdown of authority within the family contributed to by other social structures, and the simultaneous reaffirmation of faith in its ideology derived from the unfulfilled needs of its members as the result of this breakdown.

The contradiction is apparent in this example in two ways: as a result of the forces of capitalism the family is largely isolated from any network of kinship, community or institutional relations. Psychically this generates an intensified "Oedipalization" within the internal family dynamic. By this I mean children's Oedipal attachments are narrowly and exclusively focused on parental

figures, with few, if any other, significant relationships being formed. But the same forces which thus intensify Oedipal conflict likewise impede its resolution: neither family nor culture is prepared to gratify the intense, and often pathological, demands placed on them by their offspring. Hence with the onset of adolescence, which marks the re-emergence of childhood — Oedipal — themes, we witness countless teenagers who appear "out of control" — a euphemism employed by parents to express their own powerlessness. Confronted with so many other shattered dreams, parents cling to the one dream they have been promised will come true — that of home and family. Tragically, in many instances they can neither afford the home nor control the family.

Thus the family under capitalism functions as the locus of contradiction between economic and emotional life. It is forced into a state of persistent chaos — responding to contradictory demands which dictate a stable unit of consumption, socialization and maintenance of control; while simultaneously fragmenting and unbalancing this unit. To the extent that the individual's needs cannot be satisfied within *or* external to the family, tensions gradually mount. These tensions can be temporarily relieved by acting them out regressively, as exemplified by the increasing wave of crimes and cults. Or they can lead to the realization of the roots of ideological mystification and the development of progressive alternatives to the tension-generating conditions. Since the family is characterized by its contradictory existence in capitalist society its individual members reflect these contradictions by being potentially positioned in the role of radical social agents. Indeed it would be paradoxical if the ideological stronghold of early capitalism, the patriarchal nuclear family, ultimately provided the foundation for the critique of capitalist society.

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Notes

1. The notion of the "new immizeration" of family life is borrowed from a forthcoming article entitled; "The New Immizeration — The Economics and Politics of the Fading American Dream" by, Elliott Currie, Robert Dunn, and David Fogarty.
2. Juliet Mitchell, *Women's Estate*, New York: Vintage Books, 1973, p. 156.
3. Christopher Lasch, *Haven in a Heartless World*, New York: Basic Books, 1977.
4. Mark Poster, *Critical Theory of the Family*, New York: Seabury Press, 1973, p. 24.
5. Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, New York: Pantheon Press, 1974 (first emphasis mine).
6. See Mitchell, *ibid.*, p. 377, for a discussion of the role of the Oedipus Complex in culture.

7. Poster, p. 164.
8. Diana Adlam et al., "Psychology, Ideology, and the Human Subject," *Ideology and Consciousness*, Volume #1, May 1977, p. 24.
9. I am referring to ideology in the manner explicated by Schiller, Sekoff and Goldberg, as the combination of "lived experience" and hegemonic ideas.
10. While the patriarchal, nuclear family has ideologically represented the family of preference, alternative forms of family life have begun to gain legitimacy among bourgeois theorists as well. This phenomenon illustrates the contradictory nature of the family under capitalism: the family can neither be contained nor controlled.
11. Poster, p. 142.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
13. See particularly, Gregor McLennon et al., *On Ideology*, London: Hutchinson, 1978.
14. Mitchell, *Women's Estate*, p. 156.
15. Eli Zaretzsky, *Capitalism, the Family and Personal Life*, Harper Colophon Books, New
16. Elliott Currie et al., "The New Immizeration . . . ."

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THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION OF MEANING: A THEORY OF REVOLUTION?

Hillie Harned

Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, *Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977. Pp. 165.

The following proportion is far too interesting to ever appear in the Miller Analogy Test: *The ego is to intrapsychic conflict* as *ideology is to social conflict*. Both the ego and ideology afford us an illusory experience in which conflict, stemming in one direction from competing, unconscious drives and in the other from the domination of one class over others, is transformed into apparent harmony. For the subject, actual social relations of domination are obscured by the subject's ability to not only accept them, but to perceive them as "precisely the way things are, ought to be, and will be." Similarly, far from experiencing the conflict of competing drives, the subject finds itself unified in the consistent "I," for which life is the experience of conscious intention. The development of such a "materialist" theory of the subject[1] and a review of the field of semiology are the two tasks undertaken by Coward and Ellis in *Language and Materialism.*

The Book

Both readers and the writers suffer under the burden of this twofold task. Despite the obvious overlap of the material, many of the theorists who belong in a review of semiology are not essential to Coward's and Ellis's formulation of a theory of subjectivity. Furthermore, the complexity of the project can not entirely account for the difficulty of the text, the style of which can be kindly characterized as dense.[2] The two tasks are pursued as if they were synonomous, and once they are untangled the review of semiology stands as the more successful. However, the more significant of the two, the integration of the work of Barthes, Kristeva and Lacan, and the application of this synthesis to a theory of the subject, remains ultimately problematic.

Coward and Ellis explore the interrelation of semiology with political sociology, literary criticism and psychoanalysis in their attempt to uncover

what might well be called: "the means of the production of meaning." This mental tongue-twister — the means of production of meaning — refers to the act of signification, wherein the subject "produces" a sign, which can be analyzed by distinguishing two elements: a concept (that which the subject wants to express, i.e., the signified) and a world, series of words or nonverbal element which represents the concept (the signifier). The concept of signification, when misunderstood, seems to be a tortuous way of saying that words stand for things, in a one-to-one correspondence. Such an idealist representation depicts the subject as the juggler, who sets the elements of signification in motion, and remains autonomous and unaffected. This image misrepresents the process for two fundamental reasons: first, each element bears on the others, *including the subject* in a reciprocal fashion; secondly, the elements (again, including the subject) are not indivisible "things," but are heterogeneous, consisting of complex, dissimilar constituents. Lacan's characterization, "sliding of signifiers over signifieds," indicates their heterogeneous nature, so that signifiers elicit meaning, but never fully represent the signified.

Coward and Ellis emphasize the impact of Barthes' literary criticism in the study of the subject. The example of realist texts (those written with fidelity to "real life"), where the text *appears* natural and is experienced by the readers as being in accordance with reality, demonstrates how imaginary relations are accepted in place of actual relations: "The final effect of connotation in the realist text is to produce the illusion of denotation, the illusion that language is incidental in the process of transcription of the real. The "superior myth" is precisely that of the identity between signifier and signified, the way in which they are treated as equivalents" (pp. 53-54). As Coward and Ellis note, even realist works of fantasy (e.g., science fiction) seem to point to the "real."

In *avant-garde* texts, by contrast, the unity of signifier and signified is not implied. Poetic works and passages in novels such as those by James Joyce evoke different meanings with each reader and even with each reading. These texts confer upon the reader the role of creator (whose own unconscious stirs to fill the text), whereas the realist novel reduces the reader to a consumer of a text which mimics a supposed reality. In *avant-garde* writing, the process by which metaphor and metonomy bring the unconscious into play is much more visible through the experience of re-reading the same words (signifiers) and discovering (producing), effortlessly, new meaning (signifieds). The subject, induced unwittingly to perceive "reality" in the realist text, is here overtly thrown into itself for meaning, and this meaning can now be seen more clearly to be created in the process of reading. In poetic language, particularly, the signifier is visible as a powerful semiotic agent — the rhyme, tone, rhythm, juxtaposition of sounds, elicit responses both conscious and unconscious. Meaning can no longer be mistakenly located in a pre-given relationship

between the signifier and signified: rather, it is produced by the interaction of the signifier with the heterogeneous subject.[3] The same elements are involved in reading either type of text (subjectivity, signifier, and signified), with the crucial difference that the consumer of the realist text, like the consumer of products, is predisposed (formed in a certain way) to buy into the text (or product) as if it were reality, or satisfied a real need.

The interaction between ideology and the heterogeneous subject is the pivot point by which Coward and Ellis enter the discourse of both psychoanalysis and Marxism, and begin their criticism of idealist theories. In the idealist tradition, the world is perceived by a consistent subject, one who feels itself to be: ". . . the origin of ideas and actions . . . and represents [itself] as free even when there is evidence to the contrary. It is this coherency, this sense of a unified being which is produced in the work of ideology and fixes identifications and representations and subjects in relation to these" (p. 68). Thus, the subject is not so much the passive bearer of ideology, but rather, through the interaction with various social institutions, it perceives itself in a certain consistent position within the web of social relationships. In addition, the subject is socially constituted so that its very consciousness is ideological, and it is predisposed to "find" itself in the social web in two senses. First, particular subjective experience exists by virtue of relationships to others, so it is founded within the social nexus. Second, the homogenizing effect of ideology — what Coward and Ellis call the "work of ideology" — does not simply come to the subject, but is called forth by it. The "natural attitude" is doubly natural — it represents a specific, historical situation as natural, and it is part of the nature of psychical operations (synthesising functions of the ego).

Coward and Ellis write: "The practice of ideology has succeeded when it has produced this 'natural attitude,' when for example the existing relations of power are not only accepted but perceived precisely as the way things are, ought to be and will be" (p. 68). It is not simply the practice of ideology which has succeeded, but the ego's struggle against its underlying heterogeneity as well.

The Context

The current effort, exemplified by Coward and Ellis, to examine the constitution of the subject by recourse to signification and to the psychoanalytic understanding of intrapsychic processes, comes precisely at a time when subjects are hard-pressed to find a comfortable ideological position from which to view the world. The force of psychic gravity is waning.

The contemporary subject (the one with the natural attitude) is not faring well. What would have been referred to generally a decade or two ago as

"alienation" must now be seen as a much more multifaceted process, which can not merely be described as a reification of subjects' relationships with one another and with their products. The stresses thus generated are now apparent at the intrapsychic level, and reveal themselves in the ubiquitous manifestations of narcissism (both as preoccupation with self and borderline personality disorders).[4] Joel Kovel, in "Rationalization and the Family,"[5] traces a connection between borderline pathology and recent changes in family structure, particularly in the role of the father, whose authority is being supplanted by an amorphous, bureaucratized state. These changes impede resolution of the Oedipal complex. The outstanding characteristic of the borderline personality is the length to which it will go in order to maintain the experience of a consistent ego. *Splitting* is the defense *par excellence* which serves the function of maintaining the illusion of a consistent subject (by producing two of them) when the individual is incapable of tolerating conflict or ambivalence through the normal mechanisms of the ego.

The prevailing ideology is of the "free" subject, exercising free will and independent of social determination. At the same time, the social institutions which are the conduit of ideology presently appear to exert a less cohesive and convincing influence: religion, nuclear family and the democratic American myth, for example, have become less successful in organizing an effective ideology. The subject's experience of free will now affords less comfort, since the world no longer seems to obey its "natural laws." The preoccupation with self can thus be seen as a flight inward from an increasingly chaotic external world. In short, as is often noted, one's place in the social network is not as clear as it once was; and, necessarily, when this positionality is less fixed, the experience of imaginary relations as natural is imperfectly maintained. In this larger context, we can situate Kovel's thesis that the subject's constitution in the family is shifting, with the decrease in paternal authority. As social institutions which support the illusion of the "free self" disintegrate, the individual desperately struggles to fortify the illusion through narcissistic pursuits.

The commercial response to these pursuits takes the form of books, workshops and some popular "therapies" which are promoted as commodities to fill the gap in subjective experience. The marketing of "self-presentation," which first blossomed as a technique to help the subject sell labor by selling self, now offers to form the subject in social relations. The shift from "communications" (which focused on pragmatics) to a training such as EST (Erhart Sensitivity Training), is a move from the facilitation of expression to the creation of a self (from which judgement can be exercised, i.e., a training in subjectivity).[6]

The quintessence of the non-subject, who suffers from an inability to act, appears in American literature in John Barth's *The End of the Road*. Jacob

Horner's only route to action or desire is through identification with an order. It is this same subject, in need of an ego ideal, who is the target of American advertising. The relationship among subjectivity, identification and ego ideal can be loosely outlined by a comparison of the role of advertising in America and in France, which has a more traditionally functioning religion, nuclear family and national culture. There ads display large mouth-watering objects for consumption. In the metro, a slice of camembert cheese, six feet by four feet, makes its direct appeal. Most ads, whether billboard, magazine or movie, depict objects in glorious detail, filling all the available space with their presence. In America the equivalent products are usually linked with an ego-ideal consumer. Sale is promoted by the onlooking subject's identification with the ego-ideal, not through direct appeal to the subject's desire per se.

In both advertising and popular "improvement" trainings there is a response to what is perceived as a need on the part of the subject (or the cracks in the facade of imaginary relations) to be filled-in — through identification or through subjectivity training. The heterogeneous subject is visible now to many, including the theorists of subjectivity; and yet invisible to itself.

The Problem

Given the determinacy of material conditions (a Marxist premise embraced by Coward and Ellis), and the particular role of ideology in the constitution of the subject, how does social transformation occur? "Practice [praxis] is seen as the interaction of new objective contradictions with a subject formed in the place of old contradictions and old representations of contradiction" (p. 9). To understand this explanation of change, one must perceive the underlying assumption, which runs something like this: a materialist theory assumes that subjects are formed by the material conditions in which they live. These material conditions include ideology, which forms the subject in such a way as to obscure the reality of its own constitution and social role, and the role of real social relations. The subject's dilemma may well be expressed as "No escape is possible when you think you are free." How can change occur when the very material conditions in which the subject is formed preclude the experience of real social relations? Coward and Ellis also write that in traditional Marxist thought "subjective actions are initially posited as simply mirroring the objective processes of history" (p. 8). They therefore propose that subjectivity *does* in fact mirror objective processes in the constitution of the subject; as the objective processes change (the factors involved remain unspecified), contradictions emerge between the subject (who was constituted in prior conditions) and the new material conditions. From this position, Coward and Ellis imperceptibly merge their notions of change, transformation and revolution as if they were identical. New social conditions

can result in subjects transforming one set of imaginary relations into another, i.e., merely supplanting one ideology for another; whereas progressive social transformation would be a modification in a very specific direction — a movement toward a social recognition of actual social relations. We have only to witness the reaction of Americans to the changing role of the United States in the global economy to realize that the ideology of the all-powerful United States, coming into conflict with new objective conditions, does not produce progressive transformation.

Marxist analysis is concerned with the role of ideology in people's perception of social relationships, and psychoanalysis with the constitution of subjectivity, based on heterogeneous, conflicting elements which underly the ego, and the individual's ability to preserve an apparently consistent self. Integral to the nature of ideology is its aspect of being a mass phenomenon. A materialist theory of the subject, which offers to complement the more traditional Marxist theory of the contradiction of material conditions, can easily lose itself in the "individual" subject, despite its aim of analyzing the *social* constitution of subjectivity, and the ideology of individualism. The problematic of Coward's and Ellis's effort is most apparent when they stretch a dialectic explanation of intrapsychic processes so as to consider it "a revolutionary theory and a theory of revolution" (p. 9).

Coward and Ellis have indeed gone further than others to demonstrate that we are speaking of the same "subject" when we speak of a person in a social class and a person in analysis. Intuitively, this was certainly known (a subject is a subject is a subject); but now, from a more cohesive theoretical perspective, the same subject can be referred to in each situation, whose subjectivity is expressed equally through the act of signification in the realm of dreams and in that of ideology. However, phrases like "the constitution of subjectivity" are semantically misleading because *subjectivity* can and does apply equally to an individual's constitution and constitution on a mass scale. Identifying social and psychic determinants at the individual and mass level is crucial.

When Coward and Ellis bring together the trinity of Lacan, Barthes and Kristeva, and extrapolate a theory of the subject which is both "material" and dialectic, they have too easy an entry into a theory of change, because the heterogeneous subject introduces a dynamic element. At this point, the problem of the place of individual and mass phenomena in the theory is found again, in the collapsing together of change and revolution. What evolves from their text as a concept of change at the level of *individual* subjects, is restated as a foundation for a theory of revolution. Coward and Ellis apparently assume this transition is viable because individual subjects are socially constituted — but close attention to the conceptualization of the difference between intrapsychic change, change in consciousness and social

transformation, should simultaneously illustrate the difference between subjectivity as it pertains to individuals and to the mass phenomenon of ideology.

The authors take subjectivity as the origin of change:

> subjectivity is seen to be the place of the highest contradiction: an atomized subjectivity which is the motor of practice and therefore of social transformation and revolution. The subject revealed by the Freudian unconscious in the movement of projection, is precisely such a subject in process. This is crucial for any elaboration of the concept of practice, for it allows a genuinely materialist understanding of history and practice which no longer falls back into the traps of idealism. (P. 148)

A materialist theory of subjectivity is crucial, but not sufficient. Coward and Ellis lack an examination of social relationships which are neither an extrapolation from the pre-Oedipal relationship (the Lacanian constitution of self through the Mother/other) nor an extrapolation from the Oedipal relationship (the internalization of the Father's authority) — i.e., relations of collectivity, as in a social class or small group. Group psychology, totally omitted by Coward and Ellis, is only recently moving toward its potential coordination with critical social theory.[7] Yet even in its traditional psychoanalytic form (e.g., Bion), group psychology has never been conceived as the sum of the psychology of individuals (even socially constituted individuals). While Coward and Ellis do not state that revolutionary transformation can be explained merely as a summation of individual subjects' actions, they fail to suggest how this relationship (between revolutionary transformation and individual practice) might be understood or even to recognize it as an integral part of a theory of subjectivity. A theory of social transformation must include not only the fact that groups have "a life of their own," but also an account of the psychology of collectivity, and must account for desires which are mediated by the process of collective action and production. Furthermore, Coward and Ellis offer a theory of subjects who come into conflict with new objective conditions — conditions which differ from those by which their ideology was forged; but rather than meeting the claim of being "a revolutionary theory and a theory of revolution," this is a general theory of change, which could apply equally well to the rise of fascism.

In order to differentiate between the phenomenon of idiosyncratic change in consciousness and a change which would undo the effect of ideology (e.g., allow the formerly hidden aspects of relationships to be perceived), it is necessary to briefly discuss the conceptualization of *consciousness, change*

and *transformation*. The term "false consciousness" implies the possibility of true consciousness, and such a dualism reduces ideology to the level of mistaken ideas which are "believed in," rather than the complex lived experience resulting in an ideological consciousness — a consciousness socially constituted and predisposed toward misrecognition. At the same time, no new terms have come forth to describe variations of consciousness and responses in situations where one individual's or group's level of counsciousness differs from another's. Before discussing *how* change in consciousness may occur, these differences in consciousness that exist at both the individual and group level should be illustrated.

In the case of individuals, consider a typical car ad in which a sexy woman is linked to the car (usually lounging on it): one person desires the car and envies those who can possess the car and (as is implied to the unconscious) so possess the woman; another abhors the vision and sees in the ad an objectification of women in the service of the automobile industry. Both individuals obviously have socially constituted consciousnesses, yet there is a fundamental mystification in the consumer's attitude to the ad, compared to that of the ad's critic. Both individuals may act: the consumer impelled by the frustration of expectations and desire, the critic motivated by the recognition of oppression. While both may yearn for a different situation, only the critic's position incorporates the Marxist concept of "self-consciousness," a consciousness of the place of the self in social relationships (i.e., an analog to class consciousness). The point of this very simple example is to align the notion of "self-consciousness" with that of demystification of ideology. In this example, despite self-consciousness, the individual lacks a social forum for practice. In work groups, consciousness similar to that of the consumer of the ad may lead to "liberal-progressive" change which can result in the redistribution of material goods ("getting a bigger piece of the pie"), etc. However, the basic ideological premises remain unchallenged. In contrast, critical social transformation presupposes a degree of consciousness which alters the perception of social relationships and subjectivity, and would lead to a work group's struggle to change the structure of power.

A theory of the dynamic subject and a theory of social transformation can emerge from examining the nature of imaginary social relations and the process of their demystification. For example, when power is misrecognized as authority, and a subject experiences respect for this authority, ideology is at work. The power relation is in the background for the subject, and the fear it evokes is unconscious, while the foreground is experienced as respect. What allows this misrecognition to shift? Allows the fear to be less repressed? Allows the respect to dissolve, exposing the subject (not absolutely, but relatively speaking) to the real relationship?

To explore the structural difference between actual social relationships and imaginary relations derived from the unconscious, it is necessary to examine the distinction between metaphor and analogy and their power to explain semiological and political phenomena. In metaphor (which, together with metonomy, we now take to be the process of the unconscious and of language) an element is missing. To borrow *Webster's* example, a "marble brow" may call forth the image "a brow as *white* as marble" (as *Webster* suggests), or "a brow as *cold* as marble" or the brow of *Michelangelo's David*. . . . The space which underlies "marble" can be occupied by any one or several meanings; this is an example of the process of the sliding of the signifier over the signified. In metaphor, by definition, an element is missing (and in the case of prohibitions and taboos, the missing element is repressed from consciousness).[8] In the production of meaning, the unconscious evokes substitute (preconscious) material in the place of these missing (repressed) elements. In analogy, *there is no unspoken element*; analogies juxtapose two sets of relationships whose internal structures are identical to each other. By contrast, in metaphor, as in the process of language, there is never a correspondence of identity between signifier and signified.

In a social setting, the objective relationships of each member of a social group to the class or individual in power, are *analogous* to one another. The idea of anology thus opens the way to comprehending how actual social relations might be experienced as such, i.e., these actual relations are no longer transformed through metaphor into imaginary relations. While neither actual social nor unconscious relations can be "recognized" (in their totality), it is nevertheless the case that in actual social relations, the subject *can* discover his social position by reference to the analogous positions held by others in a particular social formation. The identical nature of these analogous relationships has two important aspects. First, these relationships are analogous in *reality*, not in phantasy (where they may be similar, but certainly not identical). Secondly, the nature of analogy is such that there is a one-to-one correspondence of identity, with no missing elements. It is the *identical* nature of the relationships which provides the possibility of releasing the subject from the misrecognitions of ideological relations. A brief development of this possibility serves also to outline the problems encountered in uniting the theory of monadic subjectivity as developed by Coward and Ellis with a theory of transformation which depends necessarily on the introduction of group process.

In a social setting (e.g., work: workers and boss; education: students and teacher; community: women and men), the subject experiences itself in relation to authority (in phantasy, the Father) in the presence of the other members of the group. The "other" (members of the same social group) is the third component (along with the subject and the authority figure) in what

resembles an Oedipal triangle. Thus we would expect, from a strict psychoanalytic reading, that the other signifies the Mother to the unconscious, and the relation to authority (Father) would remain an Oedipal one. However, on at least one level this situation is unlike the triangle of infancy, where the mother/other is first experienced as omnipotent — the "other" group members are in an analogous position vis-a-vis authority, and therefore do not necessitate the mediation of the Father (or the maintenance of imaginary relationship whereby actual social power is experienced as paternal). On the other hand, owing to analogy, the subject is able to identify with the other, and a fascinating hypothesis regarding the convergence of the real and imaginary in group process emerges at this point.

In so identifying itself with the group, the subject is in the same instance recapitulating the archaic unity with the omnipotent mother, which characterized the imaginary phase at that time. The experience (in the imaginary plane) of impotence of the subject (and the group) contradicts the unconscious memory of omnipotence and a dialectic between the two is thus invoked. Under normal conditions it is precisely the threat of the imaginary fusion which is defended against by obedience to authority. As the subject is partially decentered from its position of child (in relation to Father), a new position from which to exercise its subjectivity is available — *experienced consciously as a collective position.* The group comes to recognize its omnipotence — *an omnipotence which partakes of both the imaginary and the real* — and acts upon it. In so far as the regression to the imaginary is accompanied by some measure of political awareness (self-consciousness) the recognition is at once regressive and progressive, imaginary and real.

The process of de-cathecting the phantasy relationship with the Father through identification with others who are in an analogous relationship, requires certain conditions; perhaps the new "objective conditions" in Coward's and Ellis's theory of change, a sufficient level of contradiction in ideology, a social context (collectivity) which permits the cathexis of fusion without invoking defense in the form of paternal intervention, etc. Critical social transformation can, no doubt, occur in a variety of circumstances; but a theory of subjectivity, which holds that the subject is constituted in a certain "position" in social relations, must recognize the interaction of the subject with others in analogous positions as a crucial aspect in understanding both change in consciousness and in social transformation. To posit social transformation as a direct outcome of intrapsychic change within the subject is to remain trapped within the confines of a semiotic theory which has come to recognize the importance of the "producer of meaning" — the heterogeneous subject — in a social context abstracted from human relations. It is the

group and the analogy which informs the individual, and thus transforms subjectivity.

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Notes

1. Coward and Ellis assert the "materiality" of intrapsychic, imaginary processes, based on their dialectic, heterogeneous nature. While their understanding of the subject contributes to materialist theory, a basic argument can be made against relegating intrapsychic phenomena and the material conditions of life to the same realm.

2. A contributing factor is the plethora of anthropomorphized concepts, e.g., "Dialectical materialism thinks the concepts of historical materialism. . ." (p. 82). As would be expected, there is particular difficulty in the chapter on Lacan. One is often told that Lacan's thought can only be expressed by signifiers that slide a bit more than usual over their signifieds, and criticism of obscurity is not in vogue. Regardless, entering Chapter 6, "On the Subject of Lacan," is like falling into a quicksand of signs whose elements are sliding at an unprecedented rate; for example: "The claim that the phallus is a signifier the symbolic function of which already included him or her becomes clearer" (p. 120). Clearer?

3. "Heterogenous subject" is a paradoxical term, since subjectivity is precisely the illusory harmony that is the conscious experience of the underlying heterogeneity (competing drives). In a sense, recent work in the theory of subjectivity is requiring us to read: "[heterogeneous] subject" whenever the word "subject" is referring to a person; yet "subjectivity" — the experience of the [heterogeneous] subject, is an experience of homogeneity, harmony, etc.

4. Jon Robert Schiller, "The Illusion of a Future," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (Spring/Summer, 1979), 118-130.

5. Joel Kovel, "Rationalization and the Family," *Telos* 37 (Fall, 1978), 5-22.

6. This explains why EST graduates are frequently recognizable; despite their diverse biographies, they emerge with a style for apprehending the world, which appears as a common trait.

7. See the works of Gérard Mendel, Claire Rueff, Gérard Lévy and Jacky Beillerot in *Sociopsychanalyse*, vols. 1-7, Paris: Payot, 1972-1978. Gérard Mendel's article in *Sociopsychoanalyse*, 2 has been translated: "The Theory of the Sur plus Value of Power and the Method of its Demystification," in W. Muensterberger and A. Esman, eds., *The Psychoanalytic Study of Society*, Vol. 6, New York: International Universities Press, 1975.

8. Jean Laplanche and Serge Leclaire, "The Unconscious: A Psychoanalytic Study," *Yale French Studies*, Vol. 48 (1972), pp. 118-178.

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FEMINIST EXPLORATIONS: LIFE UNDER PATRIARCHY

Deborah Melman

Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, eds., *New French Feminisms. An Anthology*, Amherst: the University of Massachusetts Press, 1980, pp. 279.

New French Feminisms embodies a long awaited attempt to introduce to the English-speaking world the spirit of the current French feminist endeavours. It is an assembly of poems, essays, sentences and fragments meandering over its chosen terrain — the analysis of women's oppression, and the way to liberation. The pieces reiterate and condemn, conflict with and support, one another. It should not come as a surprise that the editors, Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron, have made no attempt to make a logical *tour de force*, to present a unified (and thus simplified) statement; in short, to recapitulate a phallocentric intellect. The collection is presented as a literary *jouissance*,[1] a fact that is explicitly acknowledged.

> Women's *jouissance* carries with it the notion of fluidity, diffusion, duration. It is a kind of potlatch in the world of orgasms, a giving, expending, dispensing of pleasure without concern about ends or closure. One can easily see how the same imagery could be used to describe women's writing. (P. 36)

Words — weighted and self-important — are not used to encode, label and then reconstruct in some new manageable form, so that all that was alien has been appropriated and poses no more threat to the phallic sovereignty. Instead this book is a summation of surprises — words liberating, evoking, tiptoeing respectfully — an exploration of the gaps and *lacunae* that are covered over by the Symbolic order.

The various and disparate writings in the volume become multi-tentacled explorations that probe the hidden corners of women's lives; a woman's fear to speak in public, the silent speech of the hysterical symptom, the joy of pregnancy. It is in such subterranean moments that the fragmented specters of an undescribed, unelucidated female discourse are evoked. Unelucidated

because they constitute the very *lacunae* where a masculine language and order differentiates itself. The pleasures, the sensations and experiences that are female are only to be discerned in the gaps of discourse. In language and in history they are invisible and inaudible, conspicuous in their absence.

Freud, and Lacan following him, have given testimony to the symbolic place of women. They have written the *mythology* of our discourse. They have laid bare for all to see that woman is the one without, the one that must accommodate and pay homage to the phallus. She is constituted as a mutilated subject in the name of that omnipresent signifier — the phallus (God, the Absent Father). Let there be no further pretense of the sexual neutrality of the social discourse, no denial that this discourse is predicated ontologically at the very moment when masculine authority intrudes.

What does it mean for a sexed human being to live in a phallocentrically ordered universe?[2] *New French Feminisms* contains analyses and strategies that can be viewed in the light of this question. While the analyses differ, and the strategies conflict, it is the nature of the problematic given voice to, that makes the text a valuable contribution to both the feminist movement and to the field of psychoanalytic theory. It has fallen to feminism to disentangle, explore and elucidate the very structures and practices of patriarchy. In the realm of academic discourse, the frequent use of the term patriarchy has only served to naturalize it, to make it an everyday word that no one need any longer define — one more instance of the insidiousness of language. "The challenging of this solidarity of logocentrism and phallocentrism," Hélène Cixous writes:

> has today become insistent enough — the bringing to light of the fate which has been imposed upon woman, of her burial — to threaten the stability of the masculine edifice which passed itself off as eternal-natural; by bringing forth from the world of femininity reflections, hypotheses which are necessarily ruinous for the bastion which still holds the authority. (P. 92)

New French Feminisms offers a tentative but definite attempt to wrest language from the realm of the "natural," to claim the Symbolic as an object of investigation. In so doing the book relocates these once immutable structures to the domain of the *man-made*, a domain susceptible to the forces of change.

Herein lies the "newness" of the French feminists — a newness that signifies a break with the past, recapitulating Freud's rupturing of the "I." It is a break that Courtivron and Marks liken to a fourth narcissistic wound (following the "decenterings" of Copernicus, Darwin and Freud), a dethroning of the phallus as the prime signifier in the Symbolic order. The new feminists do not hesitate to defile the phallic. They write about the male preoccupation with

erection, and the size of the penis, their fear of death and their narcissistic quests for immortality. In fact it is this very feminist *negativity* that becomes a revolutionary weapon, a weapon that elicits what is ordinarily repressed.

With the channelling of feminist activity towards the realm of culture, writing is designated as a revolutionary tool. As women find their tongues, speak their own discourse, they infiltrate and shatter the phallocentric chain:

> If, however, "replete" words (*mots pleins*) belong to men, how can women speak "otherwise," unless, perhaps, we can make audible that which agitates within us, suffers silently in the holes of discourse, in the unsaid, or in the non-sense. " . . . [Women] say, the language you speak is made up of signs that rightly speaking designate what men have appropriated. Whatever they have not laid hands on, whatever they have not pounced on like many-eyed birds of prey, does not appear in the language you speak." (Xavière Gauthier, P. 163)[3]

Over and over in the text comes the exhortion: Write! Write as women. Write for women. Succumb neither to the flowers and frills of "feminine" writing (writing in the image sculpted by male desire), nor to the power offered by ignoring your sex and writing like a man. But this brave admonition disguises the full spectrum of possibilities — a spectrum that, to the credit of the editors, is well represented in this collection.

There are writers (most notably Luce Irigaray) who see the path to liberation in the recapturing of that which is essentially female. They celebrate the dark, the Anti-Logos, the diffuse differentness of female experience. In her attempt to chronicle female desire, Irigaray abandons the voyeuristic analysis that permeates male endeavours (is it not the sight of the mother's missing penis that initiates all the mischief?). She speaks of an autoerotism that does not need anything other than itself to be full. "A woman 'touches herself' constantly without anyone being able to forbid her to do so, for her sex is two lips which embrace continually" (p. 100). Irigaray gives testimony to a sexuality that is denied by the male gaze (for it sees only a scarred absence) and repressed by a male desire which seeks to create a passive receptacle for its own satisfaction. Freedom lies in the expression of the female imaginary. Woman must speak her bodily pleasures, give voice to the somatic speech that is hysteria. For the advocates of difference it is the witch — uncivilized and in communion with nature, rapturously dancing her freedom on the moors — who signifies liberation.

The celebration of difference is a controversial mode of political practice. It too eerily echoes the very reasoning of a patriarchal ideology that excludes

women because they are "naturally" and "essentially" different. This criticism is made in the *New French Feminisms* by both the orthodox left for whom class and not patriarchy is the central problem, and by feminists who link the struggle against patriarchy with the demise of capitalism. However, the veracity of this criticism offers no alternative practices that are specifically feminist. Julia Kristeva aptly characterizes the feminist dilemma;

> Women who write are brought, at their own pace and in their own way, to see sexual differentiation as interior to the praxis of every subject. There are two extremes in their writing experiences: the first tends to valorize phallic dominance, associated with the privileged father-daughter relationship, which gives rise to the tendency toward mastery, science, philosophy, professorships, etc. This virilization of women makes of her, ideally, a typical militant who can, in fact, become a veritable striking force in the social revolution. . . . [T]his doesn't at all justify any dogmatic interpretations that call for "happy sexuality" because it's taken over by society. — On the other hand, we flee everything considered "phallic" to find refuge in the valorization of a silent underwater body, thus abdicating any entry into history. (P. 166)

What remains for Kristeva is a negativity — the positive praxis of negativity. The turning of feminist attention towards the disruption of social codes, the disruption of the phallocentrically ordered Symbolic. What is new in French feminism is the broadening of the scope of feminist activity. A broadening, not a shifting. For there is no dispute over the absolute necessity for the feminist movement's involvement in the battle for free abortion, safety from rape, contraception (a major issue in primarily Catholic France) and the concrete issues that affect the day-to-day lives of women.

There is a contentiousness that emanates from this text, one that is amplified with translation into American political and intellectual discourse, where the language of Lacan, Barthes and Derrida cannot be easily inserted. *New French Feminisms* is particularly vulnerable to criticism, and it is necessary and inevitable that such criticism be made (would it be too audacious to liken criticism to resistance and to then interpret it as a defense against that fourth narcissistic coup to the phallus?). The argument is easily made that there is nothing new about the *New French Feminisms*, with its theories of difference and its glorification of that which is feminine. Such theories have appeared periodically and worse still have been associated with politically limited practices — either radical (usually homosexual) sexual segregation or conservatism.

It would be possible to justify the endeavours of the French feminists as therapeutic, to posit that the very process of translating that which is neurotic, i.e. privately suffered, into a public realm where it need not bear the burden of madness, is in itself liberating. But this is a secondary gain, an inadvertent advantage in the face of what I believe to be new about *New French Feminisms*, and that is the positing of *hysteria as the royal road to Patriarchy*. Precisely as the dream lurks behind the realm of consciousness, and *like a symptom* carries both the mark of desire and the taboo against its expression, so does hysteria. And femininity in general, for what is femininity other than a mild, nonpathological dose of hysteria? Picture the sensitive, passive heroine, lost to the world of obsessional detail, a stranger to science and technology, as she dwells in her dreams of true love. The hysterical discourse lurks beneath the Symbolic carrying its desire and also the repression of it, and like any symptom it alleviates the anxiety of contradiction.

Just as consciousness never of itself reveals its secrets, which are only unearthed in its cracks — the joke, the dream, the symptom, the slip — so it cannot be expected of the Patriarchal order of language and the Symbolic to render its underpinnings for examination. It is only the cracks that afford such privileged information, and the discourse of the female is one of its cracks. This is not simply to say that the sexuality of women needs more scrutiny and documentation. What must be understood is the relationship between the documentors, observers, categorizers and their object. As with the serene opacity of the psychoanalyst, his desire obscured, so their voyeurism is also unremarked while the hysteric is stripped bare.

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Notes

1. Sexual rapture, bliss.
2. It was not through lack of theoretical expertise that Freud could never deal satisfactorily with that age old question; what is it that a woman desires? Rather there is no place in the social order that he helped unveil for female desire to be revealed.
3. Xavière Gauthier, "Is There Such a Thing As Women's Writing?" *NFF*, p. 163. She quotes Monique Wittig in *Les Guérillères*.

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THE GRAMMAR OF FEMININE SEXUALITY

Louise Marcil-Lacoste

Luce Irigaray, *Speculum de l'autre Femme,* Paris: *Les Editions de Minuit,* 1974, pp. 463; and *Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un*, Paris: *Les Editions de Minuit*, 1977, pp. 219.

Luce Irigaray's books on women are little known, especially to English readers, and even in French articles, they have not received the attention they deserve. She published *Speculum de l'autre femme* (1974) and *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (1977) in the collection "*Critique*" of *Les Editions de Minuit.*" In general terms, the attempt is to provide us with a new reading, and interpretation, of the "black continent" of psychoanalysis. More precisely, Luce Irigaray tries to show the extent to which feminine sexuality has been thought of in the framework of masculine parameters.

Her basic claim is that given the theoretical framework of psychoanalysis, especially in Freud and in Lacan, women were doomed not to be recognized as women. This, Irigaray argues, derives from the fact that psychoanalysts did not question the discourse of all discourses, the one which dominates philosophy and which permeates the general grammar of our culture: the discourse of mastery (*C.*, pp. 129, 155). In other words, where women are concerned, psychoanalysis still is an enclave in philosophy and in religious mythologies (*C.*, p. 123). This fact would also explain a lack of concern for, and assessment of, the socio-economic factors and rules defining the condition of women.

Given the topic, the radicalness of many of Irigaray's claims, and the original ways in which her studies are structured, her books are not easy to read. This difficulty stems not merely from the fact that Irigaray writes in a manner which is consonant with recent attempts to create a new "*écriture*," but also because her way of writing is, in itself, her thesis. Arguing that "the/a" woman has been excluded from the *production* of discourse, the present alternative for women studies is, she claims, to *go through* the dominant language where women have been connoted as castrated and as forbidden from *parole*, and then to open new paths.

The issue is to alter the phallocratic order, in such a way that a non-hierarchical re-articulation of sexual differences may emerge as a possible and

desirable horizon (*C.*, pp. 156, 143). A feminine view, it is argued, does not postulate the One or the Many, the reproduction or the representation (*C.*, pp. 147-148). In any case, the issue is certainly not to invert or revert the phallocentric order and thereby to attempt to provide us with a new "concept" or a new "logic" of femininity (*C.*, pp. 151, 122). The issue rather is to put into practice the tabooed difference of women in going through language and to disengage women fully alive (*vivant*) from males' conceptions (*C.*, p. 211). In other words, the point would be to get to a *mimesis*, but in Plato's second sense of the term which meant a production, rather than a mimicry, inverted or not.

Irigaray's books are challenging in many ways. At the crossroads of psychoanalysis, philosophy and religious mythologies, they already require a break with the well-spread habit of mono-disciplinary studies. Besides, as I have said, part of her thesis is to create a new way of writing and thinking on, about and for women. This appears not only in Irigaray's style — she usually breaks down a phallocentric "logic" or ontology, often in a humorous manner — but also in the non-linear structure of her books.

Speculum de l'autre femme begins with a long chapter on Freud and ends with an equally long chapter on Plato's allegory of the cave. This pattern, Irigaray admits, may suggest that she considers history the wrong way up. Yet, she says that her "incontournable volume" may be read in any order: "the/a woman never shuts herself up (again) in a volume" (*S.*, p. 296).

Significantly, this important statement appears in the "anti-conclusion" presented in the body of her book. There, one also finds a series of eight short studies on (and around) relevant passages taken from Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, in addition to some writings from the mystics (Maître Eckhard, Ruybroek L'Admirable, Angèle de Foligno). A similarly disconcerting structure appears in *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*. In addition to two "interviews" — essentially meant as further explanations on her first book — Irigaray presents a collection of already published articles, in particular on (and around) Freud, Lacan, Marx, and the mechanics of the fluids.

The non-linear structure of Irigaray's books, together with the non-linear approach used within each chapter, is already evidence of a systematic attempt to alter the phallocentric economy of the Logos and language, without falling into a gyneacocentric inverted world. A "classic" reader may find it easier to acknowledge this pattern by starting either with Irigaray's first chapter on Freud's writings on women (in *Speculum de l'autre femme*) or her fifth chapter on Lacan's account of women entitled "Cosi fan tutti" (in *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un*). In both cases, the "quotations" together with Irigaray's multiple way of altering them are easier to pinpoint.

Acknowledging Irigaray's shrewd criticisms of the logic of inversion when talking of women is a crucial condition for understanding her theses. This has

not been done yet, as may be seen in the superficial accounts of her studies by most critics. For example, Claude Alzon — in *La femme mythifiée, le femme mystifiée* — devotes a chapter to Irigaray's books in which he cannot see any more than a plea for a gyneacocentric inversion of the phallocratic order. "The martyr of the Holy Vulva," he writes, wants a speculum in place of the ruler. This kind of irony — itself a good illustration of the kind of contempt for femininity as a genuine *theoretical* issue which Irigaray challenges — ignores the radical question here at stake.

According to Irigaray, indeed, the inversion thesis itself derives from the old dream and grammar of symmetry and its corresponding hierarchy of the sexes. As a (so-called) fatal "logic," it exhibits the general inability of our forms of rationality to think about "the other" as different. In its most general terms, Irigaray argues, feminity is precisely "the" other of our culture (*C.*, p. 163). This appears in many ways, but most strikingly in the fact that women are usually defined as want, defect, absence, envy, reverse-of-men. As Irigaray puts it, women are defined in terms of the male standard "*à une inversion près*," that is, with *that* exception that women are defined as an inversion of men, as their bad copies (*S.*, pp. 63, 70). And the radical question here is: is it so very unthinkable that the other does exist? (*C.*, p. 128)

One of Irigaray's most interesting and subtle arguments is found in her thesis about the complex structure ("*l'aporie*") of language. Indeed, she argues, we can say both that there is no language but a male language *and* that we do not know males' language properly. The problem of women, therefore, lies at the very crossroads of language *both* as a (sexually) neutral vehicle and a cultural instrument which is specified by a masculine set of rules, metaphors and limits. Indeed, rationality prescribes that we talk either as a sexually neutral being or as a male. In this context, Irigaray argues, femininity must be seen as the limit of philosophy and of rationality itself (*C.*, p. 146). Important as it is as historical fact, the argument that males have created language for their own exclusive use cannot be sufficient to explain the peculiar nature of the myth of the neutral man.

According to Irigaray, men claim (and pretend) to define everything in a sexually indifferent manner (*C.*, p. 127). However, in giving specific meanings to basic concepts (such as Being, Subject, Logos, Origin, Principle, Telos, etc.), they use a logic of identity, an ontological *a priori* of sameness, a dialectical model itself in search of the movement toward unity, etc. (*S.*, pp. 27-28, 46-50, 92-93). Furthermore, the specifications of this univocal economy of the logos are given by means of a series of metaphors which give priority to sight, look, instruments, solid and photologic properties, and which thereby undervalue, if not altogether ignore, metaphors related to touch, proximity, envelope, fluids, etc. Presumably, the latter would be more adequate to refer to women (*S.*, pp. 93, 109; *C.*, pp. 23-29, 111, 128); but be that as it may, it is

significant to realize the extent to which non-solid and non-photologic metaphors are given a subordinate, if not altogether irrelevant, status in the phallocentric grammar of symmetry.

Thus, Irigaray argues, the economy of the logos, with its linearity, its property/propriety and its instrumentality defines the Subject as a dominant being and a sovereign — including its ideal picture in the concept of God — a system of symbols to which women have no access (*C.*, pp. 71, 63, 145-147, 184-185). The sense in which this Subject is the "present figure of jealous gods," the exclusive standard of truth and meaning, is what Irigaray calls the phallus symbol, the phallocratic grammar of culture which "the/a" woman always overflows. When they talk about the Subject, she says, philosophers make it clear that women are not the subject of discussion.

To be sure, at a formal level, this univocal economy of the logos would not seem to be a relevant clue to the very presence of a masculine standard. Yet, as Irigaray forcibly suggests, it is a crucial rule of this formalism to ascribe a secondary status (if not irrelevance) to any specification defining males as the exclusive standard of human beings. This is the reason why the set of metaphors used in psychoanalysis, philosophy and religious mythologies are so important as heuristic devices, though they are usually denied such a value by an appeal to the fact that they are "merely" metaphors. But, as Irigaray puts it, such metaphors must be seen as the "ruse of reason," given their overwhelming presence and their systematically hierarchical usage in the economy of the logos.

Besides her account of the complex structure of language, the most important and, I think, original contribution of Irigaray's books to women studies is her account of the set of *relationships* between femininity as a bad copy of the male and femininity as a means of reproduction. The dilemma here — which illustrates anew the "*aporie*" of language — may be summarized as follows: though they are "*interdites*," that is, though women are denied as genuine subjects, as producers of meanings and symbols, and as genuine partners for exchange, women are also "*inter-dites*," that is, they are told in between the lines of the grammar of culture. Irigaray's basic claim is that, when they are not defined as inverted males, women are systematically ascribed the *kind* of *indifference*, of undifferentiation which is necessary for masculine parameters (rules, standards, principle, telos, etc.) to make (their) sense. This *un*differentiation by which all science, logic and discourse is sustained, together with the fact that femininity is that which functions under the name of the *un*conscious, shows that women are ascribed a status of silent plasticity *in order to* remain the grounds to launch and limit the phallocentric production of language and symbols (*C.*, pp. 22, 67, 94, 99, 122). Thus, women are denied the very *ambi*valence by which males can evolve at all levels of

rationality, theories, symbols and legislation in a productive manner (*S.*, pp. 132-133).

This operation, to be sure, is not performed in a simple way. Involved in the process is a series of reductions which Irigaray analyses carefully: the ascription of the multiple side of the One *versus* Many dialectic to women; the further reduction of this multiplicity to a "class," which dissolves women into numerically interchangeable entities; the reduction of the system of proper names to a pattern of property and monopoly; the further reduction of womanhood to motherhood, which is perhaps the paradigm of all paradigms, to the extent that motherhood is the very symbol of silent plasticity and thereby denied as an active and properly productive process.

The matrix, a twofold symbol of the principle of origin and of speculation, is the emblem here. The crucial point is that as a symbol it *must* be defined as a non-determined entity, by a concept of undifferentiation which is made necessary for the symbol, and concept, of women-mothers to remain available *for* further specific (phallocentric) specifications. This appears not only in the classical structure of matter, be it prime matter, but also in similarly determined concepts such as the object, the real, the principle of origin, etc. This basic pattern of the economy of the logos is illustrated, in effect, in most of Irigaray's chapters, whether in Freud's view of women as reduced to envy of the male or to castrated mother or in Lacan's "logical" account of women as the other of men, or again in philosophical writings. Strikingly convincing in Irigaray's main thesis about the (logically necessary) reduction of women to this undifferentiated entity are the excerpts from Plotinus. They concern the definition of matter in terms of impassiveness, inertia and undifferentiation, the latter being quite explicitely said to be "absolutely necessary for the matter to be totally different from any form that might penetrate it and thereby remain altogether and for ever unchanged as the very receptacle for *any* thing" (*S.*, pp. 215-217).

A similarly suggestive reading of other philosophical views is proposed. For example, Irigaray's chapters on Plato are quite revealing, both on the necessary plasticity of "reality," matter, appearances, and on the self-preserving nature of the cadastral survey of properties, forms, telos, etc. Plato there appears to have presented the twofold moves later at work both in Plotinus and Descartes. The *cogito* is presented as an attempt to cross out all origin and re-engender the whole universe in such a way that men's thought be the proper matrix of all things. Again, Irigaray offers quite interesting hints in her reading of Marx's puzzles over the enigma of money and the abstraction of goods: both are presented as examples (and consequences) of the inability to allow any differentiation which is not already settled in the phallocentric economy of the logos, the latter being taken in its concrete and social sense.

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Considering the radicalness of Irigaray's approach to the question of women, as well as the crucial relevance of the many questions she raises about the general grammar into which this question is pre-determined, it seems high time that we go beyond the mere irony of her studies. It is time to realize the heuristic value of most of her theses and to undertake a series of verifications for which her reflections provide so important a rationale. When we realize that the overwhelming dilemma in which women studies find themselves — either charged with a denial of differentiation for purposes of equality or with a denial of similarity for the purposes of liberation — may be a "logical" consequence of the kind of grammar of symmetry which Irigaray so cleverly brings to light, we realize at the same time how crucial and urgent it is to go through the dominant forms of rationality anew.

In this context, it is to be hoped that Irigaray's studies be translated. To be sure, this undertaking would be quite a challenge. Yet, it would not only make her important contributions to women studies accessible, but most probably provide us with a test case of her very thesis about the subtle nature of the genderization of language. Indeed, the point would be to see whether we find, say, English equivalents to the French linguistic items and devices exhibiting the type of phallocentric structure which, she claims, permeates the very grammar of our culture. The point would also be to gather cross-cultural data in order to test the extent to which political symbols themselves obey a grammar which either trivializes the issue of equality between men and women, or *a priori* declares the fatal and logical untenability of any attempt to improve the feminine condition.

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"SEXUAL OUTLAWS"

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Guy Hocquenghem, *Homosexual Desire*, translated from the French by Daniella Dangoor, London: Allison & Busby, 1978, pp. 144.

Hocquenghem's *Homosexual Desire* was originally published in Europe at the same time Dennis Altman's *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*[1] appeared in the English-speaking world. With Altman, *Homosexual Desire* presents the first modern theoretical *tour de force* devoted to wresting reflection upon homosexual existence from heterosexist presumptions. Long the preserve of psychiatrists and other moral entrepreneurs, commentary on gay people has typically remained imprisoned in an ideological straitjacket analogous to the Jim Crow "scholarship" which so long bedevilled blacks.[2] The first flourish of scholarly gay self-reflection follows on the advent of the gay liberation movement. This scholarship is an unabashed challenge to the taken-for-granted order of family, gender and intimacy. Hocquenghem remarks in his opening words that *Homosexual Desire* is an investigation of the "phantasies and ratiocinations of the heterosexual world on the subject of 'homosexuality'" (p. 35).

The book is founded in Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's[3] onslaught upon psychiatry's reduction of the world to the sociodynamics of the nuclear family. *Homosexual Desire* develops a polemic against the enforced "oedipalization" of homosexuality by scholarly traditions and the public mind. In a series of brilliant exposés, Hocquenghem demonstrates that relegation of homosexuality to the "ontological darkness of the 'unnatural,' the 'deviant,' and the 'pathological'"[4] reveals only the paranoid delusions of the heterosexist mind and nothing about homosexuality. Homosexuality is no more than the realization of a universal human potential; its degradation by classical psychoanalysis, the mass media, police reports and judicial proceedings constitutes the problem. Drawing on French evidence, Hocquenghem remarks that "the law is clearly a system of desire, in which provocation and voyeurism have their own place" (p. 52). Who can doubt the claim when the RCMP routinely employs sophisticated electronic surveillance to overcome darkness and physical inaccessibility in order to spy upon sexual rendezvous among men in public parks?[5] Such practices are also

commonplace in the United States and in both western and eastern Europe. Hocquenghem's cast of paranoiac French mayors, prosecutors, doctors and journalists is paralleled on this continent; for example: California Senator John Briggs, who pushed for the elimination of schoolworkers who are gay *or condoned gay people*; Anita Bryant's crusade to "Protect America's Children"; the *Toronto Sun's* Claire Hoy and the campaign to suppress the *Body Politic*. As soon as homosexuality becomes mentionable, popular prejudice can be turned to profit.

Hocquenghem wants to understand homosexuality in its own terms and explore its implications for conventional understandings of gender, social hierarchy and eroticism. This book is less interesting in the answers it provides, than in the questions it poses: what happens to male privilege when the phallic signifier is dethroned by the desiring use of the anus? "Only the phallus dispenses identity: any social use of the anus, apart from its sublimated use, creates the risk of a loss of identity. Seen from behind we are all women; the anus does not practise sexual discrimination" (p. 87). What is this unique social formation without generations or biological reproduction which nevertheless never lacks members? "Homosexual production takes place according to a mode of nonlimitative horizontal relations, heterosexual reproduction according to one of hierarchical succession" (p. 95). How is polyvocal desire subdivided into homo- and heterosexuality and forced into the Procrustean bed of Oedipal relations? Would an end to anti-homosexual paranoia necessarily reorganize repressive institutions which seem to require homophobia for their perpetuation? "We find the greatest charge of latent homosexuality in those social machines which are particularly anti-homosexual — the army, the school, the church, sport, etc." (p. 58)

Homosexual relations challenge the ideological legitimations of patriarchy which declare the Oedipal structure of the family as biological, gender roles as genetic, and the subordination of women as universal. Gay social organization opens a radical alternative to sexuality confined to the nexus of dominant and submissive, active and passive, subject and object, male and female. In Hocquenghem's words: "what is repressed in [male] homosexuals is not the love of woman as a particular sexual object but the entire subject-object system which constitutes an oppression of desire" (p. 125).

The book is innovative, seminal, provocative, but not without conceptual problems. The French structuralists peel away the layers of civilization to find Rousseau standing on his head. There appears to be no "ego," "individual," or "subject," only a natural substratum of "polyvocal, non-personalised relations among organs," the decoded flux of desire, an anti-humanist destruction of the subject. It is an irony of this book that the everyday life of gay people, their material existence, self-conceptions and aspirations are largely ignored in order that homosexuality may be appropriated as the

symbol of this natural substratum. Hocquenghem becomes the philosophical counterpart to John Rechy's bleak world of an anarchy of impersonal couplings.[6] Homosexual expression is constrained, according to this text, to two alternatives: submission to repressive heterosexual forms or the "abyss of nonpersonalised and uncodified desire . . . desire as the plugging in of organs subject to no rule or law" (p. 81). Hocquenghem's "desire" is a reified perpetual motion machine without antecedents or form.[7]

Despite their self-presentation as revolutionaries, both Hocquenghem's and Rechy's "sexual outlaws" are suspiciously compliant with the morality of capitalism — its "artificial reterritorializations of decoded flows" (to use French structuralist jargon). Sex becomes yet one more specialized compartment of life in a social system which fragments the person into a series of separate social roles. Sex becomes another commodity in a society where everything, including people, can be reduced to well-packaged consumer items. Sex acquires the "virtues" demanded for survival in the capitalist market system: emotional repression, competitiveness, manipulation. Hocquenghem believes this "plugging in of organs" is the "mode of existence of desire itself" (p. 118). The humanization of sexuality is dismissed as an anachronism: "It is no use trying to turn the clock back" (p. 130).

As a serious attempt to raise fundamental issues of sexual organization, this book merits a wide readership.

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Notes

1. Dennis Altman, *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*, New York: Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, 1971.
2. Cf. Barry D. Adam, *The Survival of Domination: Inferiorization and Everyday Life*, New York: Elsevier, 1978, Ch. 2.
3. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, translated from the French by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen Lane, New York: Viking, 1972, 1977.
4. Adam, *The Survival of Domination*, p. 34.
5. Cf. "Hidden Cameras Nab 80 in Park Washroom," *Body Politic*, No. 47, October, 1978, p. 9.
6. John Rechy, *The Sexual Outlaw: A Documentary*, New York: Dell, 1977.
7. Barry D. Adam, "Freedom from Psychiatry," *Body Politic*, No. 51, March/April, 1979, p. 36.

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THE RETURN OF THE OTHER

Jeanne Wolff v. Amerongen

> The ontological basis of history is the relation of men with other men, the fact that the individual "I" exists only against the background of the community . . . .
>
> Lucien Goldmann
>
> There are no subjects except by and for their subjection.
>
> Louis Althusser
>
> I identify myself in language, but only by losing myself in it like an object.
>
> Jacques Lacan

Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits, A Selection,* translated from the French by Alan Sheridan, New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1977, pp. 335.

Jacques Lacan is scarcely a new name on the academic scene. He is widely known and discussed in the fields of psychoanalysis, literary criticism and media studies. Although many books, essays and critical reviews have been devoted to formulating a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of his work for the North American audience, relatively few critics have attempted to relate Lacan's work to the study of ideology.

The lack of critical analysis in the realm of ideology cannot be accidental since Lacan himself has never developed a concrete theory of the subject and its formation in and through ideology, and accordingly it is only on a latent level that such a description can be derived. Despite Lacan's reticence to formulate explicitly a theory of ideology, he has, however unremittingly attacked the school of American Ego Psychology for its ideological presupposition of the autonomous individual and unified ego structure. Lacan relentlessly denounces this notion as a basic misrecognition of how the subject evolves.

RETURN OF THE OTHER

Lacan's dispute with Ego Psychology can be located in a wider historical-philosophical frame of reference where Hartmann et al. reflect on one hand a strictly Cartesian philosophy, with its postulate of an essential gulf between the *res cogitans* of the individual and the alien *res extensa* of the world. Lacan on the other hand assumes the Hegelian view in which for human beings the world and consciousness are mutually determining and interpenetrable, and that, in fact, the existence of an outside social world is already implied in the constitution of any single consciousness.

Louis Althusser was among the first Marxist theoreticians to recognize the applicability of Lacan's developmental theory of the "decentralized subject" as a powerful explanation of ideological formation and the reproduction of ideology. Althusser ends his essay on Freud and Lacan with the hopeful note:

> It must be clear that this has opened up one of the ways which may perhaps lead us some day to a better understanding of this *structure of misrecognition* which is of particular concern for all investigations into ideology.[1]

Two recent publications, *On Ideology*[2] and *Language and Materialism,* have attempted to enhance this understanding and it is the latter which claims that Lacan's work "provides the foundation of a materialist theory of the subject in the social process . . . . Lacan's subject is the new subject of dialectical materialism; a subject in process."[3]

* * *

What then is this new subject who becomes the bearer of ideology and at the same time is constituted by it? And since it is the structure of misrecognition that underlies the proper functioning of ideology, how does the subject misrecognize itself and consequently its outside world?

Lacan situates this moment of misrecognition in the *mirror stage*, through which the infant passes at the age of 6-18 months. The child will recognize itself in front of the mirror, a recognition that is usually accompanied by an intense feeling of *jouissance* (jubilance). Lacan interprets this elated feeling as an indication of the fundamental misrecognition that has taken place when the infant sees a unified body when, in fact it is not yet in control of complete motor coordination and constitutes nothing more than *un corps morcelé.* Thus, while the infant is completely dependent upon others, in particular the mother, it takes its reflection in the mirror, which seemingly portrays an autonomous independent human being, as itself and its own body as an alien body. Thus the first instance of misrecognition is accomplished in alienation. The child captured by its own reflection is trying out the

movements it perceives in the mirror and reduplicates the image inside and outside itself, constantly repeating the seduction which it experiences in the mirror movements of itself. Of course Lacan's description of the mirror is to a certain extent metaphorical since the issue is not the child's reflection in a glass but rather the process whereby its first act of self constitution is achieved via the identification with a foreign body. Regardless of whether the projective identification proceeds with the child's own reflection or that of the mother or any other external other, it always remains an Other, an alien body with which the infant identifies *thus mistaking a representation for itself.* The idealized mirror representation characterizes the structure of the Ideal Ego, or *alter ego*, and at the moment that the infant identifies with its idealized ego, it also gets lost in it and captured by it.

Thus the mirror phase not only initiates the stage for the subject's fundamental alienation from itself, but it also marks the subject's structural dependence on an Other, because what the infant wrongly perceives as its self-identity is always at first and forever that of another. For this reason the dual relationship between the alter ego (or as Lacan also calls it the *moi*) and the other sets up the intimately linked feelings of love and aggression as the infant attempts by these alternate means to compensate for the dimly perceived alienation.[4]

The *Ideal Ego* is the primordial form of the I which is

> objectified in the dialectic of identification with the other .... But the important point is that this form (the Ideal Ego) situates the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being of the subject asymptotically.[5]

In other words, the subject can never recapture the image it projected outside and then introjected as the basic structure of its self-identity: it can only gradually approach this fundamental split between imago and body but can never meet it:[6]

If we now define ideology not in the traditional Marxist fashion as a *false* consciousness but as a *misrecognized* consciousness which makes the individual believe himself the agent of his own actions, we can understand the important function the mirror phase plays for the positioning of the subject in the social world.

For the subject to function properly in the realm of ideology it has to be accepted by other subjects as a separate autonomous individual. Indeed, it is this need for recognition that perpetually reifies our subjectivity, a movement Althusser describes as "the rituals of ideological recognition . . . which

guarantee for us that we are concrete individual, distinguishable and (naturally) irreplaceable subjects."[7] This fundamental need for recognition by the Other can already be observed when the child passes through the mirror stage, because not only does it seek an external proof of itself but it also desires to situate itself in the social order by comparing itself with others. It is equally important for the child to recognize the Other as it is to be recognized by the Other.

In the child's desire to reaffirm its Ideal Ego it needs the constant reassurance of the mother which it strives for in the *Imaginary* phase. At the price of her confirmation, it submerges into the eternal movement of the desire of the other (le desir de L'Autre), "namely that it is *qua* the Other that he desires."[8] According to Lacan, the infant not only desires recognition but constitutes its desire in a dialectical relationship in which the child is also the mother's desire. In order to satisfy her desire, the child identifies with the mother's original desire to have a *phallus*.[9] In other words, desire itself — what seems most private and personal — is itself a social product derived from the desire of another. The infant becomes what the mother desires it to be.

Hence, the subject misrecognizes his desire along the same line as he did his ego, "a *meconnaissance* by which he transfers the permanence of his desire to an ego that is nevertheless intermittent, and inversely, protects himself from his desire by attributing to it these intermittences."[10]

This imaginary realm (where everything seems to be total and absolute, either all good or bad) where no distinction or relativity can be drawn is disrupted by the entrance of the father who represents *the Law and Language*.

It is with the acknowledgement of a tertiary structure and the learning of language that the child is thrust into the *Symbolic* realm. The appearance of the Father (the Father should not be taken literally but symbolically as the all-mighty Father, a paternal authority) constitutes a great threat as well as relief. The Father, as he who *has* the phallus, destroys an object relationship which was entirely grounded upon imagination and wishful fantasy. Yet, he also liberates the individual from the here-and-now of the *Imaginary*. Through the acquisition of language the child learns to separate the paternal function from the biological father, and language also permits it to seek for substitutes in which it can *re-present* its desire.

Foremost, however, the access to the *Symbolic Order* represents the second and last step along "the fictional line of alienation." The speaking subject must renounce the omnipotence of his desire and accept the limitation that is set by the Father; he must assume his "lack." In language the child has to name its desire but since it is the nature of desire that it cannot be named the child is forced to repress it. Language can thus be seen as a substitutive process, a compromise formation for the process of having to name the unnameable.

From this perspective language fulfills very much the same function as the symptom does.

According to Lacan "desire exists only because the unconscious exists, i.e., a language, whose structure and effects elude the subject; because on the level of language there is always something that is beyond consciousness where one can locate the function of desire."[11] Consequently the true desire and the multiple phantasmagoric forms it takes are repressed into the unconscious and constitute the mobilizing force of the unconscious which drives the subject to search for an increasing number of substitutes: "The nature of this repressed desire is insatiable because it is the desire not of a real person but of a symbolic position . . . it constantly recedes, being only the idea of an ultimate, transcendent guarantee of identity."[12]

Through language, subjectivity is restored to the objectified individual, who is given a name and taught to refer to itself by "I," "Me" or "Myself," which are signifiers along the sliding chain of signifiers. When Lacan says that a "signifier is that which represents the subject for another signifier" what he means is that language is constituted as an ever-sliding chain of signifiers where meaning is only derived by the arbitrary match between a signifier (the acoustic image) and the signified (the concept) or the idea which the word expresses. Thus the subject who is represented by the signifier either through "I," his name, or his relative position, derives his meaning only because of the system to which he belongs and the relative position that he occupies within it. Consequently, the subject cannot represent what he really is, since there is no unified correspondence between himself and the conception of himself, but *he can only be understood in his social relation to all other subjects.* The individual establishes his subjectivity through difference from others.

The "I" that is usually understood as character, identity or self is not self-consciousness but the object of consciousness: it indicates nothing more than the subject of "enunciation," yet it does not truly signify it.

Samuel Weber argues that the I, traditionally identified with the subject of self-consciousness, becomes for Lacan exactly the part of the subject which excludes the true historicity of the individual.[13] The subject who has always been regarded as the true agent of history, a self-conscious human being, is in fact a subject-less being dependent and dominated in its practice and desire by others and objectified from himself, remaining a mere link in the signifying chain.

From the Lacanian perspective then, language is not a tool of self-mastery but *rather a system that subordinates and constitutes the subject.* In a sense it is language that "speaks" the child-becoming-adult and not the other way around.

It is at this point that Althusser's perspective becomes most immediately relevant. According to Althusser, ideology is not merely a set of ideas or a

system of beliefs imposed by the ruling class; rather ideology slides into all human activity and is thus identical with the lived experience of human existence itself. Therefore, for ideology to work, it cannot be perceived as an external enforced system of beliefs but rather as an internally generated set of "natural" ideals that determine how the subject "normally" acts, feels and thinks of himself as well as of others. To assure this process of misrecognition, ideology has to appeal to the imaginary nature of the Ego, the *moi* or Ideal Ego which mistakingly perceives itself as a unitary structure, an Ego in control of itself. Ideology, like language, covers up the individual's confusion about his self and locates the fragmented and contradictory subject in a position of pseudo-coherence and responsibility for his own actions.

Since, as Ellis and Coward very clearly point out, the subject is not at the center of the social whole, ideology must not only induce a self-consciousness but it also must create a social relationship in which each individual can represent himself coherently within a social totality that is fundamentally contradictory. Ideology is the practice which articulates this relationship, and which, according to Althusser, is "the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence."[14]

Althusser argues against the Feuerbachian theory that men make for themselves an imaginary representation of their real conditions of existence because their conditions are intrinsically alienating; instead he maintains that men do not represent their real conditions of existence to themselves but rather the *relations* to their conditions, relations which are imaginary in nature and whose imaginary distortions are at the core of ideology.

We can now understand how ideology works on both the imaginary and symbolic level to assure the individual a fixed position in the social world. Ideology addresses the individual as a subject, thereby fostering the self-consciousness achieved by the acquisition of language. Yet, at the same time, it reinforces the imaginary nature of the ego, reproducing the phantasmagoric relationship no longer fixated upon the original object of desire, but rather upon the social system as a whole.

In religion, the paternal metaphor is, of course, God, "the Unique, Absolute Other Subject" in whose relationship all other religious subjects define themselves and subject themselves, becoming His "mirrors and reflections."[15] God could not exist by himself as the "Absolute Subject" since he needs his subjects as much as the master needs his slave in order to exist. Following Althusser's dictum that "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence," we can observe in religion, as in any other ideology, that the followers do not so much misconceive their real existence as live it in the Imaginary sphere as faithful believers. Thus real poverty is lived as the humble submission to the will of God. One's relation to the real conditions become imaginary, and it is this

imaginary phantasmagoric part of the relationship that ensures the adherence to the Absolute Subject.

To summarize this process of ideology (of which religion has been just one example for which any type of system[16] or belief system could be substituted) four general characteristics can be described:

1) the individual is exchangeable;

2) the subject subjects itself to an Absolute Subject since it needs an Other as a reflection of itself;

3) the subject ensures its subjectivity by recognizing the other subjects as subjects and simultaneously being recognized by them;

4) the Absolute Subject has to recognize himself in the subjects for the subjects to recognize themselves in Him.

Returning now to Lacan, we can say that the constitution of the subject in language is based on the same principle as the formation of the subject in ideology. Yet, if we maintain that ideology works on the same basic structure as language, where can we find in language the place of the Absolute Subject without whom, according to Althusser, ideology could not effectively work?

In language, the position of the Absolute Subject would be fulfilled by the *phallus* which Lacan calls the "privileged or central signifier" to which all other signifiers submit themselves. The phallus gains its central and indivisible position because it marks the splitting and simultaneous passage from the Imaginary to the Symbolic. The individual can only become a subject if he acknowledges the existence of the phallus and, moreover, accepts that it belongs to the Father, thereby assuming his own lack. At the cost of repressing the phantasies of either possessing the phallus or being the phallus (for the mother) the individual gains entry into the social world, obtaining his subjectivity. Although the imaginary nature is repressed, it is not lost but becomes instead the repository of desire. However, if the individual does not accept the Law of the Father and forecludes (*verwirft*) the existence of the phallus or misrecognizes its proper locus, he will not pass into the Symbolic realm or social world but will be lead into psychosis and thus be outcasted like the religious subject from his social order.[17] In repressing the phallus the child moves from sexual desire to linguistic substitutions. The paternal phallus — the Absolute Subject — represents Law, and the individual's submission to it.

Thus we could conclude that Lacan's model of the subject passing from the Imaginary to the Symbolic and being constituted in language parallels the development of ideological formations. Lacan seems to have offered a detailed *developmental schema* of how this subject becomes the bearer and supporter of ideology.

However, it seems still problematic to adopt Lacan's model for an explanation of ideology, to think that his psychoanalytic version can answer fully the question of why the individual misrecognizes itself as an autonomous

subject and thus enters and reproduces ideology. If we accept Lacan's theory of the individual as fundamentally alienated from itself as a result of the passage through the mirror stage, we enter the realm of ontology and explain a largely historical phenomenon by a socio-individual fact. For ideology which is so deeply rooted in the history of class struggles and power relationships, Lacan's explanation of the objectification of the subject appears to be too mechanistic and essentialist in its underlying presuppositions, offering no possible conception of change, struggle or opposition.

Looking at Lacan's work from a more critical perspective then, one can detect certain flaws (or inconsistencies) within his theory, flaws that are particularly relevant for a understanding of ideology.

At the center of his theory, Lacan posits a misrecognition committed by the infant when it mistakes its reflection for itself and itself for another, yet he never elaborates on the moment of recognition. If the infant is only capable of misrecognizing the world, at what point in life does it begin to recognize itself adequately, or is life solely a series of misrecognitions? Strictly speaking, even if full recognition can never be attained, a theory of misrecognition makes no sense without at least a theoretical model of a possible mode of genuine recognition; without such a parallel possibility, this crucial moment is reduced to an arbitrary and largely metaphysical presupposition on Lacan's part.

Another area that is left unquestioned and seems to be based on an assumption rather than a scientific elaboration is Lacan's insistence on the *phallus* as the indivisible central signifier.

Jacques Derrida treats this problem at length in his essay "The Purveyor of Truth." He argues that it seems peculiar that "the subject is very divided but the phallus never shared."[18] In other words, if the subject is truly a signifier for another signifier who attains his meaning only because of the position taken along an ever-sliding chain, thus constantly splitting himself and uniting again, it seems illogical suddenly to propose one single signifier that remains indivisible, strictly maintaining the same meaning. Why, Derrida asks, can the phallus not be split off and divided, thus rendering its meaning also arbitrary? Both Althusser and Lacan never examine the indivisibility or destructuralization of the Absolute Subject, and their reluctance to consider the possible breakdown of this central figure makes their concept of ideology at best fragmentary.

By the same token, Samuel Weber points out that the predominance of the phallus is in itself an indication of Lacan's own ideological bias and at the same time an accurate reflection of present cultural dynamics.[19]

Despite the attractiveness and distinct validity that Lacan's concepts have for the studies of ideology and social formation, an all too eager application of his theory fails to recognize the historical and social forces that impinge upon the subject in its social formation. This is not to say that Lacan is not a social

theorist, since, as we have seen, he firmly grounds the infant's development in a dialectical social relationship; rather he treats the familial environment as a global force that encourages the infant's path along alienation without granting the possibility that this same force might arrest, oppose, confront or change the direction that Lacan envisions for each subject. There is social process in Lacan's theory, but no concept of society, no model to show the complex interpenetrations of the specific and the general.

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Notes

1. Louis Althusser, "Freud and Lacan," in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1971, p. 219.
2. Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *On Ideology*, London, Sydney, Melbourne, Auckland: The Anchor Press Ltd, 1977.
3. Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, "On the Subject of Lacan," in *Language and Materialism, Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject*, London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan, Paul, 1977, p. 93.
4. For a more detailed discussion of the intra-subjective love/aggression between Ego and alter Ego, see Anthony Wilden, "Lacan and the Discourse of the Other," in *The Language of the Self*, New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1968, pp. 160-173. Also Leo Bersani, "Subject of the Power," in *Diacritics, a Review of Contemporary Criticism*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Univ. Press., Fall, 1977, pp. 2-21. Bersani argues that the subject is structured as a *rival* of himself when he identifies himself in the mirror with his imago.
5. Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Ecrits*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1977, p. 2.
6. Samuel Weber clarifies the unattainability of any true consciousness in the following way: "But we cannot conceptualize this misrecognition (*Verkennung*) as merely an avoidable, false consciousness, since the structure of this consciousness, of this I, is not just misrecognized by this I, in order to be truly *recognized* as in a traditional model of absolute knowledge. This movement would only be possible if the I would be truly that, as what it presents itself: *namely to be identical with itself.* Only then could it hope to recognize itself. But as long as the I is and has always been and always will be *something else* all attempts to come to *itself* must imply misrecognition (*Verkennung*) and disavowal (*Verleugnung*)" (translation mine). "Das Subjekt als Fader," in *Rückkehr Zu Freud, Jacques Lacans Ent-stellung der Psychoanalyse*, Frankfurt, Berlin, Wien: Ullstein Verlag Gmbh, 1978, p. 87.
7. Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the State," in *Lenin and Philosophy*, pp. 172-173.
8. Jacques Lacan, "Subversion of the Subject and Dialectic of Desire," in *Ecrits*, p. 312.
9. The child identifies with the phallus because it wants to be for the mother what only the father can offer her, since by virtue of having the phallus the father possesses the mother. From the mother's perspective, Juliet Mitchell explains: "the mother who herself in her infancy has envied the penis that she lacked will find her substitute for it in the child to which she gives birth; in a sense then, she will want her child to represent her phallus, and, in turn, the child

will desire to be what she desires of it . . . ." When the Father intervenes it is not only the child who must renounce its desire, but also the mother who must give up her phantasy of having a penis. Juliet Mitchell, "The Different Self, the Phallus and Father," in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1974, pp. 382-398.

10. Lacan, "Subversion . . . ," pp. 312-314.

11. Jacques Lacan, Psychanalyse et medicine, Lettres de L'Ecole freudienne, p. 45, quoted in *De la Structure en Psychanalyse*, "Qu'est'ce que le structuralisme?" Paris, 1968, pp. 252-253.

12. Steve Burniston, Chris Weedon, "Ideology, Subjectivity, and the Artistic Text," in *On Ideology*, p. 216.

13. Weber, p. 17.

14. Althusser, p 162.

15. Althusser, p. 179.

16. For a description of the functioning of ideology in the bureaucratic apparatus, see Joel Kovel, "Rationalization and the Family," in *Telos*, No. 37, Fall 1978, pp. 5-21.

17. Lacan considers psychosis as the result of the subject's failure to pass from the Imaginary to the Symbolic, which occurs when the infant does not accept the Law. Or, if the mother does not recognize this position in the Father, the infant will remain identified with the phallus and subjected to the mother's desire. Consequently, the subject is fixated in the Imaginary which he takes for real thus never developing the ability of symbolization.

18. Jacques Derrida, "The Purveyor of Truth," in *Yale French Studies*, No. 52, 1975, p. 86.

19. See Weber, pp. 123-124.

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NARCISSISM AND THE FISSURE OF NEO-CONSERVATISM

Brian Caterino

Christoper Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, New York: Norton, 1978, pp. 286.

The growing influence of neo-conservatism, has spawned a series of new diagonses of the social ills of contemporary American culture. The common theme of these criticisms has been the growth of the "me generation," a narcissistically preoccupied society which places its personal interests above those of the social good. The existence of the new narcissism can be confirmed, according to the neo-conservatives, in phenomena such as the rise of awareness and human potential movements, which stress the self as central, in the decline of patriotism and expressions of social solidarity, and in the growing loss of confidence in government and its officials to act in the interests of all in balancing competing social claims. The excess of individualism, manifested politically, leads each individual or interest group (e.g., Blacks, Women, left-wing groups) to demand from the political system more than the system can accomodate. The intransigence of these demands leads to instability and unrest which threaten the balance of the political system as a whole. Lacking self-restraint, discipline and a sense of community, the narcissistic individual threatens the cohesion of the political order. The proper relationship of the individual and the community requires that the individual restrain demands in the interests of the community.

Culture of Narcissism has become associated with the neo-conservative critique of culture. However, it differs fundamentally from this viewpoint in its diagnosis and its remedy. The relation between the individual and the community is marred not by an excess of individuality, but by its eclipse. Advanced capitalism asserts the priority of the state (though not that of the community proper) over the individual. Lasch contends that the changed relation of the state to society in advanced capitalism undermines the development of autonomous individuals. Instead, the systematic dependence of individuals upon the workings of a state-directed capitalism induces fragmented and atomized individuals unable to control their own destinies.

NARCISSISM AND THE FISSURE . . .

In his previous work, *Haven in A Heartless World*, Lasch details the emergence of state paternalism in America at the turn of the century. Progressive Era reformers were concerned with increases in poverty, crime, family breakdown and other instances of social disorder caused by the emergence of industrial society. Faced daily with the consequences of *laissez-faire* relations of state and society, reformers felt it was the role of the government (not only national but state and municipal) to actively intervene to ameliorate social ills. The new role of government required it to take over functions previously reserved for the private sphere. Reformers approved of this, assuming a unity of interests between the state and the individual, and that the state was capable of reforming and steering social relations in an appropriate direction.

The unity of individual and state interests was to be achieved through the scientific management of social relations and such scientific knowledge was to be the basis of a program of social hygiene. However, the rationalization of personal and familiar relations was itself ideological; it concealed the political interests of the state. Reform of criminal justice, for example, implied the rejection of harsh punishment for a medical model of justice. The criminal was a sick individual to be cured by society. Extended to all social relations, by professional sociologists, the medical model offered the justification for an essentially political intervention into private life.

Lasch contends that the progressive reforms have fragmented the family. The emphasis on expert opinion undermined the experiential base of family life and weakened traditions of self-help. Blamed for all of societies ills from anxiety to crime, parents lost confidence in their ability to raise children. The "cooling" of the emotional intensity of family life (recommended as well by professionals) also has taken its toll. The child is not raised with a combination of love and discipline. It confronts cool, rational, humane (but anxious) parents, who relate to each other in a similarly "realistic" fashion. No longer a shelter from the competitive world of work, the family became the extension of the administered world of advanced capitalism.

Culture of Narcissism paints a portrait of the social character resulting from the changed relation of public and private life. Lasch's fundamental proposal is that the decline of the family and increasing state-administration of private life have weakened the strength of the ego to independently assess and criticize the society it inhabits. Under the pressures of this society the ego loses its unit, and regresses to a more primitive, malleable form of organization.

Clinical psychologists have noted a change in the typical symptoms of patients since Freud's time. Replacing the "classical" neuroses of hysteria, and obsessive compulsions, are disorders characterized by vague and undifferentiated symptoms: free floating anxiety, meaningless and empty

lives and low level depression and loss of vitality. These have been termed borderline personality disorders. They are characterized by a weak or fragmented ego structure which lacks the integrity of a "healthier" ego. Lasch's account of this syndrome relies on writings influenced by Melanie Klein's theories of primitive object relations, and thus to grasp his argument a brief account of Klein's position is necessary.

Klein describes two main "positions" of the child towards its objects: the depressive and the paranoid-schizophrenic. Each child according to Freudian theory takes itself as its first object choice. (Here "object" means anything not the self; even though the child may make itself an object choice.) This stage is termed primary narcissism and is a normal part of the transition from autoerotic to object relations. Klein's theory concerns the modes of object relations that follow primary narcissism. The pathological forms of object relations lead to secondary narcissism, the clinical syndrome that is at the root of Lasch's analysis.

In the depressive position, the child reacts to an object that is a whole person. Defending itself against the anxiety of object loss and hence of gratification, the child introjects the lost object (generally the mother), so that it provides protection from the frustration and sense of persecution that is experienced when gratification is lost. According to Klein, the weak ego of the child experiences all frustration as attack from internal or external persecutors. The child's identification with the whole object achieves growth in the strength of the ego, because it allows the expression of concern and remorse toward the object. While the child identifies with the object, it also feels concern that the love object could be destroyed or hurt. The introjected object remains good, and the child directs feelings of remorse against itself for failure to maintain the love of the object (i.e. melancholy). The introjection of the good object is the basis of a secure relation with the self and objects in later life.

The paranoid-schizophrenic position is characterized by a relation to part objects, which does not allow the stable formation of an inner object world. The ego of the young child, as noted above, is fragile and open to fragmentation when frustrated. Its first defense against the rage of frustrated gratification is the splitting of the ego into an idealized good object, and bad objects (persecutors) which are projected onto objects. The omnipotent good object annihilates the bad objects. Whereas in the depressive position the ego is integrated, exposed to, and mastering good and bad impulses toward objects, and distinguishing between itself and objects, the paranoid-schizophrenic position is characterized by an ego unable to accommodate the conflicting pressures of its own good and bad impulses. Projecting the unmastered impulses onto objects, its relation to them is primarily narcissistic and egocentric. It's world is a projection of omnipotent control and hostile

persecutors. The self and its object merge in a shadowy world of infantile impulses.

The narcissistic personality, fixed in the paranoid-schzophrenic position, is unable to love other individuals, or to form a creative relationship to his work. All significant erotic attachments excite, in addition, strong, destructive impulses which split the weak ego. When the good aspect of the ego is projected onto the loved object, the ego is depleted and feels enslaved by the love object. It must control this object or become completely controlled by it, for the object now contains the valued part of the self. Avoiding the "theft" of the good object means that the object must be re-introjected and held closed within the self. In this position the ego withdraws libido from the world; no significant object relations are possible.

Since character is formed only in object relations with the world (for Freud character is the precipitate of our prior object relations), with our parents, teachers, peers and admired cultural figures, the narcissist inhabits an impoverished psychic world. In the normal personality parents and, later, others serve as sources of ideals and prohibitions. We want to *be like* our parents and model our actions after admired figures whom after later growth we abandon. We still however draw a distinction between ourselves and our heroes. The narcissist makes no such distinction. He seeks objects which suit his projections of omnipotence, regardless of their actual qualities. Figures of omnipotence are not models which form mediate links between the existing self and its ideal goal. They are merged in a symbiotic bond with the ego. One has (controls) the omnipotent figure and is controlled by it. Therefore the ego believes it possesses immediately qualities of omnipotence. The narcissist has no ideals, merely an unceasing desire for control. The object that no longer provides feelings of omnipotence is abandoned immediately with no lingering traces.

Lasch finds manifestations of the narcissistic character in much of modern culture: in the excesses of radical politics whose fantasies of omnipotence led to the excesses of the weathermen; in the crises of personal relations and in the chronic anxiety and meaninglessness of life; in post-modern literature where an autobiographic mode often retreats into posturing, self-parody or clever literary tricks devoid of substance; in business where the corporate man is replaced by the gamesman, who attempts to manipulate the corporation for his own advancement; in politics where management of an effective image and the maintenance of power overtake the commitment to substantive political ends; in the fear of becoming old, the degradation of sport, the decline of educational standards and in the world of advertizing.

Lasch's critique of society is not identical to that of the neo-conservatives. The existence of mass society agreed upon by both parties has a different significance in relation to the existing social order. While the neo-

conservatives hold that the excessive demands of the mass man threaten the stability of society, Lasch contends that they are its necessary foundation. Advanced capitalism can maintain its stability only by the deliberate de-individualization of its citizens. The transition from competitive capitalism to state-directed capitalism requires not only that the state intervene in order to stabilize economic crises, but that it take a hand in steering social and political relations as well. The ideological support of global enterprise, the channelling of motives, desires and ideas into acceptable forms can no longer be achieved through the automatic regulation of the economic system, but only through state support. This form of organization requires relatively greater control over individual freedom, than capitalism's earlier phase: creating a tension which is deepened by the relatively greater possibilities for freedom that current capitalism seemingly contains. The central cultural problems in advanced capitalism do not lie exclusively in the sphere of the individual, but in a systematic restriction of individual development. The neo-conservative critique relies on the view that society is for the most part well functioning, and that individual character is flawed. In this context the neo-conservative insistence on restraint and excellence is politically regressive. The "limits" or diminished expectations which the neo-conservatives propose imply that the existing injustices and inequalities are existentially necessary. The excessive demands of the narcissist represent an inability to recognize the necessary limits of life. In this analysis left-wing political groups who make "excessive" demands for political or distributive justice are lumped together with narcissistic individuals. Lasch's analysis, although its premises remain implicit, recognizes a subtler social dynamic. The emergence of narcissistic character represents the grand failure of advanced capitalism to provide a satisfactory way of life. Its maintenance and stability requires that individuals become fragmented — unable to actively direct their own destinies. The true significance of the narcissistic character lies not in its excesses, but in its deficiencies: it is the cry of extinguished possibilities.

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THE "FRENCH FREUD"

Kermit M. Hummel

Sherry Turkle, *Psychoanalytic Politics,* New York: Basic Books, 1978.

"French Freud" has become almost common parlance in many academic circles. Yet, until now little has been offered to account for this phenomenon. Sherry Turkle's *Psychoanalytic Politics* enjoys a certain privilege in exploring much uncharted territory.

The core of her study is a history of the various psychoanalytic societies in France. The tale of these groups begins with the founding of La Société Psychanalytique de Paris (SPP) in 1927 which survived as a unified group until 1953. The first *rupture* was precipitated over the man who has become *the* central figure in French psychoanalysis, Jacques Lacan. Rumours had been circulating that Lacan was shortening the length of his sessions with patients from the standard fifty minutes. Two weeks after Lacan's announcement that this was indeed the case he was asked for his resignation as president of the society. In response to these actions Daniel Lagache, then vice president of the society, and three other analysts submitted resignations to the SPP and formed a new group, La Société Française de Psychanalyse (SFP), Lacan joined this group and presented his famous lecture "Fonction et champ de la parole et du langage en psychanalyse" at the first congress.

Things went fairly smoothly for the SFP for a decade, but the lure of recognition by the powerful International Psychoanalytic Association proved fatal. In 1963 the IPA offered recognition to the SFP under the proviso that Lacan and Françoise Dolto — one of the first four members of the SFP — would be denied their status as training analysts. In taking sides over this issue the members of the SFP split to form two new groups, the Association Psychanalytique de France (APF) and L'Ecole Freudienne. The former, whose members included Lagache and two of Lacan's pupils Laplanche and Pontalis, was granted recognition by the IPA. The latter group, which was and still is denied recognition by the IPA, was formed by Lacan.

In 1969 Lacan's own group split again. This was due to certain proposals put forward by Lacan. He suggested that a new title be created. "*psychanalyste de l'Ecole.*" These "school analysts" would be marked off from the normal practicing analysts for their theoretical abilities. An entire

procedure known as *la passe* was worked out and proposed through which an analyst could earn the new title. Part of the "pass" procedure included certification by a committee of senior analysts on which Lacan would always sit. A group of analysts in the Ecole Freudienne, gathered around Piera Aulagnier, opposed the institution of such a hierarchical ordering. They broke with Lacan and formed "Le Quatrième Groupe." (This group according to Turkle has become something of a meeting ground for various positions. In this sense it remains the most open of all the societies.)

A great deal of the divisiveness within the French psychoanalytic institutions has centered on the problem of authority. In a sense, these splits highlight a tension which is central to the psychoanalytic field. Much of psychoanalytic theory aims at elucidating the ways in which the individual is bound to certain structures of authority. Therapeutic practice should aim at subverting authoritarian structures, and analysis only works if it minimizes their power. This, Turkle suggests, presents a problem for the institutionalization of psychoanalysis. An analysand being trained by a representative of a group or association will, in completing an analysis, presumably manage to detach himself or herself from that very authority which would bestow the title of "analyst." In this way psychoanalytic institutions appear to be inherently self-subversive, and their maintenance would seem to be due only to a certain impurity in relation to their explicit aspirations.

The problem of authority — and its possible resolution — have made psychoanalysis attractive to the political left. A general leftist line of thought has been to see the "individual" as itself an authoritarian production. The critique of authority has come to focus on a critique of the "ego." This has meant less emphasis on explicit political issues and more on epistemological configurations. The ego, in searching to be identical with itself, turns out to be very closely related to a politics which can allow no otherness. In this way, political criticism becomes a critique of knowledge. Inversely, psychoanalysis, with its critique of the ego, launches an epistemological subversion of the claims to knowledge which serve to justify overt political power.

In certain respects this critique by the "French Freud" appears to be in line with the critique of identitarian philosophy offered by the Frankfurt School, and Turkle draws this parallel. However, one must be leery of the unifying formula — "the interpenetration of individual and society." On one hand there are the Frankfurt theorists who could, if not proclaim the existence of, at least entertain the hope for, something like an autonomous ego. On the other is Lacan, whose position — as Turkle points out — tends to disintegrate the division of interiority and exteriority to the point at which an "autonomous ego" can only be the imaginary ego's imaginary version of itself.

Further, the anti-egological twist of much of this French theory has not been unopposed within the psychoanalytic community itself. One could say a

great deal more about the conflicts within the International Psychoanalytic Association by turning back to the influence of ego-psychology within it and to the lasting presence of Heinz Hartmann and the "conflict-free sphere" of the ego.

* * *

Turkle's discussion of the anti-psychiatric movement is complicated by her use of the notions of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. She focuses on Deleuze and Guattari and suggests that they take Lacan's notions of the Imaginary and the Symbolic as stages, in the sense that the infant passes through the Imaginary to the Symbolic. "Oedipus" is located at the point of initiation into the symbolic order. Deleuze and Guattari, according to Turkle, are arguing for a "naturalism" in trying to get back to the Imaginary, i.e., to a "pre-Oedipal" state. This reading only juggles certain categories developed by Lacan. In their critique of Oedipus, though, Deleuze and Guattari are suggesting that the "Imaginary" is itself an Oedipal construct. They object not to a periodization of Imaginary-Symbolic as such, but, rather, to any attempt to demarcate an imaginary field (through periodization or any other conceptual means). Turkle, in situating Deleuze and Guattari within an Oedipal schema, blurs their theoretical position — a position which attempts to rid itself of an entire oedipalized conceptual apparatus.

And yet, we should perhaps not be overly hasty in dismissing the convergence of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and Oedipus in Turkle's discussion. This conceptual matrix may provide us with a clue to some of the theoretical divisions which mark the various factions of the French scene. On one hand we have looked at Deleuze and Guattari who would be rid of Oedipus. Many have suggested that their formulation is too quick in dismissing the difficulties involved in overcoming the Oedipal problematic.

In another case, we might consider Lacan himself. He seems to insist on the analytical division of the Imaginary and the Symbolic as well as their inseparability. This is to say that the relation of Imaginary and Symbolic is not reducible to one of periodization. Instead, the two are in an ongoing process of intermingling. Such an inmixing makes the resolution of the Oedipus complex both necessary and impossible. A resolution is necessary in that the subject must find a way to the symbolic in order to be represented. However, the relation to language invariably splits the subject. The field of the Imaginary lies within this gap opened up in the subject as a result of its relation to language. In the Imaginary the subject is positively represented — as ego — in such a way as to deny the split which has been introduced. The aim of once and for all sealing the subject with language raises the third term — which is no longer one of dialectical transcendence. The real (reel) is affirmed as paradox,

as impossible. The real is the impossible, and the impossible is the real.

Another approach is found in the work of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok. Their position may be viewed as recovering a late essay of Freud's which has been heavily downplayed by Lacan — "The Splitting of the Ego." Abraham and Torok — and we might add Jacques Derrida here — are also critical of the unified and unifying ego. However, rather than attempting to delimit the ego's claims by circumscribing it within an imaginary field, they instead find an inherent instability within the ego itself. They take an old battle cry of ego psychology and turn it inside out, "*Wo Ich war soll Es werden.*" In terms of our general discussion, such an analysis undermines the attempt to clearly separate the Symbolic from the Imaginary.

Finally, within Le Quatrième Groupe we see the attempt to formulate a notion of the Imaginary incorporating aspects of both the Imaginary and the Symbolic in Lacan's scheme. (I am thinking of Cornelius Castoriadis.) In general, the problem here is to describe an "Imaginary" with an inherently self-transformative quality. Castoriadis tries to do this with the notion of imaginary institution. (I do not know to what extent this position reflects the Fourth Group as a whole.)

In what is to me the weakest aspect of her book, Turkle tries to provide some sort of explanation for the popularity of psychoanalysis in France. She turns to a sociology of knowledge. An openness to psychoanalysis is occasioned by a period of rapid social change that forces a turn toward the individual. This general theorem is applied in an effort to account for the different receptions given Freud in America and in France in the early twentieth century. "So, at a time when American society was increasingly receptive to new ways of looking at the world that focused on the *self*, the French bourgeoisie was concerned with reinforcing its own experience of France as a self-contained, organic, interdependent, well-cemented *society*" (p. 32). The disruption of this stable fabric in France during the 1960's, then, opened the door to this shift to an interest in the self. The haste of such an account seems to reflect a certain reductionism.

In spite of these problems, *Psychoanalytic Politics* provides many insights into the problems of the institutions of psychoanalysis and the psychoanalysis of institutions. Further, it offers an entry into the feuds and controversies that have helped to generate so much enthusiasm around psychoanalytic issues in France. The former contribution should add to the growing interest in psychoanalytic material. The latter will perhaps help to keep those away who would dismiss the "French Freud" for its lack of seriousness.

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SEARCHING FOR EQUALITY: THE SOCIOLOGY OF JOHN PORTER

Wallace Clement

John Porter's influence on Canadian sociology and on the social sciences in general was tremendous. His name, particularly in association with *The Vertical Mosaic (TVM)*, is one of the few in the social sciences known internationally. His death was a great loss, especially for those who knew him personally.

I have found writing this paper a difficult task in several ways. On the one hand I want to accurately portray the essential elements of his intellectual contribution, but his writings were many and do not readily lend themselves to condensation. On the other hand my intellectual (as opposed to personal) relationship with Porter was often one of contention. We frequently disagreed in our modes of analysis or interpretation. My problem will be to portray his positions on the topics he considered essential yet keep my editorializing to a minimum. I will not pretend to be detached from the subjects discussed here or even from my personal relationship to Porter but I will attempt to outline objectively his enormous contribution.

John Porter was born in Vancouver, British Columbia on the 12th of November 1921 and left Canada in 1937, remaining abroad for what he called "twelve formative years." As a teenager he worked at odd jobs and eventually as a reporter for the *Daily Sketch*, a Kemsley (now Thompson) Newspaper, in London. He joined the Canadian Army in 1941 as a private, rising by his release in 1946 to captain, having spent the war in the Canadian Intelligence Corps in Italy, North Africa, and North-West Europe. His class origins had prevented him from receiving much formal education; his father "did some clerical work but had no inclination to do anything very much," and John never graduated from high school. The war, however, gave him the chance to enter university through a veterans' program. He entered the London School of Economics and Political Science, graduating with a B.Sc. in 1949. Returning to Canada on a Department of Veterans Affairs trip, he stopped in Ottawa to look up an army friend. Paul Fox invited him to become a teacher of Political Science at Carleton, where he remained, aside from a brief sojourn at the University of Toronto in 1968-69, until his death on the 15th of June, 1979.

Particularly during his later years, he again spent considerable time outside the country. He was a Canadian Fellow to the International Institute for Labour Studies in Geneva in 1966-67; he held the Canadian Chair at Harvard in 1974-75, and took his 1975-76 sabbatical in Paris. These periods abroad he found to be intellectually stimulating, giving him a distinct vantage point from which to view Canada and the opportunity to be exposed to outside influences. By this point he had achieved a large international reputation, having received the prestigious MacIver Award of the American Sociological Association in 1966 for *TVM*, the same year he finally received a D.Sc. from the London School of Economics (having submitted *TVM* as his thesis).

Many young social scholars must find it confusing that John Porter could have had such an overwhelming presence in Canadian scholarship. What was it that made *TVM* so prominent? My interpretation is that this work was a statement of the times. Not only was it enormous in its scope, rich in detail and suggestive in its analysis, it also encapsulated many of the important issues of the day. For the first time there existed a statement of where we were socially. It continues to be a baseline from which many contemporary researchers begin. Since *TVM*, of course, many other statements have appeared, but *TVM* was the opening volley.

Because he did so much in *TVM*, contemporary reviewers seem to want him to have done everything. They seem to forget the paucity of existing literature and data, particularly the fact that most of the material used was analysed for the first time. Since its publication, Canadian social science has blossomed, in no small measure due to *TVM*. Even ten years after its publication critical reviews were being written, often without sufficient regard to the historical conditions of its writing.[1] When first published in 1965, *TVM* was welcomed by the Canadian left (broadly defined) and during the student movement of the late sixties was often used as the basis for radical analysis. Into the 1970s, as a more theoretically sophisticated (but less activist) left developed and became reacquainted with Marxism, Porter was subject to much criticism. Much of this criticism he reacted to as mere "carping" rather than "constructive" empirical research designed to expose or eradicate inequalities in Canada.[2] Toward the end of his life Porter adopted some of the criticisms of his work but only after its shortcomings had been demonstrated empirically to his satisfaction. At that point he incorporated some of the insights of the left into his analysis.

Although *TVM* opens with the disclaimer that "no one volume can present a total picture of a modern society," it may safely be said that Porter did, to the extent possible, present a thorough overview of contemporary Canada. There are, of course, significant gaps — the study is weak historically; it does not adequately situate Canada internationally; the analysis of Quebec and other regions is limited; real (as opposed to statistical)

classes are dismissed.* Its strengths, particularly for its time, compensate for these shortcomings. The analysis of power in its various expressions is likely the most comprehensive done anywhere; its treatment of education, ethnicity, migration and income and particularly the inequalities associated with them — were the *tour de force* of Canadian social science. Those engaged in empirical research tend to appreciate Porter's work more than those who work primarily at the theoretical level (or do little research at all). The methodological problems, sources of data, and access to information were all formidable barriers to solid research, to the application of theory. He marshalled amazing empirical detail and did so in a way informed by theory if not in a way that "tested" or "generated" theory. His work was drawn together thematically — the master theme being inequality. It is around this theme that I will address Porter's contribution.

II

What was the most consistent in Porter's work was his concern with issues of vital concern to the whole of Canadian society. Central was a focus on inequality and on the need for equality. Particularly during his later years he spent a great deal of time thinking about concepts like "justice" — what it meant, how it could be achieved, etc. These were his concerns, his value premises, which he never hesitated to put forward. Porter's philosophical roots were in the British social democratic tradition of Harold Laski, R.H. Tawney and T.H. Marshall but his values, as will be argued later, were often those flaunted as "American" ideals.

TVM was essentially an exercise in sophisticated description — and in prescription. Porter attempted to identify what is in order to evaluate what could be. Rather than develop a theory of class he chose to bring to light inequalities characteristic of the contemporary class structure. It was his judgement that the priority was empirical rather than theoretical. He envisioned himself as establishing a base from which he and others could work. It was never intended, as he never tired of reiterating, as "the last word" — although he was not too modest to claim it as "the first" comprehensive statement.

He outlined in some detail the intellectual forces integral to his early research in a "Research Biography." There he reflected on his consciously "eclectic" use of theory, an eclecticism which continued throughout his career.

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*Porter often discussed reissuing *TVM* with a new introduction to deal with "recent" issues in Canadian society, including foreign investment, Quebecois nationalism, regionalism and the women's movement. These issues he regarded as the most significant ones to emerge since the drafting of *TVM* in 1963.

The strongest and most concise statement of the value concerns and theoretical dilemmas informing his democratic socialism was articulated in "Power and Freedom." His final pronouncement on the values of social scientists appears in his Prologue to *The Measure of Canadian Society*, and in his previously unpublished paper on "Education, Equality, and the Just Society" in that collection. Together these papers consolidate the essential concerns of his work. As he said in his Introduction to the "Research Biography": "My research and social action interests since [*TVM*] was published have all been extensions of it, particularly those parts which are most relevant to social change in Canada as it is at present on the threshold of post-industrialism: the search for highly-qualified manpower, social mobility, educational opportunity, and the planning of post-secondary education."[3] In his final collection of essays, it will be argued, he amended his position on post-industrialism and the centrality of educational reform.

The Preface to *TVM* clearly states Porter's value position regarding equality and specifies the type of equality he means. It is equality of opportunity — the removal of barriers which prevent the "most able" from attaining "top positions." This promotion of "meritocracy" is desirable, he argues, "on both ethical and practical grounds." He sees the "creative role of politics" as the means to achieve this goal and the educational system as the principal mechanism. At times he wandered into the territory of inequality of condition[4] by identifying structural sources of inequality but basically opportunity was his focus, at least until his final years when he returned to the structural features of society.

Porter's is what may be referred to as a "meritocratic critique" of inequality in contrast to an "egalitarian critique."[5] Never, however, does he shy away from the issue of values. In a little known piece called the "Limits of Sociology," written in 1973, he addressed some of these issues and it is worth reproducing his conclusion at length:

> Important as measurement is to the clarification of ethical problems, measurement alone is not enough, for it leads to the free-floating findings which, lacking an anchor in a clear philosophical position, can be used to support contrary points of view. Perhaps that is a limitation of sociology, but in the search for equality it is difficult to avoid ethical considerations because equality is a moral problem. This difficulty is aggravated by the very legitimate need to measure, without which social sciences cannot make their contribution, but measurement reduces important ethical ideas to very mechanical procedures and limited scopes. It is all the more

> important, therefore, to capture findings within a clearly defined ethical framework; otherwise someone will come along and seize them for his own ideological purposes.[6]

The author of this statement is a man aware of "ideological warfare," of the ethics and morality of research. It is also the statement of a humanitarian who sees the need to develop human qualities and develop a more equitable society.

The particular form of equality which Porter strove for was that often used to characterize "American" values in which the ideals of altruism and equality of opportunity dominate. Shortly after the publication of *TVM* he was quoted as saying, "In my optimistic moments . . . I think the best thing for Canada would be greater Americanization — the more American values we get the more we can become genuinely North American."[7] It may be argued that the egalitarianism produced by these values is *égalité de droit* (formal or legal equality) but not *égalité de fait* (practical or economic equality). Equality before the law and equality of opportunity, particularly through access to education and mobility through the occupational structure, were the forms of equality Porter sought throughout most of his career and thought were possible to achieve. Canadians, unlike "Americans," he thought, were impeded to their development because they lacked values appropriate to advanced industrial societies. He opposed all "ascriptive" inequality — particularly ethnicity and intergenerational advantages transferred through education and occupational mobility.

Capitalism, as a way of organizing a society's productive capacities, was viewed by Porter as a source of grave inequalities. He argued that "Individual property rights meant that those who owned the instruments of production controlled their use and access to them. In many respects the new urban proletariat of the industrial revolution was less free than the feudal serf who had at least some legally defined claims against his master."[8] At times he denounced capitalism and its "lack of conscience" which "can only be explained in terms of habituation to the capitalist ethos and the complex attitudes which legitimates predatory behaviour . . . .The exploitive, predatory and restrictive character of capitalist institutions rests on a morality defined by those at the apex of our institutional hierarchies."[9] The irony of these statements is that he simultaneously called for Canadians to become more like the "Americans" who lived in the most advanced capitalist society of all! Thus capitalism is a progressive system, yet it severely limits human potential and its barriers must be transcended.

For Porter, socialism was not free from many of the problems plaguing capitalism. A common problem was that of bureaucracy:

> Bureaucracy provides socialist theory with a built-in contradiction. Socialism, which seeks to release men from productive drudgery, envisages larger productive units, more intricate co-ordination between these units, and more extensive planning of the total social effort, none of which can be achieved without a very great increase in administrative machinery.[10]

It is this problem which made elites so important to Porter's analysis. In his view there would always be elites of some kind. You cannot "do away with power." The point was one of "transforming it in some fashion to serve justice and equality.'"[11] The only way was to somehow inject more humanitarian values into those at the top. He concentrated on "opening up" or making accessible power positions within existing institutions. This problem became a preoccupation for the rest of his life.

From this stage in Porter's argument it is necessary to make a rather large leap. It is a leap from "industrial" to "post-industrial" societies. These changes were brought about by the new demands of science and technology which required freeing people from the bonds of an earlier stage of capitalism through a demand for talent. "Post-industrial" societies would require a new kind of labour force, new sets of values appropriate to the times, and would provide the productive capacity required to meet the society's material demands. The problem of power retreats into the background for Porter as the imperatives of science and technology take hold and re-shape the society. A new problematic emerges:

> With the great expansion in the number of occupations as well as the emergence of new occupations that come with the post-industrial culture of science and technology, it is necessary for all societies at this stage of development to solve their recruiting problems.[12]

The first statement of this new problematic appeared in Porter's 1966 MacIver Award Lecture where he began to address the problem of the "recruitment of highly qualified professional workers" because of the new "culture based on science and technology." With this change there is "unfilled room at the top of our emerging occupational structures."[13] This would be handled through greater social planning, particularly planning associated with the educational system where training would take place and new values instilled. Porter's contention was that industrial societies were moving in the direction of greater potential for the "good society" whereby greater parts of the society could share more equally in the benefits. His goal was to eradicate barriers — specifically mobility barriers — which prevented people from

sharing in the newly created "good life" and which, for the society, wasted the talents of its people. The measurement of egalitarianism is not clear. The focus, however, is on barriers to individuals with particular ascriptive characteristics. While there is an analysis of inequality, there is not one of exploitation, of the structural relations between classes. There is a sense that we have to move by the imperatives of science and technology, which are creating new possibilities. The problem is one of *barriers* which simultaneously prevent people from equally sharing in the possibility of benefits and wastes the potential talents at the society's disposal. It is, in a word, the classic problem of "meritocracy," a word Porter chose to use.

III

For Porter the problem of barriers superseded the problem of power, although they were related to the extent that elites upheld self-serving values. Exclusion practices meant a waste of talent. If recruitment were widened society's institutions would become more innovative and hence more productive. This position was evident in *TVM* but became the dominant problematic of his later work. In *TVM*, as in his later work, Porter argued that industrialization was a means for overcoming some forms of inequality but at the same time the overcoming of these inequalities was necessary for the full benefits of industrialization to be realized:

> The egalitarian ideology holds that individuals should be able to move through this hierarchy of skill classes according to their inclinations and abilities. Such an ideology reinforces the needs of an industrial economic system. A society with rigid class structure of occupational inheritance could not become heavily industrialized. On the other hand the industrial society which has the greatest flexibility is the one in which the egalitarian ideology has affected the educational system to the extent that education is available equally to all, and careers are truly open to the talented.
> At some point in social development industrialization with its attendant egalitarian ideology comes into conflict with the structure of class.[14]

Thus Porter contended that "the correct values for the mobility needs of the industrialized society are those of achievement and universalism."[15] Barriers to these values are offered by "subcultural values and norms — of class, ethnicity and religion" which are not "appropriate" for post-industrialism."[16]

These barriers inhibit the development of society and are, at the same time, a major source of unjust inequality. If societies were to adopt a "universalism-achievement orientation" then their institutions would be more creative because talent would be more effectively used and the principles of meritocracy would be achieved. Thus the lack of "mobility values" creates "dysfunctions" for societal development. He argued, "If one were to locate within industrial social structures the areas where these dysfunctions can be best elucidated they would be class systems, particularly working-class culture, the family as a socializing agency, and education systems."[17] This explains his concentrated research in the areas of intergenerational mobility, ethnicity, and education, each mediated by the family, in the years following *TVM*.

Porter's first major undertaking after *TVM* was on occupational prestige classifications, but it ran into serious technical problems.[18] Eventually it led into an even larger scale national project on occupational mobility, entitled "Occupational and Educational Change in a Generation: Canada," involving five co-researchers. This remains unfinished, the final study having been written only in draft form before Porter's death.* It is not possible to evaluate the results of this unpublished work now, but it can be said of his earlier work on occupations that even though it provided a useful critique of census categories there is little of substantive value that resulted. It told little about Canada — its features and occupational anomolies — concentrating primarily on methodological problems. More, of course, can be expected from the unpublished study.

Education

Porter was opposed to any form of inequality which limited the development of a society's talent, whether it be class, gender or ethnicity. The core institution for overcoming inequality was the educational system. This required, in his view, changes in access to education and in the content of education itself. In his own case, only the Second World War provided the necessary conditions for access to a university education; likely the fact that his own formal educational career was in large part an historical accident was a factor in his deliberations.

The major area of public policy upon which Porter pronounced was education. He undertook a massive study of this subject and published, along

*Porter's two papers for this study were completed before his death. They include "Ethnic Origin and Occupational Attainment" (co-authored with Peter C. Pineo) and "Canada: The Societal Context of Occupational Allocation."

with Marion Porter and Bernard Blishen, a policy report entitled *Does Money Matter? Prospects for Higher Education*, which contributed to the debate on educational reform. A longer, scholarly analysis of this data is entitled *Stations and Callings: Making It Through Ontario's Schools.* The major finding of this research was that "educational and occupational horizons of Ontario high school students are bounded by the class structure of the society in which they live; that, associated with that class structure, there is a wastage of bright young people from the educational process; and that girls, particularly lower class girls, see themselves destined for the labour force and excluded from the learning force."[19] The report evaluates student assistance plans and the effects of family resources on students' educational prospects.

The study does not limit itself to the educational system *per se* but locates it within a broader social context. The authors say, "We are not so naive as to think . . . that educational reform alone is going to make for a society of equality."[20] This introduces the "what comes first" problem. Education is itself part of a larger structure of inequality but, in Porter's view, is the key institution for overcoming many inequalities. This was a problem of which he was acutely aware, arguing "equality in education cannot be truly achieved without moving toward a more equal society, and that could come about . . . through greatly reduced income differentials or a much more progressive tax system."[21] As far as education itself was concerned, the major reforms recommended were the abolition of tuition fees and the provision of maintenance grants to students, but these would only be effective in the context of broader social reforms. This was a longstanding problem for Porter, as he wrote in 1961:

> the fact remains that educational systems reflect the values of the dominant institutions within the society, and their influence in bringing about the desired psychological changes is thereby reduced. To achieve some measure of social change it may be necessary to find ways of changing the institutional structure before changing modes of thought.[22]

Porter offered no simple solutions for what he regarded as a complex subject. More than most researchers he was acutely aware of the relationship between institutions and the way institutions such as education were biased by the interests of the powerful. He found it difficult, however, to abandon the possibility of educational reform because it was integral to his vision of positive social change. In his critical essay on "Education, Equality and the Just Society," written near the end of his life, he began to have serious reservations about the centrality of education to accomplishing these changes:

> The crucial point is that education has failed to equalize. Perhaps it was naive to think that it might have or that educational reform alone was sufficient to deal with the basic structure of inequality, which in its consequence is much more pervasive and deep rooted than we think.[23]

Ethnicity

Paralleling the attention Porter devoted to education was his concern with ethnicity. As he made clear in *TVM*, ethnicity acted as a major barrier within Canada. Consistent with his general search for equality was his analysis of ethnicity. While he weighed the pros and cons of ethnic sub-cultures he concluded that they were serious impediments in Canada's development. His statements were strong, as the following indicates:

> "What price culture?" As cultures converge through science and technology, cultural differentiation, in the sense in which we have usually meant it, will end. In fact, we may have reached the point where culture has become a myth, in the sense of a belief in a non-existent world which might become a reality. The more culture becomes a myth, the less can it become a working concept of social science . . . . In the contemporary society of change, culture can act as an impediment to social development, because it emphasizes yesterday's, rather than tomorrow's, ways of life.[24]

Thus he argued that, "considering as alternatives the ethnic stratification that results from the reduction of ethnicity as a salient feature of modern society I have chosen an assimilationist position."[25] This was an unpopular position, given the revival of ethnicity being experienced in Canada from the late 1960s onwards and the official state policy of multiculturalism. Regardless of its controversial qualities, he clearly articulated the reasons for his position, noting that ethnicity "emphasizes descent group identification and endogamy . . . [thus] it runs the risk of believed-in biological differences becoming the basis of invidious judgements about groups of people . . . . Moreover, where ethnicity is salient there is often an association between ethnic differences and social class and inequality."[26] Not only does ethnicity interfere with the search for equality, Porter argued, "it has also served as a form of class control of the major power structures by charter ethnic groups who remain over-represented in the elite structures."[27]

Ethnicity, in the way Porter analysed it, was a barrier to the mobility of individuals within the class structure. The problem, as he argued, was that ethnicity was often an impediment to mobility because the values it promoted were contrary to those required for achievement within the dominant culture. Thus, if the salience of ethnic values were reduced and substituted with other values, there would be a freeing of the talent required by "post-industrial" societies. As it was, ethnicity was an instrument of social control by the powerful and a barrier to mobility.

Although Porter had less to say on the subject than others, he did not regard the Quebecois as he did "other ethnics." In 1961 he argued that the "French desire for cultural separation can be justified both psychologically and socially."[28] Later he argued that French culture could not withstand the onslaught of "modernization" but felt "there need not be a loss of language. If bilingualism can increase, and that requires a great effort on the part of the English, this distinctive dualism of Canada will remain."[29] His own actions were in this direction. At almost fifty years of age, Porter sought to improve his French and spent a great deal of time working at it. He valued the retention of the French language. He also recognized the two-nation reality of Canadian society. As he wrote me in 1976 concerning my study of class,

> What are you going to do about French? It seems to me we have now reached the point in Canada where Fr and Eng Canada can be treated as two separate societies and one or the other left out. The Fr always leave the Eng out since they consider Quebec unto itself. Now they no longer mind if Quebec is left out of macroanalysis of "Canada" which they see almost as another country. That becomes increasingly the reality of course.[30]

I certainly would have welcomed more of his views on Quebec in more developed form. I am not aware of any specific writings on the subject but expect it would have been addressed in his proposed macro-sociology of Canada (to be discussed later). His general position, however, was that Canada was entering a "post-industrial" stage of development where science and technology would dominate, leaving little room for particularistic cultures to survive; within this development he did not feel that there was room for bilingualism and for Quebec to have greater independence.

In advocating this position, however, Porter continued to support stronger central powers, if not vis-a-vis Quebec, then at least for the rest of Canada. He contended that "lessening of federal power particularly in a wide range of social policy can be seen as a loss of the ability to establish national goals."[31] He wished to see, for example, a greater federal presence in the

educational system as a means of standardizing and upgrading this institution.

He had little favour for regional analyses, contending that the differences within Canada were less geographically based than class based. He argued, "It is difficult to know how, other than in the statistical sense, provinces can be 'poor'. People are poor, and some of their poverty could be caused by protected privilege and regressive policies within provinces which in no way change through equalization transfers. To equalize provincial averages in some resource need not affect within-province distributions."[32] He also maintained:

> If one attempts to define communities by transaction flows, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver are probably more closely linked and provide mutual identities than do these metropolises with their respective hinterlands. Hardrock and coal miners and pulp workers moving through Canada's single industry towns might have a regional identity which geographically spans the country.[33]

I suspect that his opinion of regionalism was much like that of ethnicity. It spawned values inappropriate to the needs of "post-industrial" society by emphasizing particularistic rather than universalistic values, thus acting as possible barriers to mobility and, in this case, to national goals. Toward the end of his life he was prepared to re-evaluate his views on regionalism and toward this end was preparing to apply for a Killam Award to live in various regions of the country.

Class

In his analysis of class, Porter was more intent on demarcating ranks and strata than on analysing relationships between classes. Inequalities based on class are real in his studies but they are grouped or ordered by artificial lines drawn by application of various criteria, not by "legally recognized" relationships as was the case for estates or castes.[34] In Part I of *TVM* on "The Structure of Class," there is no class resistance or struggle, no agents of change in the working class since, he argued, we are now in a "post-Marxian industrial world." Porter contended that "in the nineteenth century it may have been the case that two groups classified by the criterion of owning or not owning property were sociological groups, but in the present day such classes are statistical categories and nothing more."[35] For him class is a ranking of occupations, income, and education; it is a "spectrum" of socio-economic

status led by a wealthy and powerful elite. This conception of class was very much a product of the dominant social sciences in the 1960s.

The fundamental reason for the shift from conflicting to statistical classes, Porter contends, is the advance of industrialization. There has been a proliferation of occupations and a reduction in overt exploitation. "For the proletariat, the work world has not been one of increasing drudgery, nor one requiring an increasingly low level of skill, making workers a vast class of 'proles.' The skills that modern industry requires have become more and more varied and complex so that unskilled occupations have formed a much larger proportion."[36] Generally, throughout this work, he understates the amount of class conflict in society, arguing for example in 1965 that "the idea of the general strike has almost completely disappeared from union ideology."[37] He also had a low expectation at that time of unionization or resistance from "the white-collar group,"[38] expecting them to grow dramatically within the occupational structure but offering little possibility for unionization or resistance. His stress was on the weakness and fragmentation of labour and the relatively low and stagnating rates of unionization. There were some obvious truths to his observations but for the most part he underestimated the struggles that would emerge from the new middle class, particularly among state workers, for union recognition and wages. The upgrading of skills assumed with application of science and technology did not turn out to have the projected effects, as will be illustrated shortly.

Much of what Porter wrote in *TVM* can be read as informing analyses of class cleavages, but most is not analysed by him in this way. The chapter on "Class, Mobility and Migration," for example, can be read as the making of a working class through detachment from the land and particular immigration policies, but primarily it is an analysis of imported education and skills creating a "mobility trap" for native-born Canadians and an ethnically stratified society. Instead of class, Porter uses the concept of elite as a substitute saying, "What we have instead of a class of capitalists is a smaller and probably more cohesive group — an elite within the private sector of the economy."[39] This leaves an obvious analytical gap for all those outside the elite, particularly the working class and petit bourgeoisie but also smaller capitalists. The "class" quality of the elite does not, however, resolve the explanations of forces of change. This requires an analysis of class transformations. Porter did not ignore classes but he did deny them as real forces in contemporary society.

As has emerged as a consistent theme throughout his work, Porter's contention was that a fundamental change was taking place in industrial societies. The problems of capitalist societies would not hold in post-industrial ones:

> The radical-conservative polarity based on class may have been appropriate in the development of a modern industrial society. It led to welfare policies of redistribution and hence legitimated capitalist systems. It also led to policies to maintain levels of demand for the output of the economy. But high evaluation of working-class culture as something of benefit to be preserved becomes increasingly less appropriate to the society based on science and technology.[40]

His analysis was based on a fundamental belief that progressive changes were taking place which would represent a movement beyond classes in the classical sense.

There is some evidence, however, that late in his life he began to re-evaluate some of the premises of this belief. It is worthwhile establishing some of these assumptions, as evident in *TVM*, and compare them with his more recent remarks. He argued that "It would be fairly safe to generalize that as industrialization proceeds the shape of the class structure changes from triangular to diamond or beehive . . . [using] the criterion of occupational skill."[41] Further, he said, "it can reasonably be assumed that the increasing proportion of blue collar workers in manufacturing had higher levels of skills at the end of the sixty years [1901-1961] than at the beginning."[42] Porter's analysis of post-industrialism places great stake in the decline of unskilled and the rise of semi-skilled and skilled workers. The "upgrading" of skills was accepted by Porter, as by most observers, as a matter of faith, concomitant with industrialization. They equated the decline of backbreaking labour with greater skill but failed to examine the content of the rising "semi-skilled" category and the changes among the "skilled."

In light of these assumptions, Porter's comments on Harry Braverman's influential *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, which makes the opposite points Porter had made earlier about class, are informative. Porter was particularly impressed by Braverman's critique of census and occupational classifications, saying "his analysis of the methodology of the prevailing official [classifications], more than any other part of the book calls into question the notion of an upgraded labour force. All of these things add up to a tremendously powerful critique of how we have looked at work."[43] Additional evidence of a change in Porter's position near the end of his life comes from his introductory commentary on his "Power and Freedom" article contained in his collection on *The Measure of Canadian Society*, where he remarks, "I would probably want also to modify my views about how the changing occupational structure which has come with industrialism really provides upward mobility."[44]

IV

John Porter's search for equality was a never-ending one. At the end of his life there was still a vibrance to his work, a feeling that he still had another great book in mind. He wrote in 1970, in the Introduction to his "Research Biography," that "Much more material is now available than formerly to undertake another macroanalysis of Canada in transition or to revisit the "mosaic." That would be an attractive possibility if time and energies allow."[45] In 1974 he wrote to me from Harvard that "course preparation I have found irksome and heavy, but I hope what I am doing will ultimately develop into a macrosociology — although the pay off is far ahead."[46] Again in 1976 he wrote, saying "When I can get out from under my present grant obligations I have every intention of doing another macro-book on Canada."[47] It is my impression that John was dissatisfied — or perhaps more accurately impatient — with his later studies of education and intergenerational mobility. They were massive research projects involving enormous grants and much complex collaboration. As I saw them, they were for John a means to an end, the necessary homework for a more important project, but they took much more time and energy than he had planned. They were only coming to a conclusion at the time of his death. There are, however, a few clues about what he intended to accomplish.

Porter's macrosociology after *TVM* contained a strong comparative focus,[48] arguing the desirability of understanding "types" of societies. Although he was hopeful about the promise of such studies he was aware of their pitfalls and critical of the rigor they had exhibited to date. One of the general concepts he continually returned to in later life was that of "citizenship rights":

> What distinguishes a modern industrial society from earlier types is that, because of greater productive capacity, it can implement all the rights of citizenship according to the principles of justice . . . .John Rawls' *Theory of Justice* which is perhaps the best contemporary attempt to develop a socialist ethic, suggests that, while liberty has primacy in modern industrial society, it could well not have it in an underdeveloped one where the development of economic resources must have primacy. Modern industrial societies, then, are a type with their own capacity to achieve social welfare, to implement citizenship and achieve equality and justice in the here and now.[49]

Porter was working with the concept of justice and how it could be translated not only into legal and political rights but social rights as well. Thus he considered the best way to develop a "socialist ethic" would be through the concrete application of specific enforceable rights available to each individual. These rights, which he felt advanced industrial societies capable of fulfilling, were for such things as a decent standard of living for all, equal access to education and equal access to all occupations. It is evident that the macrosociology he had in mind would not be a mere description. As he said, macrosociology

> should be capable of both explanation *and* evaluation, that is we should be able, on the one hand to understand how a society in its totality works and how it got to be where it is, and on the other hand we should be able to judge whether or not it is moving in a desirable direction, that is in the direction of maximizing human welfare .... If we are not concerned with questions of value then sociology will return to that condition of aimless empiricism and labourious webs of theory spinning towards which recent criticism has been directed, or it will return to that condition where its hidden major premises are those of the *status quo*.[50]

This will not be the final word on John Porter's work, nor should it be. We can expect the appearance of the major book reporting on his education study and a collection reporting on the massive mobility study in which he was engaged. We can also have a collection of his essays, *The Measure of Canadian Society*, which he worked on over the past few years and completed shortly before his death. Beyond these works there will be reinterpretations, elaborations and debates about his contribution. This is as it should be. As a great thinker he raised more questions, posed more problems and suggested more projects than could possibly be resolved in a lifetime. In the annals of Canadian sociology it will be recorded that John Porter was a great egalitarian, a committed scholar and a profound teacher for an entire discipline.

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Notes

* I would like to thank Dennis Olsen and Marion Porter for detailed comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

1. See Edwin R. Black, "The Fractured Mosaic: John Porter Revisited," in *Canadian Public Administration* 17 (Winter), 1974; James Heap, *Everybody's Canada: The Vertical Mosaic Reviewed and Re-examined*, Toronto: Burns and MacEachern, 1974; Harvey Rich, "*The Vertical Mosaic* Revisited: Toward a Macrosociology of Canada," in *Journal of Canadian Studies* 11:1 (February) 1976.
2. See John Porter, "Foreword" to *The Canadian Corporate Elite: An Analysis of Economic Power*, Wallace Clement, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975.
3. John Porter, Introduction to "Research Biography of a Macrosociological Study: *The Vertical Mosaic,*" in *Macrosociology: Research and Theory*, James Coleman, Amitai Etzioni and John Porter, Boston: Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1970, p. 148.
4. See Clement, *Canadian Corporate Elite*, pp. xxv, 1–8.
5. See *ibid.*, p. 7.
6. John Porter, "The Limits of Sociology," in *Contemporary Sociology* 2:5 (September) 1973, 467; also see Prologue to *The Measure of Canadian Society: Education, Equality and Opportunity*, Agincourt: Gage Publishing, 1979, pp 1–5.
7. *Toronto Daily Star*, 31 December 1965.
8. John Porter, "Power and Freedom in Canadian Democracy," in *Social Purpose for Canada*, M. Oliver, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961, p. 30.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 37–38.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
11. John Porter, "Notes as Commentator" for "Macrosociological Issues in Canadian Sociology" session, Canadian Sociology and Anthropology meetings, Edmonton (May) 1975, p. 10.
12. John Porter, "Evaluation and Status: Some Theoretical Perspectives," unpublished paper, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Carleton University, Ottawa, n.d., p. 15.
13. John Porter, "The Future of Upward Mobility," in *American Sociological Review* 33:1 (February) 1968, 5.
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34. See Porter, *Vertical Mosaic*, pp. 7–8.
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BACK TO WORK: SOCIOLOGY AND THE DISCOURSE ON CAPITALIST WORK

Graham Knight

After languishing for nearly a decade, the sociology of work has come into its own again. Recent works in this area offer a radical change from the "conventional" sociology of work which preceded them. Beginning in 1974 with the publication of Harry Braverman's *Labour and Monopoly Capital*, sociologists concerned with the social organization of the workplace and the labour process have been presented with an array of works. In the United States, William Form's *Blue-Collar Stratification* has revived interest in the relationship between the social and technical organization of work, and Nathan Rosenberg's *Perspectives on Technology* has brought a much needed sense of historical perspective to our understanding of technology and its effects. In Canada, James Rinehart's *The Tyranny of Work* has attempted a critical understanding of the historical and political sociology of work. In the United Kingdom, Nichols's and Beynon's *Living With Capitalism* has reopened debate on the impact of automation on the social organization and personal experience of work in the modern factory. In addition, English-speaking sociologists have been treated to the long overdue translation of crucial works by Serge Mallet.[1]

I

The fate of conventional approaches to the sociology of work is illustrated eloquently by Robert Blauner's *Alienation and Freedom*, an analysis which is both emblematic of sociological orthodoxy and a manifestation of the limitations of that perspective.[2] The success of Blauner's work was self-defeating. The thesis of *Alienation and Freedom* purported to show that although the erstwhile direction of technological change — from craft to machine to assembly-line forms of production — had fostered increasing fragmentation of manual labour and therewith generated an increasing sense of work alienation on the part of the worker, this trend would now undergo something of a reversal as a result of automation. Whereas the increasing mechanization of production, transfer and assembly technologies had given rise to the subdivi-

sion of labour into highly repetitive, unskilled tasks, it was held that automation would reintegrate all these functions into the continuous process machine, transforming the worker's role from manual operation to technical supervision. Automation would engender embourgeoisément, and all its attributes — social association, and so on. Affluence would dissolve the immiseration thesis; automation would overcome alienation.

The very success of Blauner's analysis in the context of conservative, celebrationist sociology did him out of a problem and a subject matter. After Blauner, mainstream sociologists assumed the working class was either embourgeoisé or part of the cultural crowd of the "middle-mass," where classification ceded to social significations. Even for Marxian theorists of labour, the working class was dismissed as a revolutionary subject: it was seen to be incorporated into the dominant ideological order of industrialism and integrated into the consumerist ethic — the "soft-machine" of social control.

Developments in Canadian sociology confirm this trend. Influenced, in part, by the social thought of Harold Innis, Canadian sociology emerged as a viable discipline during the nineteen sixties: an emergence symbolized by the publication of John Porter's *The Vertical Mosaic* in 1965.[3] In *The Vertical Mosaic* Porter documented certain dimensions of social inequality in the Canadian political economy. In doing so he offered an essentially egalitarian critique of what was presumed to be the middle-class Canadian self-image.

The nature of Porter's critique set the tone which prevailed in Canadian sociology for the next decade. In essence, this meant a concern for the study of institutional "elites," for the study of ethnic pluralism and stratification, and for macro political economy. Theoretically, it meant a concern with the perspective of stratification and the analysis of inequality. This was, however, conceived in a *distributive* sense, so that attention focused chiefly upon the allocation of wealth and power rather than upon their production. The hegemony of this essentially Weberian view of inequality precluded analysis of the social organization of work, of the workplace, of the labour process, and so on, as inherent features of the stratification system.

II

Set in this context the publication of a work such as Harry Braverman's *Labour and Monopoly Capital* is an event worthy of note and reflection. Clearly, it serves as a cue to go back to work, to return to the study of the workplace as a central part of our attempt to understand modern society. Equally clearly, the work is something much more than this; the analysis contained in its pages offers a radical break with the kind of sociology of work which preceded it. In this latter respect, the function of *Labour and Monopoly Capital* is not only substantive, it is reflective; it provides us with the motive

and the means to begin to reflect critically upon the kind of assumptions we have traditionally made about the work world, and where those assumptions have and have not taken us.

Braverman restores to a central position the analysis of the alienation of the worker from his labour, an analysis which points to the centrality of alienated labour in the critique of political economy and the class structure of capitalism. This contribution points to a more widespread weakness in the methodology of academic sociology. If we translate Braverman's analysis into more orthodox sociological terms, one of its fundamental assumptions and messages, is that the structure of the workplace and the labour process is an inherent feature of the class structure of modern capitalism. This, in turn, confronts us with the limitations and inadequacies of the reductionist, empiricist models of class and class structure which have predominated, particularly in North American sociology, from the early community studies of the thirties and forties through the "socio-economic status" theories today.

The declining interest in and concern with the structure and process of work activity which occurred during the sixties and early seventies was rooted in the general assumption prevalent at that time, though itself rooted in the basic structure of post-war reconstruction, that traditional problems associated with the social and technological organizations of production were solved or disappearing. The production of high standards of material life was taken for granted as an unproblematic, institutionalized feature of the so-called "mixed economy." What mattered, rather, was distribution and consumption — who had access, and how much access, to structural affluence, and what they did with it. The shift in perspective on the economic order from production to distribution and consumption is clearly evidenced in the creation and manipulation by the state, the corporate sector and the mass media of a new economic entity — the "consumer" — who became simultaneously both the chief beneficiary and main victim of the economic system.

The assumption underlying this shift of focus — that the organization of production was unproblematic — was accepted, paradoxically, even by many of those who assumed a critical perspective and were concerned to reveal and examine the situation of those who continued to be denied access to the mainstream of the post-war economic order. The underlying characteristic of these groups was that they were marginal to the productive system, and therewith to the dominant market mode of allocation. They were groups whose economic situation was derived from their roles as clients of the state welfare system. And as these groups were marginal to the whole productive system (at least from the point of view of active participation as producers/ workers/ productive labour), it followed logically that their interests and conflicts were seen to be framed and articulated as those of consumers located in the political

distribution of goods and services rather than as those of producers located in the divisions of property and labour.

This interpretation was clearly congruent with the general view prevalent in academic sociology that the study of class structure, or more correctly of "social stratification," concerned itself with the distribution of social rewards, which could, in turn, be treated empirically as well as analytically as quite distinct from their production. This view was derived from the differentiation and reification of production, distribution and consumption as separate economic functions whose operation gave rise to the formation of quite autonomous clusters of social relations. The conception of classes (or "socio-economic" strata) as distributive phenomena therefore departed radically from the Marxian assumption that these three "functions" are merely separate "moments" in the same historical process of production and reproduction which could not be grasped intellectually, or intelligibly, apart from their interrelationships in the emergent totality.[4] By accepting the assumptions of an essentially uncritical academic sociology, those who concerned themselves with the poor and the deprived tended to restrict the scope of their analyses. They focused on the mechanisms which countervailed the distributive interests of these groups, and did not extend their analysis to the manner in which the political economy initially necessitates, to a degree, the exclusion of these groups from the productive/reproductive process as a whole. Just as the assumptions adopted by Fabian politics imposed limitations on its advocates' ability to call for and effect radical social transformations and therewith predisposed them to reformism, so too the assumptions of Fabian sociology constrained its ability to carry analysis further and therewith predisposed it to a reformist critique of distributive inequalities.

The theoretical implications of the distributive view of class not only precluded analysis of the workplace as a dimension of the class structure, but also resulted in an emasculated view of the role of property in the "stratification" system. Property came to be viewed, not as a basis upon which the whole productive process of industrial capitalism rested, but rather as just another means, alongside income and salaries earned from employment, for appropriating personal and familial wealth. Academic sociology lost sight of the fact that property predominates over labour both productively and distributively to the extent that under the capitalist mode of production it is the uses to which those who own and control productive property put it which calls forth the demand for particular types of labour, and duly shapes the division of labour (the occupational structure), and the market allocation of rewards.[5] Indeed, it became fashionable to regard property as increasingly less important than and increasingly subordinate to labour on the grounds that the proportion of national wealth accruing to property in forms such as rents, interest and dividends was seen to be decreasing in relation to the proportion

accruing to labour in the form of income and salaries. The failure to consider the productive process as a whole helped obscure the nature of the relationship between property and labour. Classes, moreover, were not only reduced to the status of distributive phenomena, but were also redefined as "artificially constructed" groups or aggregates by (and presumably for) the professional observer.[6] In this way classes were viewed as aggregates sharing common resources and opportunities ("life-chances"), a view which enabled some sociologists to diversify the bases of class formation and thereby equate classes with racial and ethnic groups, gender groups, age groups, educational groups and so on.[7] What all this conceptual manoeuvering amounted to was an essentially empiricist reconstruction of class in which the theory of class was replaced by its measurement.

Just as the bases of class formation became diversified by this reduction of class to a purely distributive category, so too class conflict became at first reinterpreted and relocated, and subsequently "déclassé" altogether. The traditional (and not exclusively Marxist) conception that class conflict resided in the conflict between capital and labour, management and worker, over the conditions and product of the labour process, was relocated in the conflict between service agency and consuming client over the allocation of the state budget. As this occurred, the forms and dimensions of "class" conflict multiplied, thereby facilitating its eventual "déclassément." Even class conflict in the workplace was not immune; it became redefined as "industrial conflict" and was seen firstly to be institutionally differentiated and separated from all the other (equally differentiated and separated) conflicts on the campuses, in the prisons, in the welfare agencies, and secondly to be withering away in proportion and intensity owing to the successful institutionalization of conflict-expression and resolution through such procedures as collective bargaining.[8]

In this context, then, *Labour and Monopoly Capital* shows that the separation of industrial and occupational sociology from the study of "social stratification," now embedded in the bureaucratic division of intellectual labour in professional sociology, is in many ways a distorting one. By elaborating on the relationships among capital, technology, skill levels and the labour process, Braverman has clearly demonstrated that these two "sub-disciplines" are not separate areas of study, that the study of work organization is tied intrinsically to the analysis of class structure and political economy, that the distribution of work alienation is precisely one aspect of the whole structure of class inequalities, in short that the analysis of the marketplace is incomplete without a complementary analysis of the workplace.

This is particularly important in the North American context where this separation is most evident. In the European tradition industrial and stratifi-

cation sociology have been more closely bound together, and the analysis of work organization has been more strongly influenced by the perspective of class theory. The works of Touraine, Mallet, Goldthorpe, Lockwood and Mann provide examples of research which have used models of class which take account of the social relations of the workplace as a salient feature of the class system.[9] In North American sociology, on the other hand, these theoretical and conceptual linkages have been rare; and those works which have endeavoured to recognize and address them — works such as Sennett's and Cobb's *The Hidden Injuries of Class* or Andrew Levison's *The Working-Class Majority* — have tended to be overwhelmed by the flood of more empiricist-statistical researches or else have been confined in their influence to a smaller constituency of readers.[10]

There is a second and twofold methodological significance to *Labour and Monopoly Capital.* The book not only speaks to the deficiencies of conventional sociology, it also exposes the principal weakness in Braverman's own line of argument. As such it reveals a contradiction in the Marxist analysis of the labour process in particular and of capitalism in general.

By adopting a methodology which is both critical and historical Braverman has been able to depict the workplace and the labour process of modern capitalism in a way which sharply conflicts with the image that has filtered through from the early social psychological studies. Braverman's Marxism has caused him to focus upon the degrading, fragmenting consequences for human labour wrought by the various forms of capitalist rationalization — the mechanization, "manualization," "scientific" management and subdivision of labour — and therewith has thrown into sharp relief the conservative implications of conventional workplace sociology. By seeming to show that workers typically find the ways to accommodate themselves to the routinization and alienation of their work, by implying that the aggregate level of psychological alienation is relatively constant over time and thus an "inherent" feature of the human condition, and by attributing causal determinacy to reified abstractions such as technological development and bureaucratic complexity, the latter has served, wittingly or not, to legitimate the structure of capitalist work, and to displace its problematic features onto the ability of the individual worker to cope with life in a world that is assumed to be beyond his material and intellectual control.

In a manner which is reminiscent of Marx's critique of classical political economy for universalizing actions and sentiments which were properly thought of as historically specific, Braverman's analysis contains a critique of conventional workplace sociology for having taken for granted the very feature of the workplace and the labour process it should have sought to isolate and explain. By focusing its "analytic" largely upon the subjective experience of work the latter has created the impression that the structural

determination of work is a "natural" and by implication necessary and inevitable part of the autonomous logic of modernization. In contrast Braverman, tying the organization of the workplace and the labour process to the encompassing political economy and particularly to the forms and contradictions of corporate capital accumulation, has re-emphasized the social and historical contingency of both the structure and the experience of work.

III

It does not follow from this that the earlier sociologies of work are fully invalid. Rather, what it points to is the fact that as these studies interpreted their findings and established their conclusions without much concern for historical perspective, they were subject to interpretive bias and distortion. Nor does this assessment of Braverman's work invalidate the social psychology of work as a useful, in fact necessary, form of enquiry. What it does suggest is that the purpose of this should be to examine and explore the perennially problematic relationship between actors and structures, between our subjective experience of the world and the effects upon it of the objective constraints created by living amidst other people.

Yet on this score, *Labour and Monopoly Capital* itself begins to fall short. Regardless of the author's intentions, the principal weakness of the analysis is the absence of any systematic attempt to look into the ways in which the structure of the workplace and the labour process is reproduced in the subjective consciousness and experience of working on the part of the worker. This is ironic in that Braverman fails to adopt a sufficiently dialectical view of the worker-in-the-workplace or to examine the ways in which the structure of work may be negated in the individual's understanding of it and himself.

The reading of the history of the labour process contained in *Labour and Monopoly Capital* is essentially linear. The structure of work under capitalism is seen, more or less, as a continuous process in which labour is progressively degraded. The process of degradation, in turn, is one aspect of the general evolution of the capitalism of production and of the incessant "need" to accumulate capital. And the process of capital accumulation takes a linear form, *viz.*, increasing centralization, increasing concentration and monopolization and increasing imbalance between capital and wage labour. In this way, the process of the degradation of labour is one facet of the process of capital accumulation in which power becomes increasingly concentrated in the hands of the propertied.

This means, however, that Braverman reduces major changes in the workplace and the labour process to so many forms of the central process of degradation. Thus, for example, when discussing the role of technology on the labour process, particularly in the case of the impact of automation,

Braverman argues that it serves eventually to increase the subdivision of labour, to facilitate managerial control of the worker, and generally to render the job more routine for the worker. Similarly, when dealing with the growth of technical, professional, service and white-collar workers, Braverman maintains that the changes are largely cosmetic since these "new" workers are simply new forms of wage labour.

While there is truth to much of Braverman's critique on these and other matters, his analysis at times becomes forced, as he tailors fact to fit theory. On the matter of automation, for example, Braverman relies chiefly for support upon the empirical work of James Bright (a rather surprising source of documentation given his institutional and research association with the Harvard School of Business).[11] Yet Bright's work is only one of a host of studies concerning the structural and experiential implications of automation. Similarly in the matter of changes in the composition of the labour force, Braverman underestimates the importance of the growth of technical and "new" professional forms of labour; these cannot be dismissed casually as new forms of wage labour, at least insofar as the self-image of these workers is concerned.

The root of the central problem of which these examples are only symptoms resides in Braverman's failure to develop a social psychology of the workplace and the labour process which will complement the structural perspective he adopts. This critique is not merely addressed to the sophistry of conventional "bourgeois" sociology; the social psychology of the workplace must form an integral, necessary part of the Marxist analysis of modern capitalism. By not connecting his analysis of the objective alienation of the worker from his labour to a theory of the subjective alienation of the worker under modern capitalism, Braverman may provide us with an indictment of modern capitalism, but he offers no moment of transcendence. We are left with the immiseration thesis and with the orthodox assumption that this will lead to an emancipatory ideology.

This weakness can be usefully illuminated by comparing Braverman's analysis to that of Serge Mallet.[12] In his *Essays on the New Working-Class*, particularly in the essay entitled "Industrial Labour," Mallet gives us a theory of the labour process under capitalism that consists of three stages of development. Each of these stages is defined in terms of the relationship among the division of labour, the prevailing mode of technology and the typical form of collective labour organization as manifested in the historically predominant type of union structure and ideology. Mallet regards the relationship among these three elements in a more reciprocal and interactive way than does Braverman.

The methodological contrast between the two approaches is clearly illustrated in Mallet's discussion of the third, and most recent, stage of develop-

ment in which the worker is undergoing the transition from machine operative to monitor-technician. This transition is more than cosmetic; automation is seen to have a restructuring effect upon the division of labour, and therewith upon the experience of work and upon the predominant form of unionism. For Mallet, the semi-skilled worker of the machine age gave rise to "industrial unionism" and an economistic ideology; the technician-monitor of the automated age will give rise increasingly to "enterprise unionism" and the replacement of economism with an ideology focusing upon the need and right of the worker to exercise control over the various levels of the production process.

Mallet envisages a workplace torn by contradiction; as technician, the worker is invested with responsibility; as proletarian, the worker remains trapped within the call of wage labour. The coexistence of these two contradictory processes — the creation of "educated" proletarians — will render the opaque nature of the wage form more socially transparent in the political consciousness of the "new" working class. The contradiction of the capitalist labour process thus resides in the partial enrichment of the worker's labour!

Unlike Braverman, Mallet connects the evolution of the structure of work to its reproduction in the consciousness of the worker. And equally, the success of Mallet's interrogation in clarifying the radical implications of new modes of alienation points up the historical regression of Braverman's analysis — its repetition of categories of nineteenth-century industrial sociology.

Braverman makes it quite clear in the opening pages of *Labour and Monopoly Capital* that the ensuing discussion is not designed to explore the subjective dimensions of the labour process: "This is a book about the working class as a class in itself, not as a class for itself."[13] Disclaimers such as this, however, are only acceptable insofar as they do not contravene the assumptions and premises of the theory one adopts, and in Braverman's case the disclaimer does contravene the theory. While he recognizes that his focus entails a "self-imposed limitation," the point is that it is a limitation of greater consequence than he seems to suppose. It not only "compromises" the analysis for "those who float in the conventional stream of social science," it also, and indeed more importantly, compromises those whose theorizing is ostensibly directed towards effecting social change. As such, the distinction between the working class as a "class in itself" and as a "class for itself" is a problematical assertion. Is not, after all, the former a point of departure from which the latter arises?

Nonetheless, the debt to Braverman remains. The absence of a social psychology of the labour process and its relationship to the dialectic of capitalism indicates the inadequacy of those models that posit the relationship between structures and actors in mechanistic and deterministic fashion. With

Braverman, we can acknowledge that while men do indeed make their own history, some make it more clearly and more fully than others. We can recognize that the "tradition of all the dead generations" does indeed weigh "like a nightmare" upon some of the living more than on others. To emphasize the need for a social psychology of the capitalist labour process in no way precludes our analysis of its structure in terms of a political sociology and political economy.

Conclusion

The emphasis devoted in the preceding discussion to *Alienation and Freedom* and to *Labour and Monopoly Capital* should not be misconstrued. It would be convenient to attribute the declining interest in work to the former and the renewed interest in work to the latter. It would also be quite misleading. Both works are more properly viewed as symptomatic of developments in the organization of social thought and changes in the wider social order. To regard a work of analysis as symptomatic of wider developments is not however, to belittle its importance. *Alienation and Freedom* represents the apogee of a social psychology of work that assured us that disenchantment was destined to wither away with the advance of new technology.

Set against this background, any revival of interest in the social organization of work would not only have to abandon the assumptions of the earlier social psychologies, but do so by confronting critically their shortcomings and limitations. The importance of *Labour and Monopoly Capital* is precisely that it gives us the cue, and to some extent the means, to begin to carry out this task. At the same time, it is a work whose problematic features may lead to self-exhaustion of the analysis it attempts to establish. By failing to come to grips with the social psychology of the labour process Braverman comes close to abandoning the radical distinctiveness of a theoretically informed praxis.

Intellectual history may thus be poised to repeat itself. For Blauner an exhaustion of topic derived from an "optimism of the intelligence"; for Braverman it may well come from a "pessimism of the will."

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Notes

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2. R. Blauner, *Alienation and Freedom*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964; H. Braverman, *op. cit.*

3. J. Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965.

4. Cf. K. Marx, *Grundrisse: Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy (Rough Draft)*, trans. by M. Nicolaus, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973. *Viz.*:

> The conclusion we reach is not that production, distribution, exchange, and consumption are identical, but that they all form members of a totality, distinctions within a unity. Production predominates not only over itself . . . but over the other moments as well . . . . A definite production thus determines a definite consumption, distribution and exchange as well as *definite relations between these different moments.* . . . Mutual interaction takes place between the different moments. This is the case with every organic whole. (Pp. 99-100, original emphases)

5. Cf. C. Anderson, *The Political Economy of Social Class*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

6. Cf. J. Porter.

7. The most ambitious attempt along these lines can be found in G. Lensin, *Power and Privilege*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966.

8. Cf. R. Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959.

9. A. Touraine, *La Conscience Ouvrière*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1966; *The Post-Industrial Society*, New York: Random House, 1971; S. Mallet, *La Nouvelle Classe Ouvrière*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963; *Essays on the New Working-Class*, St. Louis: Telos Press, 1975; J. Goldthorpe and D. Lockwood, *The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969; D. Lockwood, *The Blackcoated Worker*, London: Unwin, 1959; M. Mann, *Workers on the Move*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973; *Consciousness and Action Among the Western Working-Class*, London: MacMillan, 1973.

10. R. Sennet and J. Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, New York: Vintage Books, 1973; A. Levison, *The Working-Class Majority*, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1975.

11. J. Bright, *Automation and Management*, Boston: Harvard University School of Business Administration, 1958.

12. Mallet, *op. cit.*

13. Braverman, p. 27.

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THE ECLIPSE OF *THEORIA*

Alkis Kontos

Richard J. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Political and Social Theory*, New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovitch, 1976, pp. xxiv + 286.

Philosophy and science were born out of the same womb: primitive religion, the mytho-practical cosmos of the past. Yet, from the beginning, philosophy's concerns and method, have been distinctly different from those of science. Philosophy emerged as the quest for true knowledge, the practice of wisdom, the critique of everyday life. Plato's allegory of the cave proclaims philosophy the *theoria*, the true vision of reality, the ascent toward the sun of the mind and the rejection of the false world of shadows and appearance.

Philosophy interprets; its province is the normative sphere. Science explains; its subject matter is the empirical world of Nature, the discovery of its secret workings. These are ancient distinctions which have been obscured by the amazing growth of modern science. It is this growth that proved quite devastating for the visionary, speculative world of philosophic *theoria.* Truth and scientific precision and objectivity became coterminous. It is in this context that the rise of the social sciences and the eclipse of *theoria* have occurred.

In this very schematic prolegomenon I merely suggest the outlines of an ancient, complex story which still goes on, albeit in a modern version. The full story is the intellectual and cultural alienation of modern man. The tension, indeed the quarrel, between philosophy and science — its modern manifestation with its almost inaudible ancient echoes — constitutes the realm of Bernstein's inquiry.

This study grew out of the crisis in the social sciences that erupted in the 1960s. The polemics, debates, claims and counterclaims that surrounded this crisis concerned the nature of the social sciences and the role of theory. The author's hope is

> to show that in what might otherwise seem a parochial and intramural debate about the social sciences, primary questions have been raised about the nature of human beings, what constitutes knowledge of society and

> politics, how this knowledge can affect the ways in which we shape our lives, and what is and ought to be the relation of theory and practice. (P. xiii)

His "primary objective in this study is to clarify, explore, and pursue" these fundamental issues (p. xiii).

Bernstein confesses that "the initial impression one has in reading through the literature in and about the social disciplines during the past decade or so is that of sheer chaos" (p. xiii). But this is only an initial impression. Bernstein believes that beneath this babel of claims and counterclaims "we can discern the outlines of a complex argument that has been developing: an emerging new sensibility that, while still very fragile, is leading to a restructuring of social and political theory" (p. xiii). It is as if a kind of Hegelian cunning of reason were at work. The restructuring of theory is self-adumbrated, it exists in a substratum just beneath the surface. It is the result of "a period of crisis" (p. xiii). We can aid and abet this process of gestation.

The author's "major objective is to evolve a perspective from which one can integrate what is right and sound" in each of the various competing orientations involved in the crisis-debates and, of course, "reject what is inadequate and false" (p. xviii). Bernstein is convinced that "despite tensions and conflicts" a coherence is discernible (p. xviii). It is this basic coherence that he wishes to articulate, unify and integrate.

The study emphasizes the Anglo-Saxon intellectual context. Bernstein explains:

> the same basic problems that emerge in sharp relief in Anglo-Saxon debates about the nature of the social sciences and the role of theory, are also central to Continental investigations of the *sciences humaines* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*. The live options that are taken seriously and the forms of discourse manifestly differ, but there is a concern with the same primary issues. (P. xxi)

The thematic structure of the study consists of four parts: first, empirical theory — the naturalistic interpretation of the social sciences. This is followed by three distinct theoretical perspectives which challenge the naturalistic interpretation. These are: linguistic analysis, phenomenology, and critical theory. These form the remaining three parts of the study. Each part contributes to the debate; but only the totality is meant to disclose the essential dimensions of the restructuring of social and political theory. Each part serves as a clarification toward that end. For each part to serve as a step toward the resolution of the crisis, its analysis-critique must reach the very root of the issue.

The section on empirical theory is very strategic. It defines the context of the whole crisis-debate: science vs *theoria*. Bernstein's intention here regarding empirical theory is to articulate faithfully (not to caricature) the views of those who conceive of the social sciences as differing only in degree and not in kind from natural science. The positivist influence among the advocates of this view is evident. Ambivalence and plain hostility toward normative theory are also evident. It is central to the doctrine of this school to refuse to draw a qualitative distinction between the social and the natural sciences. The social sciences are seen as an immature — though rapidly maturing — version of natural science. These scholars are convinced that scientific explanation means "discovery of and appeal to laws or nomological statements" (p. 43). The insistence on identifying natural science with true theory — the only acceptable form of theory — renders logical their desire to pattern social science upon the method and aims of natural science. This, of necessity, leads to the conviction that social scientists must remain objective and neutral: they must explain, not judge or justify. Their "task is *not* to make prescriptive claims about what ought to be — not to advocate a normative position" (p. 45).

The naturalistic interpretation of the social sciences not only neutralizes the normative-prescriptive dimension of social thought, but it also ignores the tradition of *theoria*, its ability to "distinguish appearance from reality, the false from the true, and to provide an orientation for practical activity" (p. 53). The *bios theoretikos* is ruled out.

Bernstein points out that the naturalistic school of thought is not monolithic. There are those empiricists:

> who think our present ignorance so vast that it is best to stick to the task of refining techniques for collecting data and making low-level empirical generalizations about independent and dependent variables. There are those who think that such an endeavor is blind and directionless unless guided by the search for general theories. There are those who recommend a more modest endeavor of advancing theories of the middle range. (P. 43)

The many and varied disputes among the advocates of the naturalistic interpretation remain well confined within a framework basic to this perspective. Its central premise is never challenged. This framework also "fosters a distinctive attitude toward the history of the social sciences and especially social and political theory" (p. 43). A basic distinction is drawn between the history of theory and systematic theory (p. 43). But the distinction is polarized: "From a scientific point of view, the measure of past theories is

and ought to be the present state of systematic theory" (pp. 43-44). Indeed, "present theory — to the extent that it is rigorously formulated and empirically tested — is the measure of the success or failure of past theory" (p. 15). Perhaps the most sophisticated version of the empiricist view would be this: "Empirical research without theory is blind, just as theory without empirical research is empty" (p. 14).

In the final analysis, the naturalistic interpretation of the social sciences severs theory and action; its view of theory is modelled after the natural sciences and "reflects a *total* intellectual orientation" (p. 51). Facts and values are distinguished by the advocates of the naturalistic view. Only facts are accepted as legitimately within the realm of scientific inquiry. Weber is referred to briefly and though Bernstein sees him as a more sophisticated and more serious scholar than most modern advocates of the fact/value dichotomy, he is found wanting. For "it is absolutely hopeless to think that we can justify . . . basic values; we can only choose to accept them" (p. 48). This is Weber's final verdict on the issue, according to Bernstein.

Clearly, Bernstein disagrees with the naturalistic interpretation of the social sciences. In this section on empirical theory he examines the views of scholars such as Merton, Smelser, Homans, Nagel and, to a lesser extent, Parsons, Easton, Popper and Hauser. The thinker who struggled most effectively, though not exhaustively, with the question of the nature of science, social science, philosophy and the role of theory is Weber. Had Bernstein paid more attention to Weber he would have been forced to treat the question of empirical theory more philosophically, more lucidly and more constructively. Bernstein begins his study with Merton, a poor substitute.

Weber insisted on viewing science, its method and results, as capable of validation on a universal scale. In this, science was unique for Weber. But science was addressing questions of means, not ends. Thus science could rule supreme only within a limited sphere of human life. This sphere, indispensable in its instrumentality (especially in industrial societies), cannot deal with ultimate questions of value and meaning. This is the domain of philosophy. Ultimate value questions cannot and should not be settled without heeding the voice of science where issues of means, as they relate to ends, are concerned. Weber wanted science to become the indispensable servant of philosophy. But he wanted philosophy to realize how helpless it could be without any assistance from science. Social science stands between the two. It deals with the social world, the world of culture, beliefs and values. A world which can be understood interpretively in its full diversity. It is in this sphere of culture that ultimate values must be taken for granted. Their full investigation-validation is beyond the aims and capabilities of the social sciences. Neither can philosophy validate them in the manner and method of the definitive, irrefutable universality of natural science. This does not mean — as many

wrongly assume Weber's position to be — that philosophy cannot assert distinctions, preferences and value judgements. What philosophy cannot do is refute as conclusively as science can. But Weber never suggested that philosophy and sociology ought to emulate the natural sciences. He realized that our lives unfold within a complex universe of ethico-technical questions which should not be confused, but which cannot be absolutely separated. Weber did not believe in the naive absurdities of a grand, general theory. No ultimate, final, comprehensive unification was either possible or desirable for Weber. Bernstein misreads Weber's position on the crucial issue of the fact/value dichotomy.

If Weber really believed that all values are the same, that no moral judgements could be made, and that values are questions of preference, why would he be so critical of so many aspects of our modern cultural wasteland? It is in Weber's thought that the confrontation of science-*theoria* takes place in its most modern and *philosophical* form and expression; it is a powerful, comprehensive and tragic encounter. In the figure of a distinctly modern, post-Nietzschean tragic hero, philosophy seeks refuge, recoils and then, at least temporarily, it eclipses.

Bernstein's treatment of the empiricists does not permit a radical (in the philosophical sense of the term) analysis-critique of the crucial question of science vs. *theoria*. The monistic, narrow, view of the naturalistic interpretation is rejected by Bernstein; the denial of a qualitative difference between natural science and social science is erroneous in Bernstein's view. But this is a minimal critique. We know what it rejects; it refuses to accept a highly constricted concept of empirical theory as *the* concept of theory. But the true concept of theory, vaguely intimated, remains invisible and divinely mysterious. Bernstein would like us to believe that the substantive elucidation of his theme is to follow this prolegomenon where the empiricist position is pronounced and mildly objected to. It is a genuine conviction on the author's part that indeed the subsequent chapters do orchestrate the restructuring of social and political theory.

Having stated the position of the "mainstream social scientists" — those social scientists who model social science after natural science — and having offered some preliminary criticisms, Bernstein turns to the second part of his inquiry — language, analysis and theory — based primarily "upon analytic philosophy, especially 'the linguistic turn' taken by Ludwig Wittgenstein and J.L. Austin." The influence of these philosophers on many modern thinkers generated the challenge to the pretentious claims of narrow empiricists that concerns our author (p. xvi).

Here Bernstein starts with the eloquent voice of Isaiah Berlin. A strong irreconcilable qualitative distinction exists between the subject matter of philosophy (and social science) and that of the natural sciences; Berlin, critical

of the naturalistic interpretation of the social sciences, warns us that philosophy cannot be subsumed under formal or empirical techniques. He reminds us that human beings are self-interpreting, Nature is not (p. 61). Bernstein finds Berlin's ideas suggestive, but not definitive. Berlin's apologia for philosophy paves the way for Bernstein's treatment of the "linguistic turn." However, it should be pointed out that Berlin speaks within the tradition of philosophy (with a strong liberal orientation). Berlin, unlike Weber, rejects science as irrelevant to philosophy. Weber would have provided a more accurate context for the whole inquiry, as I have mentioned already. But besides Berlin there have been other voices of wisdom rejecting the narrow empiricist view of theory: Arendt, C.B. Macpherson, Strauss, Oakeshott, Voegelin. Though these thinkers do not share a common ideological perspective, they do not succumb to the prevailing scientism. Bernstein does not deal with their thought; nor does he acknowledge their existence in this very context. Thus an artificial monolith is created; great, complex intellectual diversity is ignored.

From Berlin the author moves to Winch. Attention is paid to Winch's claim that there is a logical incompatibility between society and the science of Nature. Human action and behaviour are viewed in a totally different light: to understand them we must move well beyond mere observation. Bernstein finds value in what Winch wants to say rather than in the actual claims he makes (p. 72). More comprehensively we are told

> Winch's strategy of argument is wrongheaded, for it is a mirror image of what he opposes. The real object of Winch's attack is a form of scientism which refuses to recognize that there is anything distinctive about our social life and the concepts required for describing and explaining it. He is ferreting out the *a priori* bias which declares that talk of "understanding," "interpretation," "forms of life," and "rule-governed behavior" has no place in a tough-minded scientific approach to the study of social phenomena. (P. 72)

But the consequence of this critique, according to Bernstein, "is to isolate social life and the concepts pertaining to it from the rest of nature and empirical inquiry" (p. 73). Winch's position is found wanting and even contradictory; but his critique has the merit of achieving a degree of conceptual clarity which exposes the poverty of a simplistic empiricism.

From Winch we move to Louch: human action is viewed in moral terms; assessment and appraisal are needed in order to understand human action. These are moral in nature. The normative dimension so neglected by the

empiricists is now stressed more and more. Louch's argument rests on a dichotomy that Bernstein finds suspect. This is an artificial either/or. "*Either* we concern ourselves exclusively with the variety, complexity, and detail of specific contexts of human performances, and with *ad hoc* descriptions and explanations of these, *or* we will be ensnared in the futile search for generality that results in empty, platitudinous, dubious claims and in universalistic doctrines that are positively evil" (p. 80).

Winch's and Louch's arguments are informed by a moral point of view. Their protest against rampant scientism and positivism is not limited to epistemological considerations. "Indeed, they are arguing for the intrinsic connection between epistemology and a moral point of view" (p. 84). But both undermine their position "by a latent descriptivism" which denies "rational criticism of existing social and political phenomena" (p. 84). Here Berlin is seen more positively; he urged us to accept social critique as one of the tasks of the theorist. And Weber is mentioned as one who "held out the possibility that philosophy might help answer" the crucial question: how shall we live. Bernstein is apparently oblivious to his contradiction — praising Weber here (p. 84) and criticizing him regarding the unresolvability of the question of ultimate values (p. 48).

At this juncture, Bernstein argues that the view of natural science held by the logical empiricists is also held by their critics (p. 85). It is a narrow and simplistic view of science. In order to rectify this erroneous view, Bernstein turns to Kuhn. By exploring the concept of paradigm in Kuhn's work, Bernstein wishes to show that the true picture of the life and growth of science is more complex than is commonly believed; he wishes also to show some basic difficulties and contradictions present in Kuhn's argument — especially regarding conversion, and rational and non-rational persuasion (p. 91). The celebrated distinction between ordinary and extraordinary science advocated by Kuhn is accepted face value by Bernstein. It is the transition from ordinary to the extraordinary that is problematic. I find it very disappointing that Bernstein does not realize that within the boundaries of a prevailing paradigm the life of science is what all advocates and critics of empricism claim it to be. Nor does Kuhn or Bernstein distinguish levels of scientific discourse. Is an Einstein or a Heisenberg within a fixed paradigm? Kuhn's desire to inform us of the complexities distinctive to science has led to a different simplification; he has mechanized the process of scientific creativity. Popper's work and the much neglected but brilliant book *World Hypotheses* by S. Pepper should have been utilized here by Bernstein. It is philosophical poverty to treat Kuhn as *the* authority in this context.

The use and abuse of Kuhn's concept of paradigm — itself a problematic notion — is examined next by Bernstein. Truman, Almond, and Wolin, who have employed the concept in a strained analogy, are treated briefly. Truman

and Almond make a very naive use of the concept. Wolin's ambiguous use of the concept is also demonstrated (p. 101). But Bernstein ignores Wolin's major work, *Politics and Vision*, where continuities and discontinuities in the life of political philosophy are panoramically observed. To treat Wolin's work only in reference to his war with the behavioralists is to constrict unnecessarily the universe of one of the most imaginative theorists.

A brief examination of the contribution of thinkers such as Charles Taylor, MacIntyre and Ryan regarding science and theory permits Bernstein to argue that a more complex orientation is emerging. A convergence of critiques of mainstream social science occurs (pp. 112-114). Thinkers such as Taylor give an indispensable, lucid critique of narrow empiricism, and point out complexities. They employ logic without renouncing theory's value orientation and critical task. But no comprehensive philosophical stance is articulated.

The third part of the study is devoted to phenomenology. Bernstein introduces the phenomenological challenge to scientism by discussing first Sellars' synoptic vision. Sellars seeks to unify the scientific and the manifest image of man. He attempts to ground the manifest image of man in an explanation of it "through more fundamental scientific principles." Again, "science alone is the measure of reality, and the standard for assessing legitimate knowledge of what human beings are" (p. 119). Sellars deals with both images of man: scientific and man-in-the-world. He does not deny the latter as narrow empiricists do, but he incorporates it in the scientific view, the primacy of which remains incontestable. Sellars' vision is sophisticated only by comparison with the crude narrowness of the logical empiricists. It is, in reality, an impoverished version of humanity. Bernstein is attracted to it, its claim to a grand synthesis. It is in light of Sellars' insistence on giving primacy to science that Bernstein introduces the phenomenological philosophy of Husserl. Briefly put, Bernstein sees Husserl's synthesis as a critique of the supposed primacy of science. Science — in Husserl's claim the mathematization of the world — and man-in-the-world, what Husserl calls the *Lebenswelts* must be bracketed; "we must perform a type of *epoché* in which we transform what seems to be so obvious and unproblematic into an enigma, and make it the subject of an independent investigation" (pp. 129-30). And this demands what Husserl calls the transcendental *epoché*. Husserl ultimately rejects the possibility of reducing the sciences of man to the natural sciences; nor should the natural sciences be the model. Here lies Husserl's indictment of Sellars' argument. Bernstein insists that Husserl does not assert "the ontological primacy of the *Lebenswelt*" (p. 129). It seems to me that *unless* the *Lebenswelt* is the proper grounding of ontology the transcendental turn must be seen as a pitiful absurdity. Husserl is severely critical of the scientific mentality. Though he wishes to exit the realm of mere appearance,

he cannot constitute the avenue to transcendence outside the world of perception. It is in this sense that the *Lebenswelt* is the source of its own transcendence, the resolution of the enigma — what normally is unproblematic — the manifest image of man.

It is precisely this ontologization of the phenomenal world that Schutz wishes to push even further into the essence of inter-subjectivity. Schutz, whose thought Bernstein examines in a comprehensive introductory manner, struggles against Husserl's inadequate ontology and Weber's insufficient concept of *Verstehen*. I believe that Schutz was correct regarding Husserl, but as far as Weber was concerned I believe he ignored the mediating role of culture, a role absolutely indispensable for Weber. Ontology is filtered through cultural structures. Bernstein's interpretation differs from mine. He examines Schutz's concept of *Verstehen*, his concept of time, structure and constitution. Schutz, according to Bernstein, abolishes the either/or dichotomy present in vivid pronouncements in Sellars and Husserl (p. 157). Though he enriches our understanding of the manifest image of man, Schutz — and the phenomenological movement as a whole — is declared inadequate. In their perspective, the phenomenologist as theorist "is not directly concerned with judging, evaluating, or condemning existing forms of social and political reality, or with changing the world" (p. 169). Phenomenology is inherently limited; it is incapable of rising to a level of significant socio-political critique.

With this verdict Bernstein turns to the last part of his inquiry — critical theory. After a brief commentary on Horkheimer, ignoring Adorno and Marcuse, he concentrates on Habermas. The admiration he has for Habermas is quite evident. Here we are offered a systematic and comprehensive introduction to Habermas's thought. A mild criticism is voiced occasionally. Habermas is presented as *the* synthesizer. He is reconstituting the ground upon which the web of reason is to unfold.

I have enormous difficulty accepting Habermas as the saviour of theory. I see his effort as primarily epistemological. Unlike all the great theorists of the Frankfurt School who were fundamentally articulators of ontological arguments, Habermas does not confront the ontological question as *the* vital issue. (Bernstein disagrees with this — p. 192). The obsessive manner with which Habermas seeks to incorporate new directions in the various disciplines in his own thought is a sign of weakness and not of strength. I believe that Habermas's best work belongs to the beginning of his career and fame. His most recent work is repetitive and regressive. By comparison with the giants of the Frankfurt School, he is the living decline and academization of critical theory. But at issue here is Bernstein's promise of the restructuring of theory and not any specific part of his orchestrated scenario.

ECLIPSE OF THEORIA

Bernstein states that "an adequate, comprehensive political and social theory must be at once empirical, interpretative and critical." He also informs us that there is a dialectical involvement between empirical research, interpretation, and critique (pp. xiv and 235). Bernstein seems to feel that the convergence he has identified in the polemics; the logical, internal and external weaknesses he has shown to exist in the schools of thought he has investigated; and the errors and insights he has identified *do* lead to the restructuring of theory. Proclaiming his optimism, tame as it might be, and stating and restating his necessary conditions for an adequate theory cannot and do not establish dialectical relations. In this study a great deal about *theoria* and science in intimated. But the exact nature of both remains quite elusive. When Bernstein speaks of his ideal theory is he referring to a comprehensive general theory? He states that "the primary problem today is the reconciliation of the classical aim of politics — to enable human beings to live good and just lives in a political community — with the modern demand of social thought, which is to achieve scientific knowledge of the workings of society" (p. xxii). This most noble aim is to be resolved by a miraculous resolution of the qualitative difference between science and philosophy or by rigorous structuring of the spheres of the two modes of thought. Bernstein does not establish the ground upon which such reconciliation can or ought to take place. The suggested dialectical movement never does emerge. Instead of philosophical articulation and insight we have erudite scholasticism. Instead of rigorous philosophizing we have a grand sociological overview devoid of conceptual clarity and of penetrating analysis regarding its own most strategic and vital concepts and values.

Bernstein in his optimism sees theory rising from its ashes like the mythological phoenix. After all, for Bernstein the ashes were only apparent, not real. But *theoria* is in eclipse, and Bernstein's study does not alter this state of affairs. I suspect that the possibility for any revival and ultimate restructuring would demand an imaginative reinterpretation of Weber's problematic juxtaposed with an interpretation of Marx and Freud — the three image builders of modernity. And I must confess, in a total absence of optimism, that this can only be a beginning. In a rare moment of powerful insight, Bernstein states that "there seems to be a natural progression from early Enlightenment ideals to contemporary positivist and empiricist modes of thought. What were once great liberating ideas have turned into suffocating strait jackets. There is a hidden nihilism in the dialectic of this development" (p. xxiii). This has not been confronted. Though eminently able for such confrontation, Bernstein opted for more secure glories.

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AN ATLAS OF UTOPIAS

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Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World,* Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1979, pp. 896.

There have always been two ways of considering utopias: as literary artifacts and as political projections. In the practice of writing utopias the two functions — of presenting a convincing artistic structure and of working out a convincing pattern of thought — have tended less to complement than to conflict with each other, so that an openly didactic intention will often spoil a utopian novel as fiction, while excessive attention to verbal form will weaken it as the delineation of a political proposition. The utopia is in fact the literary genre in which the difference between creative imagination and plausible invention is most clearly exemplified.

In most utopias it is the inventiveness that is paramount; there is a need in this genre for socio-political neologisms that is quite different from the avant-garde artist's need for new verbal forms, and utopias are rarely experimental in a literary sense because easy comprehensibility demands a clear expository style. The best utopists — those who present an intellectually provocative invention in satisfying prose — are precisely the writers who have striven, as Orwell said, after "prose like a window pane"; it is hard to imagine a Joycean or a Jamesian utopia! And the best of all have, ironically been anti-utopians or dystopians, like Orwell, Zamiatin and Swift, whose satirical intent allowed them to manipulate their content in imaginative ways closed to the writer of an "affirmative" utopia. When Aldous Huxley followed his dystopia, *Brave New World,* with *Island* — a utopia presenting his views of the requirements of an ideal society the result was not merely less satisfying artistically; it was less true to modern social and scientific realities.

The special quality of More's *Utopia*, the model for the whole genre, lies in its inescapable ambiguity; we never know how far this brave saint and ferocious burner of rival believers accepted his own utopian inventions as *desiderata*, and how far he saw himself engaged in Erasmian play.

But even when we have counted in More and Orwell and the Marquis de Sade and William Morris and Bulwer Lytton and the dozens of other well-

known writers who in one way or another have floated into the vast seine of Frank and Fritzie Manuel's *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, we still find that none of the major figures in world literature has undertaken as a leading task the construction of a utopia. Balzac, Dostoevsky, Dickens, Stendhal, Austen, Eliot, James are all missing from the roster; even Tolstoy, for all his later dedication to Christian anarchism, never confined his social and moral theories within the frame of a utopia. And the other major writers who have actually touched on the utopian theme have done so lightly and most often ironically, as Shakespeare did when he gave Gonzago a score or so of lines to sketch out a primitive communism in *The Tempest*; or Cervantes when he chose Sancho Panza to preside over a peasant utopia on the island of Barataria; or Rabelais when he lightly sketched his libertarian utopia of Thelème into the scatological jungle of his vast comic masterpiece; or E. M. Forster when he made a short story out of his chilling dystopia, *The Machine Stops*, which inexplicably, like Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, goes unmentioned by the Manuels.

It is this fact of being somewhat apart from the wider field of imaginative literature, of being judgeable by criteria of socio-political invention rather than of verbal form, that probably explains why there have been so few studies — and none of them major in intent — of the utopia as a literary genre. All the good books on utopias, which the Manuels used as the foundations for their massive work, have been concerned with the ideas and inventions of the utopists, not with the way they write. None of the authors of such books has in fact been a literary critic or a literary historian; all of them — Lewis Mumford in *The Story of Utopias*, Martin Buber in *Paths in Utopia*, Marie Louise Berneri in *Journey through Utopia*, have been concerned primarily with the moral, social and political aspects of the utopias they described. They only notice the formal aspects of the books they discuss when the deficiencies of structure and presentation interfere with the plausibility in the narrative that is necessary for the ideas to be effectively projected. And, given the limited structural variations that are possible within the utopian form, it is hard to imagine a comprehensive literary study of utopias that would be other than tediously repetitious.

It has always, indeed, been more interesting and more intellectually profitable to make the study of utopias a branch of the history of ideas. This accords with the fact that most people read utopias for what they say rather than for how they say it, and find it a bonus when a utopist entices one into his or her vision with the art of a good writer. It is because they have deliberately concerned themselves with "utopian thought in the western world," rather than with the forms of utopian fiction, that the Manuels are able to sustain one's interest so well through their very long book.

GEORGE WOODCOCK

Utopian Thought in the Western World is certainly the most impressive book I have yet read on the utopian cast of mind and its products. With the Manuel's earlier collection, *French Utopias: An Anthology of Ideal Societies* (1966), and Frank Manuel's *The Prophets of Paris* (1962) and his anthology of *Utopias and Utopian Thought* (1966), it comprises a very useful series of works on utopianism.

Considered merely as a pattern of developing ideas, the story of utopian thought has its own kind of drama that stands outside any literary construct. The roots of utopian ideas go far back into the antique myths of the golden age and the Middle Eastern myths of paradise, and the utopian concept itself belongs to the splendid opening centuries of western civilization in the eastern Mediterranean. It interweaves with the great religious movements, the social and political changes, that have characterized the western world since Christianity climbed out of the catacombs to assume power in partnership with the dying Roman Empire. Almost every heresy, political or theological, projected its own vision of an ideal commonwealth in which principles would congeal into practice.

But utopias were created by individuals, and while some of the utopists were anonymous, or, like the eighteenth-century French writer Morelly, are mere names with no remembered attributes, others lived public lives that were well recorded, often in the sad chronicles of law courts and inquisitions. The lives and the characters of these people provide important clues to our understanding of their inventions and proposals and of the kind of society in which they imagined human beings would achieve fulfilment. The fashionable critical hostility to the study of intentions, dubious as it may be in other literary fields, is completely inapplicable in the case of utopias, where the intention lives at the very heart of the work. And to understand the intention we have to know as much as we can discover about the intender. Thus one of the most valuable aspects of *Utopian Thought in the Western World* is that, where anything is known of them, the utopists do not appear as names and nothing more; enough of their biography is given to help us understand those elements in their lives and their relationships that led them to envision alternative worlds. It is not merely an amusing fact, for example, that Restif de la Bretonne was a shoe-fetishist; it reflects the revolt against normality which is a strong motivating force in many utopian visions.

The Manuels have chosen their title with a proper caution. Earlier writers on the subject tended to limit themselves to fictional visions of ideal commonwealths, and had this example been followed many of the thinkers who figure in *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, such as Comenius and Marx and Giordano Bruno and Kropotkin and the Leveller prophets of the English civil war, could not have found a place. Even Saint-Simon and Fourier, though we think of them as utopian socialists, would not have fitted into the pattern.

Yet all the writers I have named imagined and wrote about different arrangements of society where something approaching the long-lost happiness of paradise and the golden age could be reconstituted, and one can hardly describe such thought as anything other than Utopian. Even the avowed anti-utopians, like Proudhon and Marx, made plans for social orders that did not exist in their time and may in fact never exist. There is a case, and a good one, for regarding as utopian any social or political proposal that envisages a total remaking of society. Piecemeal reforms are not utopian, and one can illustrate the difference by comparing the compromise politics of the Fabians with William Morris's vision of a world redeemed by revolution. Though Sidney Webb and William Morris both called themselves socialists, the ways of thinking expressed in *Industrial Democracy* and *News from Nowhere* are remote from each other. One is evolutionary, the other revolutionary, and in some sense or other every utopian is a revolutionist even if he does not propose to achieve his aims by violent means; conversely, every true revolutionist, every world-transformer, is a utopian, and so the wide scope of *Utopian Thought in the Western World*, where the emphasis is on the *thought* and not on the fictional projection, is not only justified but also extremely enlightening in enabling us to locate the fictional utopias within their context of intellectual history.

Yet *Utopian Thought in the Western World* has its limitations, which are brought about by the concentration on the utopian idea. We are really involved in utopian plans, not utopian achievements, and the Manuels are undoubtedly correct in remarking that many of the classical utopists created their imaginary commonwealths as intellectual exercises and would have deplored any attempt to realize them in actuality. Can we imagine Saint Thomas More as a happy citizen of his own Utopia? There were other utopists whose visions were obviously compensations for their personal inadequacies; the physically fulfilled passions that flourish in Fourier's phalansterian proposals may well, as the Manuels suggest, have helped to compensate psychologically for his impoverished life and his probable sexual impotence.

At the same time a surprising number of utopists did toy with the idea of realizing their utopias. Only a few in the earlier period were willing, like Thomas Müntzer, to risk their lives to put a new social order into being. But Thomas Campanella was involved in a plot against the Spanish rulers of Calabria and hoped its success might give some flesh to his utopian visions; even Plato was tempted to adapt his visions to the real political world of Magna Graecia; and Fourier stayed in his room at a set hour every day waiting for a capitalist to appear who would finance his first phalanstery until one afternoon death kept the appointment. And if Fourier did not found any phalansteries, his followers did, in France and in the United States. The Manuels have certainly done all they proposed in restricting themselves

mainly to utopian ideas and paying little attention to attempts at realizing them, but the fact remains that utopian action is in its own way a notable critique of utopian thought. If we had been given something more about Plato's experiences with Dionysius in Syracuse, or about the fate of the Digger communes, or about the actual communities which the Owenites, the Icarians and the Phalansterians established, we would have had another viewpoint from which to consider the validity of utopian plans. For a piece of utopian writing is never merely a literary artifact; it is a proposal for action and has to be judged as such.

But a study of utopian thought put into practice — and of the ways in which many details of past utopias have been realized in the modern world — would obviously extend the present book in quite impractical ways. Its present length is the maximum a publisher could easily handle, and there is very little in *Utopian Thought* one would wish to see omitted in favour of new material. What we do need is a complementary volume to illustrate Oscar Wilde's point that "Progress is the realization of Utopias." In such a volume, I believe, the imbalance of the final chapters of *Utopian Thought in the Western World* might be corrected.

It is clear that the Manuels are more at home with antique, renaissance and eighteenth-century utopias than they are with those of the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They deal far too summarily with works by writers like Wells and Huxley and Zamiatin which in terms of writing and imaginative fantasy are superior to those of many predecessors. Seldom, for example, did earlier utopian romancers create the kind of convincing characters who populate the scientific-utopian fantasies of H. G. Wells. And seldom did they create settings that were as plausible as that of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

There has been a profound change in the nature and aims of utopian writing during recent decades as science and technology have fulfilled many old utopian proposals and totalitarian politics have made us see others in a more critical light. Utopian writing has ceased to be a matter of ideal proposals; it has become rather a matter of projecting the trends created by the partial realization of utopias, and the result of the projection, from Wells onward, has often been negative as modern writers suggest that the realization of the utopian dream may in fact be nightmare. Whether, as in some science fiction utopias, the results are benign, or whether they are malign or at best ambivalent, modern utopian writings have become prophetic rather than programmatic, and frequently minatory in both tone and content.

A further change is that now utopia has almost completely passed into fiction, and mostly into the fiction of fantasy and escape. Utopian political proposals have become frozen into the ideologies of totalitarian governments, and the abundance of utopian schemes that seminal thinkers devised in past

generations has declined to a trickle as political idealists, established in power, have betrayed their pasts.

The Manuels are correct when, towards the end of their book, they remark that: "Once there are sufficiencies of food and jobs, the problem of human happiness becomes linked to psychic needs." Utopian writing today is largely concerned with the psychological and even parapsychological dimensions of human existence; it plays with ideas of mutational transformation that may produce different kinds of men, often in distant times and places, more frequently than it does with transformations of existing human society carried out by man as he is today.

Because they are so attuned to the classic utopian cast of mind, the Manuels find it difficult to deal with such shifts in utopian thinking — or utopian fantasizing as it has largely become. The political and technological developments of the twentieth century have made us profoundly distrustful of utopian proposals, and we are back almost to where Wordsworth stood almost two centuries ago when, in full retreat from Godwinian euphoria, he wrote:

> Not in Utopia — subterranean fields —
> Or in some secret island, Heaven knows where!
> But in this very world, which is the world
> Of all of us — the place where, in the end,
> We find our happiness, or not at all!

But utopia had not invaded Wordsworth's "very world" as it has ours, with the result that the people who in the past would have been thinking of utopias, are now anti-utopian in the literal sense that they fear further technological and political developments, and call for simplification, decentralization, a return to organic social forms, to the natural living of the past. Books like *The Greening of America* and *Small is Beautiful*, ignored by the Manuels, perhaps represent the new Utopian thought, with Luddites in the cellars of the City of the Sun. If that is the case, it seems even more evident that a complementary book to *Utopian Thought in the Western World* is needed, one that not only discusses how utopian proposals have been realized in our lives, but also the disillusionment that has diminished the utopian succession and divided it into the three streams of minatory dystopia, Luddite anti-utopia and escapist fantasy utopia.

My suggestion of a complementary study in no way detracts from the achievement of *Utopian Thought in the Western World*. It is the best survey of the classic utopian tradition yet written, well-presented, penetrating in its analyses, never dull, and as nearly comprehensive as we are ever likely to have. But one's doubts about the future of utopian thought give the book something

more than the monumentalism of mere size; it reads often like a threnody for a great lost cause.

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IN DEFENCE OF INTELLECTUAL CULTURE

Andrew Wernick

We don't want no education
We don't want no thought control
Hey! teacher, leave us kids alone
All in all you're just another brick in the wall

Pink Floyd

In my response to Ben Agger's essay on *Dialectical Sensibility (CJPST*, Vol. 1, nos. 2 & 3) I had hoped to bring into the open some important unresolved issues concerning the place of intellectuality and intellectual culture in a long-range transformative perspective. Unfortunately, his reply to my criticisms of populist intellectualism contains fewer arguments than symptoms: I clearly hit a raw nerve. Impatient with what he takes to be the underlying basis of my position, he foregoes a careful examination of my actual words and rushes straight into a denunciation of the sins they are supposed to connote — positivism, Leninism (which for Agger means Stalinism) and a blind defence of the ivory tower. Before commenting directly, then, on the matters at issue, it is necessary to clear up some misunderstandings.

Agger assumes that a defence of objectivity as an epistemological norm (and realism as an ontological norm) is tantamount to (a) a claim that the proponent of such a stance actually or potentially possesses absolute knowledge, (b) a claim by objectivists that they — or intellectuals in general — ought to rule, and (c) a denial of reflexivity. Assumptions (a) and (b) are *non sequiturs* and should not therefore have been ascribed. As for (c), no sophisticated objectivist in the social sciences — Marxist or otherwise — would deny that the subject, categories and process of knowledge are inextricably part of the object of knowledge itself. To put it provocatively: if I want to know myself, I — even as a verb — am also an object.

Agger's conflation of epistemological, ideological and political propositions also prevents him from correctly deciphering my political standpoint. He assumes that an insistence on instrumental rationality means thinking "about strategy only in terms of the mechanics of class struggle and not *also* in

terms of the necessary emancipatory individuation of this class struggle on the level of lived experience." To the contrary, it is precisely because of my affinity for Agger's Marcusean interest in the requirements of a new radical sensibility that I thought it worthwhile to debate with him in the first place. Need it be pointed out that Gramsci, to whom Agger makes frequent appeal, was the perfect embodiment of a revolutionary strategist who combined a rational, even Leninist, approach to politics with a full appreciation of the need to effect an ideological and cultural transformation on the widest possible scale. With Agger, let me add, I am all for broadening, even universalising, the social basis and democratic mode of the directing political intelligence (although, with Gramsci, I assume that such direction is necessary). On the relation between cultural and class struggle, it would be foolish for any veteran of the sixties to urge the subordination of the former to the latter. On this score, I suspect that Agger — with the paramount importance he places on the spontaneous consciousness of blue- and white-collar workers — is actually more orthodox in his Marxism than I am.

My views on the Frankfurt School are similarly misinterpreted. Against my suggestion that the Frankfurt School was ultimately "successful in the practical goal it set itself," Agger counters: "To think that a single soul was rescued from the aura of the death camps by reading Adorno shows pitiable naivete." It would indeed; the works to which we were both referring (*Minima Moralia* and *Dialectic of Enlightenment*) were not available to the German public until after the War. My actual argument referred to the importance of critical theory in the rapid ideological development of the West German student movement in the early sixties.

Agger's systematic distortion of my position is not merely irritating; it also reveals flaws in his own methodology. Despite frequent use of the term dialectical, he seems to find it inconceivable that one who defends the values of objectivity, reason, intellectuality and so on, might nevertheless share his own objections to Leninist substitutionism, high cultural elitism and technocratic manipulation — and, from the same utopian, democratic and communitarian perspective. Moreover, one of the first principles of an "epistemological democracy," I would have thought, is that every authentically held point of view has its moment of truth. Far from adopting such an ecumenical approach, however, Agger wants to banish some viewpoints (e.g., anti-anti-intellectualism) from his republic altogether. Paradoxically, this *ex cathedra* excommunication is pronounced in the name of anti-authoritarianism.

In addition to all these misinterpretations, there are of course a number of issues on which we genuinely disagree. Here, I want simply to state a number of propositions that will make my own "proclivities" more explicit.

1. Leadership and Vanguards

A combined, many-sided and integrated development of all human activities is the emancipatory ideal; but the higher the collective level, the more a certain degree of individual specialisation is inevitable and even desirable. On a social scale, consciousness (like all human faculties) develops unevenly. Even if the historical causes of inequality were transcended, social, cultural and psychological asymmetries would still predispose the consciousnesses of some individuals and milieus to be relatively advanced. But consciousness, in this context, should not be identified with only one of its forms and levels; the law of uneven anthropological development applies to practical as well as theoretical consciousness, to qualities such as wisdom and ethical sensitivity as well as to socio-historical reflexivity, political intelligence, intersubjective skills, imaginative capacity and specific expertise in particular branches of technical or theoretical knowledge. Some of these capacities are complementary, but being advanced in one respect by no means guarantees being advanced in others. In short, there are as many vanguards as there are types of praxis. There is no single, overall vanguard, nor — in view of the immense complexity of human activities and faculties — can there be. In principle, given a multiplicity of independently established status hierarchies and with the removal of social obstacles to individual growth, the goal of inter-personal status equality would be compatible with the actuality of asymmetry and unevenness in collective cultural development.

The problem of status, however, must be distinguished from that of leadership, which is more intractable. Surmounting evolutionary problems and even day-to-day problem-solving would be impossible if the rational authority of those with the greatest scientific, technological, political or ideological grasp were never respected. But leadership, which confers power can not be regarded as a simple extension of the spontaneous division of labour. Under the circumstances, there can be no permanent resolution of the familiar contradiction at the heart of progressive political theory between the principles of democracy and rational leadership. The extent to which the latter function can be collectivised to the point where it is exercised by the policy as a whole can only be a matter for experiment by future generations. In practice, we must, as Mao puts it, "grasp both ends."

In view of the human capacity for self-deception, leadership can only be granted, not unilaterally assumed; and even so, the conferral of authority may be misguided. Self-appointed leaders (Gautama, Socrates and Jesus are ironic exceptions) are rarely the genuine article. Political struggles require direction and coordination; but whatever the instrumental exigencies, unobtrusive leadership (by individuals and collectivities) is always the least offensive. Lao Tzu, characterising "the best of all rulers," notes that

When his task is accomplished and his work done
The people will all say: 'It happened naturally'.

Tao Te Ching

The *Tao Te Ching* is feudal and quietist, but *mutatis mutandis* there is a message here also for activists in a democracy.

2. On Intellectual Improvement

Human differences in developed mental capacity — in the powers of reason and reflection — are, among all the natural distinctions, the most invidious. A discussion of raising the collective intellectual level will therefore always seem arrogant and undemocratic. On the other hand, to treat the oedipally charged *ressentiment* of the intellectually dominated and frustrated as a regulative ideal converts this necessary egalitarian unease into a veritable taboo on the topic. Such single-minded anti-élitism creates a blind spot in the transformative critique.

North Americans, so it is said, on the average watch six hours of network TV per day and spend four hours per year reading serious literature. The figure of the intellectual (especially when fused with that of the Bohemian) has replaced the Jew as the main target of mass psychological hostility in advanced capitalism. More is at fault here than the self-distantiation of intellectual workers from the masses. The mind-body split that two centuries of social critics have detected to be at the psychotic centre of Western culture in the bourgeois epoch manifests itself not only in sexual repression (which we now understand) and in the extrusion of certain forms of intellectual practice from direct intercourse with "the real world" (which is less true of North America than of "older" regions like Europe) — but also in the repression of intellectuality and of the gratifications associated with it in the daily life experiences of the masses. Anti-intellectualism — i.e., prejudice towards ideas and those who bear them — is a self-negating expression of instinctual frustration, an unlovely element in the psychology of the oppressed.

Confining people's intellectual development to the unreflective level at which advanced capitalism requires the majority to operate, and focussing their hostility on ideas or individuals that disrupt the general torpor, is of obvious benefit to the business, military and political elites who really rule. But it is not only a capitalist problem. The repressive state-socialist regimes of the East also foster a climate of opinion antagonistic to intellectuals and independent thought. There, the effect is achieved through overt ideological controls. In advanced capitalism, mass stupefaction and ideological intolerance, which is characteristic of an alienated work process, is served and

reinforced by a commoditised culture industry. Mass media programming colonises audiences both for advertisers and for the merchandisers of popular entertainment. Reawakening the community's dormant powers of reflection is a necessary moment in the long-range project of achieving collective self-determination. Conversely, catering to anti-intellectualism represents a capitulation to present and future authoritarianisms.

3. On the Social Division of Labour

The peculiar passion of those who insist on the necessity of abolishing the division of labour is the desire to dethrone intellectual practice from its privileged social position, and to break the domination of those whose monopoly over intellectual tasks excludes the majority from effective day-to-day decision-making power. The aim is unimpeachable, but the issue — even in the abstract — is more complicated than first appears.

Above all, it is important to distinguish between the problems of domination, status, functional differentiation, individual specialisation and social mobility. It is one thing to abolish the coercive power exercised by one social group (or type of practice) over another, and quite a different thing to abolish differentiated social activities as such, or the subcultures and idiolects that crystallise around them. And the question posed by Durkheim concerning the relative merits of specialisation and generalism is another issue again. To subsume these quite separate problems under one umbrella — the division of labour: should it be abolished? — eliminates all the ground between blind defence of the status quo and abstract negation. Marx's discussion of the question in the *1844 Manuscripts* and in the *German Ideology* leaves a confused impression precisely because he does not make the necessary distinctions. Hence his conception of communism, for all its stress on the omni-sided unfolding of individual human potential, is still susceptible to regressive utopian longings. In the language of fantasy, abolishing the division of labour means abolishing the boundary between ego and other, and in the language of political theory it means primitive communism and a return to tribal unity. This does not imply that the dream (the promise of happiness) should be suppressed in the name of an impoverished reality; but rather that as we experimentally attempt to deconstruct coercive elements of human association, we should not let the unconscious, unreflected, dictate our political drives.

4. The Future of Academia

Among the functions of the capitalist university today are: the allocation of individuals into the upper reaches of the occupational hierarchy;

reproduction of the cultural values and class outlooks appropriate to professional and managerial destinations; and mobilisation of knowledge production in the service of "private" industry and the state. To those at the bottom of the class structure, education is indeed "just another brick in the wall": a barrier to social mobility, a propaganda machine for the institutions and interests which subordinate them, and a mandarinate which stamps them as inferior cultural products. Under the circumstances, the pretensions of higher education to represent higher spiritual values (the disinterested pursuit of truth, etc.) is pious rhetoric.

So what is to be done? Tear down the wall and, following Illich, de-school society? The conclusion, especially when applied to post-secondary institutions, is unwarranted. First, because it is implausible to suppose that a high technology civilisation can dispense with organised centres of scientific education and research; while less immediately utilitarian, the same is true of the cultural and social knowledge (imperfectly) produced and transmitted by the social sciences and humanities. In this context, the democratic imperative points not to academia's self-liquidation but to the need for universal access to university resources, and for more socially accountable forms of academic self-management. Secondly, the fact that the university's charter functions are vitiated in practice does not invalidate them in principle.

The problem is that the university's positive functions in the (re)production of short- and long-range intellectual use-values, are subverted by the class context and alienated mode in which the whole educational system is set. In this respect, the forces of capitalism and bureaucracy oppress even the relatively privileged intellectual workers within the academy itself — and not just because of guilt occasioned by blatant academic complicity in the evils of the world. Besides the general lack of cultural support for intellectual work, the invasion of pedagogy by market categories (curriculum planning as a Nielsen ratings game) and the reification of work relations, as the "community of scholars" becomes a corporate enterprise, serve to undermine universities as authentic intellectual centres, and to alienate the everyday activity of all those who work in them.

Far from there being, therefore, an irreconcilable gulf between the human interests of academia and the not-yet community it ideally serves, there is ultimately a convergence in the common need for academic and intellectual reconstruction (and for the broader changes that would make that possible). The bricks are a building as well as a wall: for those of us whose legitimate vocation it is to live in that building, the problem is how to make it into a place of human habitation.

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SCHMITT SCHOLARSHIP*

George Schwab

I

Until recently anyone interested in gathering information about Carl Schmitt in the English-speaking world had no choice but to turn to the standard literature written by well known political scientists and historians, some of whom exerted enormous influence on the American intellectual scene. A number of them, including Carl Joachim Friedrich and Franz Neumann, knew Schmitt personally or were well acquainted with his work.

It is not surprising — given his originality, his large intellectual output and his support of Bruening's measures against the Nazis and Schleicher's endeavors to outflank Hitler — Schmitt should have enjoyed wide respect and even admiration especially in Weimar Germany and Europe in general. But all this changed when Schmitt decided to participate in the Nazi venture after the Reichstag extended to Hitler an enabling act in March 1933 that was unprecedented in scope. Understandably, the attitude of a number of his former students, friends and followers who were forced to flee Germany shifted. It was their extreme disappointment with Schmitt's decision that led them to attack him bitterly, so much so that dispassionate discourse about Schmitt and his work became impossible. The forms that the attack assumed included questioning Schmitt's integrity, concealing some of his ideas, distorting others, and even appropriating his concepts without acknowledgement. A few examples will suffice to illustrate the extent to which the medium of scholarship was enlisted to serve nonscholarly ends.

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*This paper constitutes, in shortened form, the foreword to four of my works on Carl Schmitt which appeared in Japanese translation in December 1979: "Enemy oder Foe: Der Konflikt der modernen Politik," tr. J. Zeumer, in *Epirrhosis: Festgabe für Carl Schmitt*, ed. H. Barion et al., Berlin, 1968, vol. II; *The Challenge of the Exception: An Introduction to the Political Ideas of Carl Schmitt between 1921 and 1936*, Berlin, 1970; "Carl Schmitt: Political Opportunist?" *Intellect*, Vol. 103 (February 1975); and the introduction to my translation of Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political*, New Brunswick, N.J. 1976.

Editor's Note: Professor Schwab's manuscript provides further historical siting of the reception met by Carl Schmitt's writings in North America. For further discussion of the Schmitt controversy, see Joseph W. Bendersky, "Carl Schmitt Confronts the English-Speaking World," *CJPST*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Fall/Automne, 1978), 125-135.

Although Carl Joachim Friedrich was not a Nazi victim, his treatment of one of Schmitt's major works, *Die Diktatur. Von den Anfängen des modernen Souveränitätsgedankens bis zum proletarischen Klassenkampf*,[1] is interesting to follow. In an article that Friedrich published in the October 1930 issue of *Foreign Affairs* under the title "Dictatorship in Germany?" he characterized Schmitt as "one of the most acute constitutional theorists"[2] and stated that the second edition of *Die Diktatur* (1928) constituted "an epoch-making discussion to which the writer [Friedrich] is indebted for important suggestions."[3] From Friedrich's discussion it is clear that he subscribes to Schmitt's distinction between a commissarial and a sovereign form of dictatorship, a distinction that Schmitt had made and elaborated in the first edition of *Die Diktatur* (1921). Whereas a sovereign dictatorship, according to Schmitt, is one in which a ruler exploits a crisis to destroy a constitution in order to bring a new constitution into existence, a commissarial dictatorship aims at putting an end to a crisis so that the existing constitution can in its entirety be restored and serve as the basic law of the land. In discussing the nature of President Hindenburg's rule, Friedrich treated it entirely within the framework of Schmitt's distinction and even used Schmitt's language to state that governmental rule based on Article 48 of the Weimar constitution could never be interpreted to mean the "destruction of the constitution."[4]

However, a reader of Friedrich's much studied *Constitutional Government and Democracy: Theory and Practice in Europe and America* was told in the first edition, which appeared in 1937,[5] that in *Die Diktatur* (Friedrich's reference was to the second edition that appeared in 1928) Schmitt "attempts a comprehensive synthesis, but unfortunately his theoretical analysis is marred by his preoccupation with 'political' considerations of the moment — at that time the justification of more extended presidential powers."[6] In the second edition of *Constitutional Government and Democracy*, published in 1941,[7] Friedrich dismisses Schmitt's *Die Diktatur* as a "partisan tract."[8] Notwithstanding the fact that Friedrich steadfastly used Schmitt's categorization, no reference to *Die Diktatur* is to be found in one of the subsequent editions that appeared in 1968.[9]

In comparison to the approach adopted by Friedrich, the attack by Franz Neumann was more sophisticated. Because of his brilliance and his commitment to teaching, Neumann decisively influenced many students. In addition, his major work, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933-1944*,[10] continues to shape the American perception of the Third Reich. Publishing *Behemoth* at the height of World War II, Neumann evidently felt compelled to settle accounts with his former teacher and friend.

In *Behemoth* Neumann concerned himself with three of Schmitt's notions: decisionism, the friend-enemy criterion of politics and the distinction between liberalism and democracy.

The decisionism that Schmitt developed in some of his writings of the Weimar period was based on his definition that the "sovereign is he who decides on the exception."[11] He derived his decisionism largely from his concern about the centrifugal forces that were responsible for undermining the powers of the sovereign, on the one hand, and from his controversy with Hans Kelsen's pure normativism, on the other hand. Basically the two are linked. In contrast to Kelsen's insistence that "the concept of sovereignty must be radically banished" (*Der Souveränitätsbegriff muss radikal verdrängt werden*),[12] Schmitt aimed at breaking open Kelsen's system by including in it the exception. This meant, of course, not removing from juridical consideration the sovereign's right to declare an exception and act accordingly.

The unity of Schmitt's political thought that emerged from his answers to problems facing Weimar is best reflected in his criterion of politics as the distinction between friend and enemy.[13] Just as in the domestic domain so also in the power-political arena of states, sovereignty cannot be dissociated from decisionism. In the sovereign's endeavor to ensure order, peace and stability at home, and simultaneously safeguard the territorial integrity of the state, circumstances may dictate that the sovereign decide who the enemy/ies is/are and act accordingly.[14]

It would not be unfair to say that despite Neumann's thorough knowledge of Schmitt's works and the context in which he developed his ideas, he distorted Schmitt's political realism. Although it is true that Schmitt's ideas can lead to extremes, it is utterly without foundation to claim that Schmitt who, above all, craved order, peace and stability, had intended his decisionism to be a doctrine that demanded "action instead of deliberation . . . decision instead of evaluation."[15] Moreover, it was a distortion on the part of Neumann to assert that Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction was a "doctrine of brute force in its most striking form."[16]

Schmitt's distinction between liberalism and democracy did not fare any better with Neumann. A thesis now in vogue — that liberalism destroys democracy and democracy liberalism[17] — was advanced by Schmitt in 1923.[18] Schmitt's fear was that political parties hostile to the Weimar state would tear it apart or subvert it by using that part of the Weimar constitution that enabled such parties to thrive and compete for power. To prevent that from happening and thus to preserve and strengthen the Weimar state, Schmitt argued that the constitution deserved to be developed according to its inner logic — that is, that the democratic part be developed at the expense of the liberal part. Cognizant, however, that constitutional revisions would take a long time to bring about, Schmitt argued that in order for Weimar to survive, its president must not be hampered from acting decisively. And, according to Schmitt, the Weimar constitution in general, and Article 48 in particular,

provided the president with both the means and the legal base to act accordingly.[19] Time and again Schmitt warned that unless the problems caused by the inconsistencies in the constitution were resolved and unless the authorities immediately ceased to subscribe to the narrow interpretation of the constitution advanced by the formalists, "truth [would] avenge itself" (*dann rächt sich die Wahrheit*).[20]

Though Neumann knew precisely the context that had led Schmitt to distinguish between liberalism and democracy and to plead for a strong presidency as a bulwark of Weimar, Neumann turned Schmitt's ideas upside down and claimed that his distinction between liberalism and democracy was a "sham" and that Schmitt was an "ideologist"[21] who provided National Socialism with the ammunition in the 1920s and early 1930s to parade "as the salvation of democracy."[22] Furthermore, Neumann interpreted Schmitt's attempts to strengthen the presidency in the fight against the antagonists of the Weimar state as a "deliberate maneuver" to give "all power to the president."[23]

It is interesting to note the views that Neumann held, at least prior to 1933, on some of Schmitt's notions that Neumann subsequently distorted and condemned during World War II. On the distinction between liberalism and democracy, Neumann wrote to Schmitt on September 7, 1932, that he shared with him the fear that parties hostile to Weimar would succeed in tearing it apart. According to Neumann, rule by parliamentary means would become impossible if it turned out that "the basic political contrast in Germany is the economic . . . that the decisive friend-enemy grouping is the grouping of labor and property." "Parliamentary democracy," he agreed with Schmitt, "can function only as long as it is possible to adhere to the principle of the equal chance. Were this principle to fail . . . then the parliamentary lawgiving state must necessarily fail to function as well." To forestall Weimar from being torn to shreds, Neumann agreed with Schmitt that the "constitution deserved to be freed of its contradictions . . . and developed coherently, that is, according to its inner logic." Neumann reminded Schmitt that he, Neumann, had been trying, "even if not very thoroughly," to "develop a leading principle from the maze of contradictions in the second part" of the constitution. "I doubt, however," Neumann continued "if there is still enough time to develop the substance of the second part. This substance cannot be the order of a bourgeois *Rechtsstaat*. . . . According to the wording of the second part it can only be an order that is based on freedom and property." Without doubt, such an order had to "be sustained and preserved through the participation of all productive elements in society [*Volkskreise*]."[24]

The writings of Friedrich and Neumann are characteristic of how the record has been distorted, legends propagated and scholarship set back about the person and work of Carl Schmitt. The hostile attitude towards Schmitt has

been diluted, however, by occasional references that were objective, even if brief. For example, without referring to Neumann, Clinton Rossiter challenged the implication of Neumann's remarks concerning one of Schmitt's major ideas about how to save the Weimar. By stating in *Behemoth* that Schmitt's attempts to strengthen the presidency constituted nothing but a "deliberate maneuver" on the part of Schmitt to concentrate all power in the president, Neumann insinuated that Schmitt was glorifying power for the sake of power. In analyzing the narrow interpretation of Article 48 by legalists such as Hans Nawiasky,[25] and Schmitt's latitudinarian interpretation of Article 48, according to which the president would be given wide powers to enable him to confront crises successfully, Rossiter did not hesitate to conclude in 1948 that "In actual practice, even when German democracy was at its strongest, [Schmitt's] . . . thesis was nearer the facts than was the strict and legalistic point of view."[26]

On a related constitutional issue, namely, on measures assuming the force of law, Frederick M. Watkins correctly pointed out in 1939, years before the appearance of *Behemoth*, that for a good part of the Weimar period Schmitt argued that Article 48 did not give the president the right to decree formal laws. Passing ordinary laws was the prerogative of the Reichstag, according to Schmitt. The thesis that measures not be extended to the field of legislation is one with which Western liberals would feel completely at home. Said Watkins, the rejection of Schmitt's thesis and the "acceptance for so extended an interpretation of Article 48 . . . were serious in the extreme."[27]

However brief Rossiter's and Watkin's comments were, their scholarly detachment was a relief and certainly constituted sound directional signals for scholarly research. It was in this context, too, that I remember having been startled by a brief and yet extremely revealing reference to Schmitt by the late Hannah Arendt in 1951. To the best of my knowledge, she was the first person in the English-speaking world who, in her celebrated *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, committed to paper the fact that Schmitt was not a true Nazi and was, in fact, replaced in the middle thirties "by the Nazis' own brand of political and legal theorists, such as Hans Frank, the late governor of Poland, Gottfried Neesse, and Reinhard Hoehn."[28]

A giant step toward paving the way for a reassessment of Schmitt came in 1965. Without even one word of explanation, the late Leo Strauss had his well known 1932 discussion entitled "Comments on Carl Schmitt's *Der Begriff des Politischen*" translated[29] and published in his *Spinoza's Critique of Religion*.[30] By drawing the English reader's attention to the affinity between Hobbes and Schmitt (leading scholars have even characterized Schmitt as the Hobbes of the twentieth century[31]), Strauss obviously wanted to serve notice that notwithstanding Schmitt's terrible utterances of the Nazi period, the

cause of scholarship could not be served by distorting, inventing or omitting the rich body of thought that is contained in Schmitt's voluminous writings.

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Notes

1. Munich/Leipzig, 1921, 1928; Berlin, 1964.
2. Vol. 9, no. 1, p. 131.
3. *Ibid.*, note 15, p. 129.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
5. The first edition appeared under the title *Constitutional Government and Politics: Nature and Development.*
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 534-535.
7. Boston.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 627.
9. Waltham, Mass./Toronto/London.
10. The first edition published by Oxford University Press appeared in New York in 1942. The same firm published a second edition in 1944. The volume has been reprinted since in hardcover (New York: Octagon Books, 1963) and in paperback (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966; New York: Octagon Books, 1972).
11. *Politische Theologie: Vier Kapitel zur Lehre von der Souveränität*, Munich/Leipzig, 1922, 1934, p. 11.
12. *Das Problem der Souveränität und die Theorie des Völkerrechts*, Tübingen, 1920, p. 120.
13. *The Concept of the Political*, trans., intro., notes by George Schwab. With comments on Schmitt's essay by Leo Strauss, New Brunswick, N.J., 1976, *passim*. Fearful that the uninitiated reader may confuse Schmitt's criterion with a definition of politics or the political (on the distinction between "politics" and "political" see my introduction to *The Concept of the Political*, pp. 12-16), Piet Tommissen calls attention to the places in *The Concept of the Political* where Schmitt, instead of using the word "criterion," speaks of a definition. See Tommissen's "Schmitt et la polemologie" in *Cahiers Vilfredo Pareto — Revue européenne des sciences sociales*, Tome XVI, No. 44, 1978, p. 148. I do not, however, share Tommissen's great concern. Almost at the outset Schmitt clearly states that it must be understood as "a definition in the sense of a criterion and not as an exhaustive definition or one indicative of substantial content," *The Concept of the Political*, p. 26.
14. *The Concept of the Political, passim.*
15. *Behemoth*, New York, 1966, p. 45.
16. *Ibid.*
17. See, for example, Alan Wolfe, *The Limits of Legitimacy*, New York/London, 1977, p. 7, *passim.*
18. *Die geistesgeschichtliche Lage des heutigen Parlamentarismus*, Munich/ Leipzig, 1923, 1926; Berlin, 1961, 1969.
19. See, in particular, the appendix to the second edition of Schmitt's *Die Diktatur* (1928, 1964), pp. 213ff.

20. *Legalität und Legitimität*, Munich/Leipzig, 1932; Berlin, 1968, p. 98. See also Joseph W. Bendersky, "Carl Schmitt in the Summer of 1932: A Re-examination," *Cahiers Vilfredo Pareto . . .*, pp. 35-53. By showing that in the months before Hitler's accession to power, Schmitt was associated with Schleicher's endeavors to thwart Hitler's climb to power, Bendersky decisively refutes the widespread legend that Schmitt paved the way for Hitler's acquisition of power.

21. *Behemoth*, p. 43.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 44.

24. This letter is in Professor Schmitt's personal files, and a photostatic copy is in my possession. In Schmitt's concept of the "equal chance," only those political parties should be given the right to compete for . . . seats in parliament and for governmental power that would not, upon [their] gaining control, deny other parties a similar chance to compete for power. *Legalität und Legitimität*, pp. 30ff.

25. The thesis of the legalists can be summarized as follows: with the exception of the seven articles enumerated in Section 2 of Article 48, all other articles were sacrosanct and even immune from presidential measures.

26. *Constitutional Dictatorship: Crisis Government in the Modern Democracies*, Princeton, 1948; New York, 1963, p. 69.

27. *The Failure of Constitutional Emergency Powers under the German Republic*, Cambridge, Mass., 1939, p. 19. In Schmitt's construction of his presidential system as a last resort to save Weimar he, too, by 1931, began to subscribe to the dominant view that measures may also have the force of ordinary legislation.

28. New York, 1951, note 66, p. 332. There have been numerous editions and reprints of this study.

29. Originally it appeared in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Vol. 67, no. 6, pp. 732-749, under the title "Anmerkungen zu Carl Schmitt, Der Begriff des Politischen."

30. New York, 1965, pp. 331-351.

31. See, for example, Helmut Rumpf, *Carl Schmitt und Thomas Hobbes, Ideelle Beziehungen und aktuelle Bedeutung mit einer Abhandlung über: Die Frühschriften Carl Schmitts*, Berlin, 1972, pp. 56-60.

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